

The complaint

Miss M complains about the way Advantage Insurance Company Limited (Advantage) settled a claim on her car insurance policy without informing her, and without considering an independent repair estimate.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well-known to the parties, so I won't repeat them in detail.

In summary, on 23 August 2025 a third party made a claim on Miss M's car insurance policy after an accident where Miss M admitted liability. Miss M reported the incident to Advantage, and they took over handling of the claim. Miss M obtained an independent repair quote for £180, but Advantage instructed their approved repairers to complete repairs, and settled the claim as fault, with total costs of £895.99. They closed the claim and informed Miss M of this outcome on 26 September 2025.

Miss M complained to Advantage about this, as she was concerned their decision to settle on this basis caused her financial detriment, and she was unhappy she was not informed or consulted before this decision was made. Advantage did not uphold Miss M's complaint, so she brought her complaint to this Service.

The Investigator reviewed the complaint and thought Advantage did not need to take any further action as they believed the claim was handled reasonably.

Miss M was unhappy with the response, highlighting she is unhappy with Advantage's lack of communication before they settled the claim, and the perceived loss of opportunity to mitigate or understand the costs incurred on the policy. As such, the complaint has been 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.

Firstly, it's not my role to value the cost of the repairs to the third-party vehicle. Rather, I will decide whether Advantage acted fairly and reasonably in the way they handled the claim in question.

The policy booklet says Advantage are "*entitled to process your claim in its entirety as well as conduct the defence or settlement of any claim and/or admit negligence for any accident or claim on your behalf...*"

This is a standard part of all car insurance policies, but Advantage does need to make sure it uses this entitlement fairly and reasonably. I note Miss M's desire to settle this claim without involving insurers, but as the third party decided to claim on the insurance policy she held with Advantage, and as Miss M admitted liability, I do not find it unreasonable that Advantage decided to settle this as a fault claim and instruct their approved repairers.

As the claim has been settled as fault, Miss M's premiums are likely to be affected. This is true regardless of whether Advantage settled for £895.99 or £180. I recognise Miss M wanted to be kept informed on the progress of the claim and receive a breakdown of the

third party's repair costs prior to settlement. But I don't think Advantage acted unreasonably by waiting until the claim was settled to update her.

While I recognise Miss M could have repaired the car more cheaply herself, it doesn't mean Advantage acted unfairly. It appointed an approved agent to handle the repair process which was fair. There are also certain requirements on Advantage to ensure it carries out a lasting and effective repair – including recognised manufacturer parts. So, the fact that its repair costs were higher than what Miss M had a quote for, doesn't mean it was unreasonable.

I note that Advantage have not provided a detailed breakdown of the costs of the repair for data protection reasons, and I recognise Miss M's desire to receive this. However, I find Advantage's concerns about data protection to be reasonable as they can't share details of the third party's costs with her. Therefore, I'm not asking them to take any further action.

My final decision

For the reasons stated above, I do not uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss M to accept or reject my decision before 6 May 2026.

Joshua Clement
Ombudsman