

The complaint

Mr K complains about the amount Haven Insurance Company Limited settled his commercial vehicle insurance claim for.

What happened

Mr K held a policy with Haven. After making a claim for his vehicle, Haven said it would settle Mr K's claim by paying him what it considered to be the market value of his car (£11,880), less the policy excess.

Mr K didn't think this was enough to allow him to purchase a replacement so complained to Haven.

Haven said after reviewing some adverts Mr K sent, that it would increase its settlement by a further £570 – effectively deeming the market value of Mr K's car to be £12,450.

Mr K didn't think this was enough and queried the mileage Haven used to value his car – he thought the mileage was less than what Haven used when valuing his car.

Haven didn't change its stance, so Mr K brought his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Our Investigator didn't recommend it be upheld. He was satisfied Haven used the right mileage when valuing Mr K's car. He said Haven's valuation was higher than all the guides' we use. And he didn't think Mr K's evidence persuaded him a higher amount was fair – he didn't think the adverts were of similar enough cars.

Mr K disagreed and asked for an Ombudsman's 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.

Having done so, I'm not upholding it. I'll explain why.

- Mr K's policy with Haven says the most it will pay on any claim is the market value of Mr K's car. It defines market value as "... the cost of the replacing Your Taxi with one of similar make, model and specification, taking into account the age, mileage and condition of Your Taxi..."
- Our Service has a defined approach to assessing whether insurers have offered a fair settlement and reasonably determined the market value of a vehicle. We consult the available valuation guides, and find those persuasive, given that they take into account, the make, model, specification, age, mileage and to some degree, the condition of the vehicle. If the insurer's offer is lower than the highest guide, we need that to be supported by additional evidence.

- Here, Haven's valuation is higher than all the guides we use. And, like our Investigator, I'm satisfied it's based on a reasonably close mileage to Mr K's vehicle at the time of the incident. I'm satisfied it's shown Mr K's car's mileage was in fact higher than the amount entered into the guides – so using the slightly lower mileage has caused no detriment.
- Mr K has provided adverts for vehicles on sale for more than the amount Haven valued his vehicle for. But, like our Investigator, I don't find these persuasive. They're for cars with either larger engines, or cars that have done significantly less miles than Mr K's had. And in any event, showing cars on sale for more, is not in itself, evidence that there are not cars on sale for less.
- Therefore, I find Haven's valuation, and subsequent settlement of Mr K's claim fair and in line with both the terms and conditions of his policy and our approach to these cases. I appreciate Mr K says he can't buy a replacement with that figure, but the only cars I've been sent aren't like for like. I'm satisfied that Haven has shown that if a like for like one were available, it would likely be able to be purchased for the amount it valued Mr K's car at.

My final decision

For the reasons set out 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 K to accept or reject my decision before 24 February 2026.

Joe Thornley
Ombudsman