

The complaint

Mr M complains about how esure Insurance Limited handled a claim he made on his motor insurance policy.

Reference to esure includes its agents.

What happened

Mr M held a motor insurance policy with esure. When his car was damaged in an accident he made a claim for the damage.

esure accepted the claim and based on pictures of the damage thought Mr M's car was uneconomical to repair and wrote it off. It said to settle the claim the most it would pay was the market value of the car, which it said was £4,698.

Mr M didn't think this was enough and thought his car was worth at least £5,000. He also wanted to know what he needed to do to keep the car.

Ultimately Mr M complained to esure. As well as complaining about the value of his car, he said esure took too long to give him the information he needed to keep his car and thinks this should have been given to him upfront. He says this meant he was without his car for longer than he should have been. He also complained that esure (via its salvage agent) sent his V5 to the wrong address. He says this too meant he was without the use of his car for longer than he should have been.

Mr M says he uses his car for work and was unable to do so. He says this meant he lost out on earnings which he says esure should compensate him for.

esure didn't think it had delayed Mr M getting his car back. It said the option to keep a vehicle isn't something the policy allows for – so it doesn't think it needed to let Mr M know when it valued his car. It says once he asked, it processed that request in a reasonable time frame. It said its valuation of Mr M's vehicle was fair and based on a number of trade guides and an advert of a similar vehicle for sale at the time of the loss.

It acknowledged the mix up regarding where the V5 document was sent. It said this was sent to the address on file, not Mr M's new one. But it said it should have sent it across to the DVLA with the correct details on as Mr M had requested. It paid Mr M £75 compensation. It said this was made up of the cost Mr M had to pay to fix the error (£25) and compensation for the distress and inconvenience it caused.

Mr M didn't think this was fair and brought his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. He thinks esure should pay him for the lost earnings for the time he was without his car. He also says he was unable to visit a relative on a scheduled visit which caused him distress.

Our Investigator didn't recommend Mr M's complaint be upheld. She thought esure's valuation was fair and in line with the policy terms. She thought esure gave Mr M the

information needed about retention of his car within a reasonable timeframe and thought the compensation offered in relation to the V5 was reasonable. She didn't think esure was responsible for Mr M's lost earnings for business he wasn't insured to carry out under this policy (he had add on cover for that use). Overall, she thought the claim was handled in a reasonable timeframe from when it was made, to when it was resolved.

Mr M wanted an Ombudsman's decision. He said he accepted our Investigator's findings in relation to the value of his car and didn't want to pursue that further. But he remained unhappy with the compensation offered for the service provided around the retention of his car and the V5 address error.

What I've decided – and why

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Regarding the valuation of Mr M's vehicle, because he's accepted our Investigator's findings on that aspect of his complaint, I'm not going to discuss it further in this decision

Rather, I'll focus on what remains in dispute. And that, as I understand it, surrounds the retention of Mr M's vehicle and the process involved in making that happen. In addition, what needs to be done to put right esure's error of sending the V5 to the wrong address remains in dispute.

For context, Mr M is insured with esure to use his vehicle for business use – in connection with the occupation he let esure know of. Mr M also has two further jobs, that he uses his car for. That use isn't covered by his policy with esure, but Mr M has said he has separate policies to cover him while carrying out that work.

Ultimately, Mr M has said all the time he was without the use of his car he was losing money because he wasn't able to work. Which I understand must have been frustrating.

But like our Investigator, I don't think esure caused any avoidable delays here. I understand Mr M would have liked the information quicker than he received it, but that doesn't mean esure needed to provide it within that time.

From what I can see the claim was made and based on the damage it looked like Mr M's car would be uneconomical to repair. A decision to write the car off was made four days later, which I'm satisfied is reasonable. Three days later, esure had valued Mr M's car and advised what the settlement was.

It's not until three days after that that I can see that Mr M said he wanted to keep the vehicle. I understand Mr M says he started these enquires six days earlier, but I've not seen evidence to persuade me that's the case. What I've seen shows that in earlier contact he asked esure to contact him, but it doesn't say what about.

I agree with esure when it says it doesn't have to let its policyholders know their options in relation to keeping a written off vehicle. It's not something in the policy, and in fact the policy says when written off the car becomes esure's possession. We'd expect esure to let someone know their options should they wish to keep the vehicle, which I can see esure did here. But we wouldn't expect esure, or any other insurer to proactively provide this information.

Here, I can see the information was provided and within four days of him asking about it, Mr M had picked up his car from the salvage agent. I don't consider that an unreasonable

timeframe.

Turning to the issue with the V5, esure has acknowledged it should have sent it off with the information Mr M gave it, not the information held on its system. It's paid £75 compensation for this. I'm satisfied that's reasonable.

Mr M has said this isn't enough, but I'm not persuaded he's shown that this error meant he wasn't able to use his car. He's said the same day the V5 was sent off, he got confirmation of it by email and noticed the address was wrong. It wasn't until six days after that that Mr M says the matter was sorted at the post office and he was able to tax the vehicle and use it.

But Mr M was able to tax the vehicle the same day the address change was processed at the post office. At that point, he wouldn't have had the physical V5 document. I can see why Mr M would want the address to be correct. But I've not seen anything to show the vehicle couldn't have been taxed before this point, or how the wrong address was the cause of the vehicle not being able to be taxed.

Therefore, I'm not persuaded esure caused any loss here. It did clearly cause inconvenience – because Mr M had to pay to rectify esure's error. But I'm satisfied its compensation puts right that error, both in terms of the cost to Mr M, and the inconvenience it caused him.

My final decision

For the reasons set out above, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 11 September 2025.

Joe Thornley
Ombudsman