

The complaint

Mr G complains that BISL Limited took money from his bank account to renew his motor insurance policy when he had stated that he didn't want this. He wants compensation for his loss of earnings and stress.

What happened

BISL sent Mr G a renewal offer telling him that his policy would automatically renew unless he contacted it by phone or online to cancel this. Mr G called BISL to discuss making changes to his policy. But the conversation was cut short so BISL emailed Mr G asking him to get in touch. BISL said Mr G didn't contact it again though Mr G said he sent an email to stop the renewal. And so BISL automatically renewed Mr G's motor insurance policy and took payment from his account.

Mr G was notified of this a day before the renewal, and he contacted BISL stating that he didn't want to renew. The policy was cancelled and the agent said Mr G would receive a refund. But Mr G was unhappy that the renewal had gone ahead, that the agent didn't send him a transcript of his online chat promptly, and that he didn't receive a call back from a manager.

BISL agreed that a manager hadn't called Mr G as it had promised and it offered him £25 compensation. But Mr G rejected this. BISL later identified that Mr G hadn't received the transcript promptly and that he had cancelled a renewal by email the previous year. And it offered him £40 further compensation for these errors. But Mr G thought this wasn't sufficient for the time he had spent on the matter.

Our Investigator didn't recommend that the complaint should be upheld. He thought Mr G hadn't contacted BISL in time by phone or online to cancel the automatic renewal. Mr G had cancelled a previous policy by email. But he thought that when Mr G did contact BISL it was too late to stop the renewal process. He thought BISL had then promptly cancelled the policy and refunded the premium. He thought it had provided the online chat transcript within a reasonable time, and he provided this again. And he thought its offer of compensation for service failings was fair and reasonable.

Mr G replied asking for an Ombudsman's review, so his complaint has come to me for a final decision. He said BISL had taken money from his account without authority. He said BISL hadn't paid the invoices he had submitted for his time and effort.

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.

I can understand that Mr G wouldn't want to pay more for his insurance than he needed to. I can see that he felt frustrated when BISL automatically renewed his policy when he had already bought cheaper cover elsewhere. And it then took him an effort to get things put right and this caused him stress.

I've firstly looked to see if BISL did anything wrong in renewing Mr G's policy. I can see that it sent him its renewal offer giving him plenty of notice to either accept it or to shop around for an alternative. The letter also explained that the policy was set to renew automatically,

and it set out how Mr G could cancel this. He needed to contact BISL online via its webchat or through his account, or to call it.

Mr G called BISL to make a change to the cover and he was dissatisfied with the revised price. BISL said Mr G told it to “forget about it” and the line was dropped. But I can’t say whether this meant that Mr G wanted it to forget about the proposed change or whether he wanted to cancel the renewal. So I think BISL reasonably emailed Mr G asking it to call it back.

Mr G said he then emailed BISL to tell it to not renew his policy and not to take his payment. From the information provided, I can’t see whether this email was in response to the renewal invite (which specifically asks customers not to respond to it as the email would not be seen), or to the following email. But neither was an acceptable method of cancelling the renewal. And so I can’t say that BISL should not have renewed the policy.

Mr G thought BISL had taken his money illegally. But I don’t agree as I can see that Mr G agreed to a Continuous Payment Authority for his premiums when he took out his policy the previous year. And so I think BISL was entitled to act upon this.

BISL later found that the previous year it had incorrectly responded to an email Mr G sent to stop the renewal (but which he later decided to proceed with). And this may have led to Mr G thinking that he had stopped the renewal again when he again sent an email. But BISL apologised for this error in its procedures and offered him compensation, which I’ll consider below.

Mr G found out that the policy was set to renew and his funds were to be taken from his account a day before the renewal date. And he contacted BISL promptly using webchat to try and avert this. But BISL explained that it was too late as the renewal had already been processed, which I think isn’t unusual. But it then cancelled the renewal and agreed to refund Mr G’s funds. I would expect it to act promptly, as it did, to put things right for Mr G.

But BISL didn’t act on its promise to Mr G of a call-back from a manager. I can understand that this caused Mr G upset and stress. But I don’t think the call-back would have made a change in the outcome, so I think BISL’s offer of £25 compensation for this was fair and reasonable. This is because it’s in keeping with our published guidance for the impact of such an error.

Mr G asked for a copy of his chat transcript. And the agent explained he could request this after the chat had ended. BISL has explained that consumers can request a copy of an ended chat immediately it’s finished. But after this point, it can take up to 30 days to provide a transcript. So there was a delay in Mr G receiving the requested transcript and I think his expectations could have been better managed and this caused him stress and frustration.

For the two further errors, BISL offered Mr G £40 further compensation, which he declined. Mr G wanted significant compensation for the time he spent making calls and for the stress the matter caused him. I can see that Mr G has spent considerable time and effort on this matter. But I’m satisfied that BISL’s offer of £65 in total compensation is sufficient for the impact its errors had on Mr G as this is on keeping with our published guidance. So I don’t require BISL to increase this.

My final decision

For the reasons given 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 G to accept or reject my decision before 14 October 2025.

Phillip Berechree

Ombudsman