

complaint

Mr Y complains that IGO4 Limited (trading as Hastings Direct SmartMiles) should honour its quote for his motor insurance premium.

background

After Mr Y passed his driving test, he obtained a Pass Plus certificate. He says the course provider told him that it was equivalent to one year's no claim discount (NCD). He applied online for a "black box" policy. He complained when IGO4 said he had not provided proof of his NCD – and it asked for an additional premium.

The adjudicator did not recommend that the complaint should be upheld. She concluded that IGO4 did not give Mr Y incorrect information. She was not satisfied that it admitted that it mis-sold the policy or that its staff were rude to Mr Y.

Mr Y disagrees with the adjudicator's opinion. His father says IGO4 said it would not install the black box unless Mr Y provided copies of appropriate documents. It later admitted that it was at fault, he says. And it gave his son two years' NCD on his renewal quotation, he adds.

my findings

I have considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Where the evidence is incomplete, inconclusive or contradictory (as some of it is here), I reach my decision on the balance of probabilities – in other words, what I consider is most likely to have happened in light of the available evidence and the wider circumstances.

I accept that – from what the course provider told him - Mr Y believed that his Pass Plus certificate was equivalent to a NCD.

From a review of its online procedures, I am satisfied that IGO4 asked Mr Y a clear question:

"How many years No Claims Bonus?"

This question was accompanied by some explanatory notes:

"Your earned No Claim Discount will be shown on the renewal notice from your current insurer. If you accept a policy with us and claim a No Claim Discount, you will be asked to provide proof. Your No Claim Discount is acceptable if:

- 1) It has been earned in the UK on a Private vehicle policy, in your name within the last 2 years.*
- 2) It is not being used on another policy..."*

Mr Y answered:

"1 years".

I do not consider that Mr Y's answer was correct.

I bear in mind the explanatory notes and the fact that there was a separate question and answer about Pass Plus. So I am not satisfied that Mr Y took reasonable care in giving his answer about NCD.

Based on the information provided by Mr Y, I do not consider that IGO4 had any reason to believe that the policy was unsuitable for him. I do not consider that it mis-sold him the policy.

Mr Y paid about £1,200. I do not doubt that – if he had said that he had no NCD - his premium would have been considerably higher.

I have seen the welcome letter. It says:

“Your installer will need to take a digital image of the documents listed below before they can fit the [black] box...

Driving Licence...

Proof of your UK earned No Claims Bonus

This should be your most recent renewal notice or evidence of your last cancelled/lapsed policy...”

I accept that the engineer who fitted the black box saw Mr Y's documents including his Pass Plus certificate. But I am not persuaded that Mr Y ought reasonably to have believed that the engineer's role included not only copying but also assessing and approving proof of NCD.

Mr Y was taken aback when IGO4 asked him to pay an additional premium of about £860. But, from the telephone recordings, I am not persuaded that IGO4 said anything inappropriate to him.

And I take into account that – in early May 2014 - IGO4 was still investigating the complaint. Therefore I am not persuaded that – in the missing telephone recording - it had already admitted that it was at fault.

IGO4 told Mr Y that he could cancel the policy. This would have avoided the additional premium for the rest of the year. Mr Y decided not to take that option.

Finally, I do not consider that the renewal quote casts any light on the events of the previous year.

Overall I do not conclude that IGO4 treated Mr Y unfairly or unreasonably.

my final decision

For the reasons I have explained, my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint. I make no award against IGO4 Limited (trading as Hastings Direct SmartMiles).

Christopher Gilbert
ombudsman