

The complaint

Mr R complains about the claim settlement offer for his van by Sabre Insurance Company Limited on his van insurance policy.

What happened

Mr R took out a policy with Sabre in mid-October 2024. His van was unfortunately stolen in late-November 2024. Mr R raised a claim and was initially offered around £8,500. This was increased to around £10,300. Mr R had bought the van in November 2023 and had paid around £15,500. Mr R was unhappy with the offers and raised a complaint. Sabre upheld Mr R's complaint. They increased their offer to roughly £10,900. Mr R was still unhappy so brought the complaint to this service.

Our investigator didn't uphold Mr R's complaint. She thought Sabre's offer was fair. Mr R appealed. He was still unhappy with the offer. He said he felt his points had been brushed aside. As no agreement could be reached, the complaint has been passed to me to make a final decision.

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.

When considering complaints such as this, I need to consider the relevant law, rules and industry guidelines. The relevant rules, set up by the Financial Conduct Authority, say that an insurer must deal with a claim promptly and fairly. So, I've thought about whether Sabre acted in line with these requirements with the settlement offer made on Mr R's claim.

Having done so, and whilst I appreciate it'll come as a disappointment to Mr R, I've reached the same outcome as our investigator.

At the outset I acknowledge that I've summarised his complaint in far less detail than Mr R has, and in my own words. I'm not going to respond to every single point made. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focussed on what I think are the key issues here. The rules that govern the Financial Ombudsman Service allow me to do this as it's an informal dispute resolution service. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've overlooked it. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual point to be able to reach an outcome in line with my statutory remit.

As a starting point, I need to see what Mr R is entitled to under the policy. The policy sets out the following:

“Section B – Loss of or damage to the insured vehicle by fire and theft

1) What we cover...

Under this section we will:

- *Settle your claim by repair of your vehicle or paying in cash the amount of the loss or damage. The maximum amount payable will be the market value or declared value, whichever is the lower.*

The policy doesn't define market value. As a service, we have a well-established approach on how we investigate market value motor valuation complaints. Our investigator set this out in detail in their outcome and it's also on our website, so I won't repeat it here.

Sabre have provided us with the motor valuation guides they used when assessing the claim. Our investigator has also checked any remaining guides Sabre didn't use. From what I've seen, Sabre's offer is at the top of the valuation guide range. So, to make Sabre increase their offer, I'd need to be persuaded by adverts that Mr R wouldn't be able to replace the van for the offered amount. Whilst lots of adverts have been provided, there aren't many where the vehicle is similar in age, condition, specification and mileage. Most of the vehicles in the adverts have driven significantly lower mileage. Whilst I acknowledge what Mr R has said about the condition of his van compared to some of the vans in the adverts, I'm not persuaded from what I've seen that the settlement offer is unfair or unreasonable in the circumstances.

Mr R has said in response to our investigator's outcome that he thinks his points have been brushed aside. He hasn't specified which points he's referring to other than having paid a premium of around £1,300 in full for the cover. I can assure Mr R that even if I've not commented on it, I've taken into consideration everything he's provided to us. However, Mr R paying £1,300 for his insurance policy doesn't make a difference to the complaint outcome. That's what he was quoted by Sabre to cover his van. Sabre has paid out under the policy for the van in line with the policy terms and conditions. How much he paid and when he paid it wouldn't make a difference as when there is a claim on a policy, the full premium is owed to the insurer.

I'm very sorry that my decision doesn't bring Mr R more welcome news at what I can see is a very difficult time for him. But in all the circumstances I don't find that Sabre has treated Mr R unfairly, unreasonably, or contrary to the policy terms and conditions in how they've settled the claim.

My final decision

For the reasons I've given above, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint. I don't require Sabre Insurance Company Limited to do anything further.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 30 December 2025.

Anthony Mullins
Ombudsman