

The complaint

Mr M complains RAC Insurance Limited couldn't add Tyre Replace Plus back onto his membership, despite telling him he could.

What happened

Mr M had a vehicle based membership with RAC which began in February 2022. In January 2023 Mr M added Tyre Replace Plus to his membership. The product provides cover up to £350 per tyre in the event the tyre needs to be replaced.

Mr M renewed his membership for a further 18 months in August 2023, and removed Tyre Replace Plus at renewal. It was added back on in December 2023.

In November 2024 Mr M changed his membership from a vehicle based membership to a person based one since he didn't have a vehicle at the time. Tyre Replace Plus was also removed at this stage.

In March 2025 Mr M asked for Tyre Replace Plus to be added back onto the policy. During the call Mr M was told Tyre Replace Plus was no longer offered as a product by RAC and so couldn't be added back on. Mr M wasn't happy since he says he was told in November 2024, when he removed Tyre Replace Plus from his membership, that he would be able to add it back on. So, Mr M complained.

RAC considered Mr M's complaint and upheld it. RAC say Tyre Replace Plus was removed from sale in September 2024, and so it would have been removed from Mr M's next membership renewal in any event. RAC accept the information provided to Mr M was incorrect and apologised. It said it was unable to add Tyre Replace Plus back onto the membership since it no longer offered that feature.

Mr M wasn't happy with the response from RAC so referred his complaint to this service. When this Service received the complaint RAC offered Mr M a 50% discount on standard Tyre Replace for the remainder of the term if Mr M wanted to add that to his membership.

Our Investigator looked into the complaint since Mr M didn't confirm acceptance of RAC's offer. The Investigator concluded RAC had acted fairly and reasonably. He said RAC made a commercial decision to remove Tyre Replace Plus from new and existing memberships. When Mr M contacted RAC in November 2024 it explained that he wouldn't be able to use Tyre Replace Plus since it was vehicle specific and Mr M didn't have a vehicle at the time. Mr M was told he could add Tyre Replace to the policy when he purchased a new car.

Mr M didn't agree with the Investigator's view and said he hadn't turned down RAC's offer of a 50% discount on standard Tyre Replace. The Investigator explained that Mr M needed to confirm if he wanted to accept the offer—otherwise, the complaint would be looked into. As Mr M didn't confirm, the Investigator reviewed the complaint and gave his view. Because Mr M didn't accept that view, it's now come to me to decide.

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.

Having done so, I'm not upholding the complaint for broadly the same reasons as our Investigator.

I've explained my rationale below. But, before I do I want to acknowledge that I've summarised events in my own words and in far less detail than what's been provided to me. If I've not mentioned something, it's not because I haven't considered it – I've carefully reviewed the evidence and information submitted by both parties. Instead, I've focused on the key elements of the timeline, and what I consider to be the crux of the complaint – in line with our remit as a quick and informal alternative to the courts.

Mr M complains he was told he could add Tyre Replace Plus to his membership after it was removed. The product was removed from Mr M's membership in November 2024 following a call to RAC to discuss an outstanding balance on his account.

Having reviewed the November 2024 call, it's clear that Mr M stated he did not have a vehicle at the time. In response, the agent reasonably recommended removing the Tyre Replace Plus product from his policy, as it is designed to be specific to a vehicle. Given that Mr M could not benefit from this cover without a car, I think the agent's suggestion was reasonable. Mr M agreed to removing the product from his membership given his renewal was due in April 2025.

During the same call, the agent told Mr M that Replace Tyre Plus couldn't be added to his membership when it renewed since RAC no longer offer the product. The agent explained the standard Tyre Replace could be added when Mr M purchased his vehicle but cover with that product was limited to £150 per tyre. Mr M and the agent then discussed the cost of various tyres before Mr M agreed to continue with the amended membership; from vehicle based cover to a person based one. So, I think it's clear the agent made Mr M aware that Replace Tyre Plus couldn't be added to the membership at a later date since it was no longer offered by RAC.

Mr M says he wasn't told he could keep Replace Tyre Plus on his membership until it was due for renewal in April 2025. Had he known he could have benefited from this cover until his membership expired. However, during the call Mr M told the agent he didn't have a car and although he was going to be getting a new one, he wasn't able to say when that would be.

The agent told Mr M that because he didn't have a car he would suggest moving to a person based membership, and that since Replace Tyre Plus is vehicle-specific he would remove it. Mr M asked the agent if the Replace Tyre Plus was still on the policy and the agent confirmed it was. The agent further explained that if Mr M contacted RAC to report that a vehicle he was in needed a tyre replaced, RAC wouldn't be able to provide cover for it, since it would need to know which vehicle the product was assigned to. On that basis Mr M agreed to proceed with the amendment to his policy.

Having carefully considered the evidence I'm satisfied that the agent explained the nature of the Replace Plus product, the benefit of removing it when Mr M didn't own a car, and that it wouldn't be able to be added back on at a later date.

I recognise Mr M feels strongly about this and he will be disappointed with my response. But overall, I'm satisfied RAC acted reasonably and provided Mr M with the relevant information.

RAC offered to provide Mr M with a 50% discount on the standard Tyre Replace product. If Mr M would like to accept that offer, or discuss it further, he should contact RAC.

My final decision

For the reasons explained above, I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 25 September 2025.

Kiran Clair
Ombudsman