

The complaint

Miss S complains esure Insurance Limited trading as Sheilas' Wheels car Insurance (esure) caused delays after she made a claim on her motor insurance policy and didn't offer her a fair market value settlement when her car was found to be a total loss.

esure are the underwriters of this policy i.e. the insurer. Part of this complaint concerns the actions of the intermediary. As esure have accepted it is accountable for the actions of the intermediary, in my decision, any reference to esure includes the actions of the intermediary.

What happened

Miss S's car was damaged by snow falling off a roof. She made a claim on her motor insurance policy. It was repaired, but the repairs were found to be unsatisfactory and of poor quality.

Miss S obtained a quote to get the car fully repaired. After a delay, the quote was reviewed and esure said the car was a total loss and would not be repaired. It settled the claim as a total loss. Miss S is unhappy with the valuation of £11,335 she was paid in settlement for her car, and is unhappy with the time taken for the claim to progress.

esure paid her a total of £450 compensation for the delays and poor service received.

Because Miss S was not happy with esure, she brought the complaint to our service.

Our investigator upheld the complaint. They looked into the case and said esure's valuation was only based on two guides and there is no other evidence to back up their valuation. They said it should increase its offer to £11,817. They said esure's offer of £450 compensation for the poor level of service received is fair and in line with our Service's approach.

As esure is unhappy with our investigator's view the complaint has been brought to me for a final decision to be made.

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.

Claim delay

Miss S made her claim in early January 2025 and repairs were completed shortly after by one of esure's approved repairers.

Miss S was unhappy with the standard of repairs to her car so esure organised for an independent assessment of the repairs to take place. This was undertaken in March 2025 and it was concluded the repairs were unsatisfactory. esure apologised and paid Miss S £150 compensation for the stress and inconvenience caused due to this.

I saw in mid-April 2025 Miss S submitted an independent quote for the repairs to her car to esure's approved claims handler, as she had been requested to do. It took until the end of June 2025 for esure to review the quote and then deem the car to be a total loss.

An initial valuation of £10,420 was made and this was paid to Miss S. Because she was unhappy with this valuation it was reviewed and it increased the valuation to £11,335, and payment of the increase was made to her.

In July 2025 esure apologised and paid £200 compensation for the delay and poor service received. It said esure's engineer had reviewed the valuation provided and it wouldn't be able to make any further increase in value for the car. It explained the process if she wished to keep the car salvage.

I saw esure increased the compensation by a further £100 in July 2025.

After consideration of the poor service and delays in this case, I think £450 is a fair and reasonable offer in the circumstances of this complaint and I don't require esure to increase this amount.

Valuation

I have considered whether esure acted fairly and reasonably in reaching its decision as to the level of settlement offered to Miss S.

My role is not to provide an exact valuation but to make a judgment as to whether the offer of settlement is fair.

Although this service doesn't value vehicles, we do check that the insurer's valuation is fair and reasonable and in line with the terms and conditions of the policy. We use valuation guides to do this, and they're based on nationwide research of likely selling prices and take the car's specifications, mileage etc into account.

This service doesn't consider the question of market value to be an exact science, however our general approach is that the valuations given in the main motor valuation guides provide the most persuasive and consistent evidence. These guides are based on extensive nationwide research of likely (but not actual) selling prices.

Prices of used cars can change on a regular basis. This could be an increase or decrease. This is the reason why we take the approach that if esure can demonstrate, that it used a fair process to value the car then we wouldn't interfere with the offer it has made.

I looked at the information esure used when calculating the market value for Miss S's car. I saw it obtained valuations from two of the main valuation guides. In this case esure offered £11,335 which was the highest of the two guides.

I looked at the valuations our investigator obtained. They used four of the main valuation guides, of which two were the same as used by esure. The highest of these four valuations was £11,817 and the lowest was £10,780.

Based on the valuations our investigator obtained, I do not think the settlement amount paid for Miss S's car is fair in this case. esure paid the highest of the two valuations it obtained. However two of the four valuations obtained by our investigator were higher. esure didn't support its valuation with any further evidence. Therefore, as the valuations have shown a

range of values. I think going by the highest will ensure Miss S has received a fair offer, allowing her to replace her car with one of a similar make, model and specification.

Therefore, I uphold Miss S's complaint.

Putting things right

I require esure to increase its settlement offer to the highest valuation of £11,817 (an increase of £482). It should also add 8% simple interest from the date the initial settlement amount was paid, to the date of final settlement.

My final decision

For the reasons I have given I uphold this complaint.

I require esure Insurance Limited trading as Sheilas' Wheels car Insurance to increase its settlement offer to £11,817 (an increase of £482). It should also add 8% simple interest from the date the initial settlement amount was paid, to the date of final settlement.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss S to accept or reject my decision before 26 December 2025.

Sally-Ann Harding
Ombudsman