

The complaint

Mrs B has complained about the way U K Insurance Limited (UKI) dealt with a claim under her car insurance policy.

What happened

In November 2024 Mrs B was involved in a non-fault accident and reported a claim under her motor insurance policy with UKI. UKI declared the car a total loss and paid her the market value of her car in December 2024. Mrs B complained to UKI about its handling of her claim. She was unhappy she wasn't provided with a courtesy car, having to drop her car keys instead of UKI collecting them, some of her property being lost and her dog crate being damaged.

In its response to the complaint dated September 2025, UKI acknowledged the service and communication provided during the claim fell below the expected standards. To apologise, it offered Mrs B £350 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused alongside reimbursement for the missing items. However, UKI didn't think it was responsible for the damaged dog crate.

Unhappy with UKI's response, Mrs B brought her complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Our Investigator thought UKI's offer to resolve the complaint was enough to put things right. Mrs B didn't agree and thought UKI should increase its compensation offer alongside compensation for the damaged dog crate.

As the complaint couldn't be resolved, it has been passed to me for 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.

I'm aware I've set out the background to this complaint in less detail than the parties have presented it. I'm not going to respond to every single point raised. Instead, I've focused on what I find are the key issues here. I assure both parties, however, that I've read and considered everything they've provided.

I thank Mrs B for taking the time to explain her personal circumstances and everything that has happened since the accident involving her car. I acknowledge Mrs B feels strongly that UKI has treated her unfairly and didn't support her during the claim.

The relevant rules and industry guidelines say UKI has a responsibility to handle claims promptly, fairly and provide appropriate information on its progress. So, I've considered the relevant rules, the policy terms and the available evidence, to decide whether I think UKI treated Mrs B fairly and reasonably. Mrs B has raised a number of separate complaint points. I shall respond to them separately.

Courtesy car

Mrs B is unhappy UKI didn't provide her with a courtesy car. The starting point is the policy terms and conditions which form the contract of insurance between Mrs B and UKI. So, I've looked at the policy terms to determine whether I think UKI acted fairly with regard to this aspect of Mrs B's complaint. Having done so, I note the policy only entitled Mrs B to a courtesy car if her car was being repaired by an approved repairer. She wasn't entitled to one in the event of it being written off. So, I don't think UKI treated Mrs B unfairly here.

I'm also satisfied that it was reasonable for UKI to refer Mrs B to an Accident Management Company (AMC) given her need for a courtesy car. I understand the AMC didn't supply a courtesy car due to Mrs B's reluctance to provide her credit card details. Mrs B was of course within her right not to provide these details but I don't think UKI treated her unfairly here. And UKI isn't responsible for the AMC's actions.

Dog crate

Mrs B has said that her custom made solid steel dog crate was damaged during UKI's care. She's explained that the rivets on the back steel panel were sheared off and that the only way this could have happened was from mishandling the crate, dropping it from a height and throwing it about. She said the steel panels have many distortions, dents and creases and that this damage weakened the entire crate.

Mrs B provided UKI with images which she thought supported her argument that the crate had been damaged due to the way it had been handled. UKI said that it'd reviewed the images but it thought the damage looked to be wear and tear rather than physical impact from either the claim or being dropped.

In situations like this, where evidence is incomplete or contradictory, I'll need to make my decision on the balance of probabilities. That is, what do I consider is more likely than not, based on the available evidence. So, I've looked at the images Mrs B provided to UKI and the rivets Mrs B has referenced appear to be worn rather than snapped which doesn't support a drop impact. So, I don't think it was unreasonable for UKI to conclude that these images didn't support Mrs B's version of events.

UKI also provided us with images of Mrs B's car after the damage it sustained in the accident and these images show that the fitted dog crate already had some distortions and dents, so I don't think it was unreasonable for UKI to say that the damage appeared to be gradual wear and tear. I know Mrs B feels strongly about this matter but, on balance, I don't think there's enough evidence that the damage in question was caused by UKI. So, I don't think UKI has acted unfairly in refusing to replace the crate.

In response to our Investigator's view, Mrs B said the door locks of the crate were rusting and that this proved it'd been left outside in the winter months. She also provided two emails from the crate manufacturer which she thought supported her version of events. I can't see that Mrs B raised these concerns with UKI or provided it with the manufacturer's emails at the time of her complaint. So, UKI hasn't had the opportunity to consider or respond to these concerns. As these concerns weren't part of Mrs B's original complaint, I can't address them here, but it's open to her to raise a new complaint with us if she isn't happy with UKI's response to these concerns.

Claim handling

UKI has acknowledged that its communication and service was poor. To apologise, UKI offered £350 compensation. So, the issue for me to decide is whether I think UKI needs to do more to put things right.

I understand the claim process has been upsetting for Mrs B. I note she had to chase to get updates about her personal belongings and she was incorrectly told she'd have to pay to have them posted back to her. Mrs B was also unnecessarily inconvenienced by having to return to her car to hand over the keys. UKI has already accepted it should've arranged the collection of the keys. It's also regrettable that some of Mrs B's belongings went missing. But I think it was fair for UKI to offer to reimburse her for their replacement.

Making a motor insurance claim can cause distress and inconvenience, even when things go as they should. But it's clear that UKI's handling of the claim led to undue distress and inconvenience being caused to Mrs B. I think the actions taken by UKI to put things right were reasonable. And I think the £350 compensation offered is fair, reasonable and proportionate to reflect UKI's service failings and the impact on Mrs B. This amount is consistent with our bands of awards where there has been considerable distress and upset over many weeks or months and is in line with what I would've awarded had no offer been made. As Mrs B has already received the £350 compensation, I won't be directing UKI to do anymore here.

My final decision

For the reasons provided, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs B to accept or reject my decision before 18 February 2026.

Linda Tare
Ombudsman