

The complaint

Mr J complains that First Central Insurance Management Limited (“First Central”) cancelled his car insurance policy.

What happened

Mr J had a motor insurance policy through First Central covering his car.

His policy was due to renew, and he asked First Central to stop the automatic renewal because he felt he would be paying too much.

First Central initially didn’t stop the renewal and Mr J had to call back a few times to deal with it. He found this stressful and time consuming and he complained.

First Central looked into the calls he’d made and it decided to cancel his policy three days before it was due to renew. It said it did this because of the way Mr J spoke with First Central’s staff, which it said was in breach of its policy wording.

Mr J thought First Central acted vindictively towards him. He approached this service as he remained unhappy. He asked that First Central apologised, removed the cancellation from his file and paid him compensation.

Our investigator looked into his complaint and thought it wouldn’t be upheld. He thought First Central acted in line with the policy wording when it cancelled his policy.

Mr J didn’t agree with the view and asked that his case was reviewed by an ombudsman. So, it’s been passed to me to make a 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 not upholding this complaint.

I can see in the policy wording that First Central can cancel a policy if a policyholder uses threatening or abusive language with their staff:

“The insurer can authorise us at any time to cancel your policy by sending you seven days written notice to the last postal or e-mail address we have for you on our system. Examples of when we can do this include:-

- if you use threatening or abusive language or behaviour, or intimidate or bully our employees or your insurer’s staff or suppliers”*

I can hear in the calls that Mr J is frustrated by the price rise he was facing, which was an uplift of 300% from about £1,000 to about £4,000.

I've listened to the calls between Mr J and First Central and I think it's clear he made rude comments and noises to its call handlers. First Central felt these weren't acceptable, and I agree. From my understanding, comments he made in the earlier calls led to those calls being ended. This resulted in him having to call back and ask First Central to carry out his instructions again. He later said the call handler needed to be sacked and made further inappropriate comments.

First Central said: *"Mr J is unhappy we have cancelled his policy 3 days before expiry and believes this is vindictive. These calls could have been 3 days into the policy or 3 days before expiry, he has been verbally abusive towards staff, including racially offensive remarks, which isn't something we will tolerate and this is the reason for the cancellation of his policy"*.

I've thought about this and I can't say First Central acted unfairly in cancelling Mr J's policy. I can see from his complaint that he thinks it acted vindictively against him, and during the calls I can hear him being very concerned about the impact on his reputation and insurance history caused by First Central cancelling. I can't see evidence of First Central acting in a way that's vindictive or to penalise him, and I think Mr J's evidenced behaviour fairly and directly led to First Central's actions.

I think First Central acted fairly and in line with its policy wording when it cancelled the policy due to Mr J's behaviour.

In later correspondence with this service, First Central also said, although it would choose to not insure Mr J in future, it hadn't recorded that it cancelled the policy on any external databases. What it said was that it would advise Mr J that he doesn't need to tell other insurers about it cancelling his policy. I think this is fair.

So I'm not upholding Mr J's complaint and I'm not going to ask First Central to do anything more.

My final decision

It's my final decision that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr J to accept or reject my decision before 20 March 2026.

Richard Sowden
Ombudsman