

The complaint

Mr Y complains that Vodafone Limited failed to handle his request for a refund properly.

What happened

In June 2025 Mr Y purchased a tablet from Vodafone. He complained about the delivery being delayed and after several exchanges Vodafone paid him £250 compensation. After taking delivery Mr Y registered the product with the manufacturer and discovered it had already been registered. He believed the tablet may have been a returned item or a demonstration model.

He contacted Vodafone and it offered a like for like exchange and £47.50 compensation. Mr Y says this proved to be something Vodafone could not deliver. It then offered an out of policy return, but Mr Y did not accept this. It then suggested he keep the tablet and it would give him a refund of £150 as a goodwill gesture. This has recently been paid to him while this complaint is being considered. Mr Y explained he wanted a refund of £600 to reflect the tablet was second-hand. I would note that Mr Y had the right of return within the first 14 days and could have taken this route if he so wished.

The matter remained unresolved and so Mr Y brought a complaint to this service where it was considered by one of our investigators. Having obtained further information from Vodafone about the tablet she didn't believe the complaint should be upheld. However, she sought to mediate and the parties agreed the tablet should be returned. This agreement fell through and Mr Y has explained that Vodafone delayed taking the tablet back causing him to incur further monthly charges and he expected the upfront cost of £109.99 to be returned.

As no agreement has been reached and Mr Y does not agree with our investigator's view the complaint has been passed to me to consider.

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.

When the evidence is incomplete, inconclusive or contradictory as some of it is here – I've reached my outcome on the balance of probabilities – that is, what I consider likely to have happened given the available evidence and the wider circumstances.

I want to acknowledge that I've summarised the events of the complaint. I don't intend any discourtesy by this – it just reflects the informal nature of our service. I also want to assure Mr Y that I've reviewed everything on file. If I don't comment on something, it's not because I haven't considered it. It's because I've concentrated on what I think are the key issues. Our powers allow me to do this.

I should make it clear that the role of the Financial Ombudsman Service is to resolve individual complaints and to award redress where appropriate. I do not perform the role of the industry regulator and I do not have the power to make rules for financial businesses or

to punish them. For the avoidance of doubt, I am dealing with the complaint against Vodafone Limited, the finance provider and not any other entity. I have to consider whether it's response was fair and reasonable.

Having reviewed all the evidence provided by both parties I do not consider I can uphold this complaint. I will explain why.

The crux of Mr Y's complaint is that he believes the tablet is second-hand due to it having been registered with the manufacturer. He has said this makes it difficult for him to change the registration and to receive updates. Vodafone initially accepted his concern and made several offers to address the issue. These did not meet with Mr Y's approval.

Subsequently as the complaint process developed Vodafone considered the matter again and explained that the pre-registration was something done automatically by it. Vodafone has said: *"This device at the point of being dispatched, was automatically registered for warranty, under our Lifetime Warranty Guarantee. Due to this, it would explain to why when the customer has attempted to register with a third-party provider, it would already show as registered under warranty"*.

It has also confirmed that the tablet had not been sold to anybody else and returned.

However, despite Vodafone not accepting Mr Y's claim it sought to resolve the issue by first offering a like for like exchange plus compensation. When this proved to be unacceptable it offered to take the tablet back and then when this was not accepted it offered him £150. In the circumstances I believe that Vodafone has done all it reasonably could to address Mr Y's concerns. It strongly rejects the claim that the tablet was second-hand and it has tried to resolve the issue, but without any success.

It has given Mr Y a number of options all of which I consider to be reasonable and he has not been happy with them. I do not consider it needs to pay Mr Y £600 or £700 as recompense as he has requested. Even if the tablet was second-hand I gather it arrived untouched and in pristine condition so I consider the sum offered and paid of £150 to be more than reasonable.

After reading all the material submitted I cannot say if the tablet was a second-hand machine. However, the key point is that Vodafone has sought to address the problem and Mr Y has declined to accept the proposals made by Vodafone. I recognise his reasons for doing so, but that does not mean that I can uphold his complaint given I consider Vodafone has acted reasonably in its attempts to resolve the matter.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

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

Ivor Graham
Ombudsman