

The complaint

Miss C and Mr S have complained that their travel insurer, Inter Partner Assistance SA ('IPA'), didn't compensate them fully after they made a claim on their policy.

What happened

Miss C and Mr S took out a single trip insurance policy with IPA for a holiday they were due to take abroad with their family. On the morning they were due to travel, they were told that their flight had been cancelled due to a hurricane. Miss C said that their travel agent informed them that they would have to go to the airport regardless because if they didn't, they'd be perceived as voluntarily cancelling their holiday meaning they would receive no refund.

Miss C said that they were refunded for the cost of the holiday by the travel agent, nevertheless they still had to claim for other expenses via their travel insurance. These included theme park tickets and their taxi fare to and from the airport.

IPA paid for the expenses claimed apart from the taxi costs. It said those weren't covered under the terms of the policy.

Miss C and Mr S weren't happy about this and complained. IPA didn't uphold their complaint and said that apart from their being no cover under the policy, it also said that it wasn't responsible for the loss relating to the taxi fare.

Unhappy with IPA's response, Miss C and Mr S brought their complaint to our service and said they wanted the £240 for the taxi fare to be refunded to them.

One of our investigators reviewed the complaint but didn't think it should be upheld. Our investigator agreed that there was no cover under the policy, specifically the cancellation section.

Miss C and Mr S didn't agree and asked for an ombudsman's decision. They said that the claim should have also been considered under the "cutting short" section because their holiday had already begun. They added that IPA paid the rest of their claim under the "cutting short" section.

Our investigator didn't change her view, and the matter was then passed 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.

The policy includes cover in the event Miss C and Mr S's trip was cancelled or cut short.

The policy defines "trip" as "the period of time spent away from your home on pre-booked business or leisure travel". The definition for "cutting short" includes cutting the trip short after the customer leaves their home by direct early return to their home. "Home" is defined as the customer's permanent UK residence listed on their schedule.

Under the cancellation section, IPA will pay up to a certain amount for the customer's proportion of their irrecoverable unused travel and accommodation costs and other pre-paid charges if the customer has to cancel their trip for specific reasons which are listed in the policy. Those reasons include not finding a suitable alternative flight within six hours of their scheduled time of departure following the cancellation of their flight.

I think Miss C and Mr S's claim would fall under the cancellation section but as the taxi fare was not an "unused" travel expense I don't think it would be covered unlike the other pre-paid expenses Miss C and Mr S claimed for and which were refunded to them.

The cutting short section covers unused travel and accommodation costs and other pre-paid charges together with any reasonable additional travel and other expenses if the trip is cut short for specific reasons which are again listed in the policy. Though it is arguable that the trip could also be considered as to have been cut short, there is no cover if the reason it was cut short was because no alternative flight was available within six hours, unlike the cancellation section.

I've also considered whether there would be cover under the travel disruption or delay section. The missed departure section would apply in the event of adverse weather but only if the customer failed to arrive at the departure point in time to board their flight which wasn't the case here.

Under delayed arrival, there is cover if the customer arrives later than planned at their destination and IPA will pay for each period of delay plus a proportion of any unused travel and accommodation costs. But as this section only covers unused travel costs, I don't think the taxi fare would fall under this category either.

Under travel disruption, IPA will pay for reasonable additional accommodation and public transport travel expenses in the event the trip is disrupted due to a catastrophe which would include a hurricane. But this would be for costs incurred so that the customer can continue their trip which wasn't the case here.

My final decision

For the reasons above, I decided not to uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss C and Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 31 October 2025.

Anastasia Serdari

Ombudsman