

The complaint

Mr C complains that Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited (“Admiral”) mishandled his claim on a motor insurance policy.

What happened

The subject matter of the insurance, the claim and the complaint is a car made by a specialist sports car maker and first registered in September 2014 with a “64” number plate.

Mr C acquired the car in late July 2022.

For the year from late July 2024, Mr C had a comprehensive policy with Admiral. From at least early November 2024, the policy covered the car. Any claim for theft was subject to an excess of £350.00.

The policy included the optional upgrade of “Hire Vehicle”.

Unfortunately, Mr C reported to Admiral that on 17 April 2025, someone had stolen the car.

Admiral said the car was a total loss and its pre-accident value had been £29,769.00.

By late April 2025, Mr C complained to Admiral.

By a final response dated 24 April 2025, Admiral turned down a complaint about lack of updates and failure to upgrade the hire vehicle.

From its pre-accident value of £29,769.00, Admiral deducted the excess of £350.00 and made an interim payment of £29,419.00 to Mr C.

By June 2025, Mr C complained further to Admiral.

By a final response dated 10 June 2025, Admiral turned down a complaint including about under-valuing the car. It included the following:

“...we primarily use three guides...Glass’s, CAP and the Autotrader Guide”

Mr C brought his complaint to us in mid-September 2025.

Our investigator said that he couldn’t address issues about the service provided by the company that provided the hire car.

Our investigator recommended that the complaint should be upheld in part. He thought that Admiral could’ve provided better service, but it had made payments totalling £100.00, which was in line with what the investigator would’ve asked Admiral to do.

However, the investigator didn’t think that Admiral’s valuation of £29,769.00 was fair and reasonable. He recommended that Admiral should:

- pay Mr C the difference between the original offer of £29,769.00 and the highest guide valuation of £31,038.00; and
- add 8% simple interest (yearly), from the date of the original payment to Mr C to the date of the payment to resolve the complaint.

Admiral accepted the investigator's opinion.

Mr C disagreed with the investigator's opinion. He asked for an ombudsman to review the complaint. He says, in summary, that:

- The car was of a high specification.
- The car was in limited supply.
- Guidebook figures cannot accurately represent the real retail value.
- There were also several inconsistencies in Admiral's valuation reports concerning mileage and reference to a non-existent model.
- He has supplied multiple UK retail comparables from the correct time period.
- He has also supplied supporting listings showing continued market consistency.
- A realistic retail value would fall as a minimum in the £36 k range.

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.

Shortcomings in communication

In reviewing the complaint, I've noted that Admiral was responsible for some shortcomings in call-handling and other communication. That includes an incorrect model designation and an incorrect mileage. It also included lack of clarity about whether Admiral and the independent assessor had taken into account the AutoTrader guide.

I've thought about those shortcomings and the nature and duration of their impact on Mr C at an already difficult time for him. That included frustration that Admiral was causing a waste of his time.

I take into account that Admiral has paid Mr C £100.00. Overall, I don't find it fair and reasonable to direct Admiral to make any further payment to Mr C for distress and inconvenience.

Market Value

Admiral's policy required it to compensate Mr C for the car's "market value" defined as follows:

"The cost of replacing your vehicle; with one of a similar make, model, year, mileage and condition based on market prices immediately before the loss happened. Use of the term 'market' refers to where your vehicle was purchased. This value is based on research from industry recognised motor trade guides."

We expect insurers to value used cars by reference to retail figures in certain trade guides.

From its MOT history, I've seen that the car passed a test in August 2024 with a recorded mileage of about 78,400.

For Mr C's car, including its full specification, I've seen retail figures in the trade guides as follows:

CAP	£27,000.00
Glass's	£28,500.00
Percayso	£30,645.00
AutoTrader	£31,038.00

That's a range of valuations.

Admiral's figure of £29,769.00 isn't close to the highest figure. Moreover, Admiral accepted the investigator's recommendation that it should adopt the highest guide valuation of £31,038.00. So Admiral no longer contends for a lower figure.

Mr C contends for a higher figure, and he has provided some advertisements. Some were from outside the UK market, so I'm not persuaded by them.

Mr C has provided two adverts from April 2025. One of them was for a 2015 car with a stated mileage of 61,500 and an asking price of £35,949.00. The other was for a 2016 car with mileage not stated and an asking price of £39,988.00.

Mr C has also provided an advert from January 2026 for a car first registered in 2016 with a "66" number plate and a stated mileage of 41,000 and an asking price of £42,995.00.

I don't consider that any of those adverts is for a comparator close enough in age or mileage to Mr C's car. So the adverts don't persuade me that the trade guide figures are all too low.

Overall, I'm satisfied that £31,038.00 was enough to allow Mr C to replace his lost car like-for-like.

Putting things right

So I find it fair and reasonable to direct Admiral to adopt a valuation of £31,038.00 and to pay Mr C the difference between that figure and £29,769.00, that is £1,269.00.

As Mr C will have been out of pocket for that amount, I find it fair and reasonable to direct Admiral to pay interest at a yearly rate of 8% from a date one month after his claim.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, my final decision is that I uphold this complaint in part. I direct Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited to:

1. adopt a valuation of £31,038.00 for Mr C's lost car; and
2. pay Mr C, in addition to its payment of £29,419.00, a further £1,269.00 for his lost car; and
3. pay Mr C simple interest on £1,269.00 at a yearly rate of 8% from 17 May 2025 to the date of its further payment. If Admiral considers that it's required by HM Revenue & Customs to deduct income tax from that interest, it should tell Mr C how much it's

taken off. It should also give Mr C a tax deduction certificate if he asks for one, so he can reclaim the tax if appropriate.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 19 March 2026.

Christopher Gilbert

Ombudsman