

The complaint

Mr N complains Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited hasn't handled a claim against his home insurance policy fairly.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them here. Instead, I will focus on the reasons for my 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.

Mr N had a soil pipe leak in June 2022. He made a claim against his home insurance policy. Admiral accepted the claim, but the claim has not gone well. There have been four complaints to our Service about delays and other claim-related issues, covering various time periods:

- Complaint 1 – June 2022 to August 2022
- Complaint 2 – August 2022 to January 2024
- Complaint 3 – January 2024 to May 2024
- Complaint 4 – May 2024 to July 2024

Complaints 1, 3 and 4 have been resolved. This decision is for complaint 2, so the period August 2022 to January 2024. Over the course of this period, Admiral issued five final response letters and paid compensation in each one, as follows:

- 22 February 2023 - £275
- 9 June 2023 - £400
- 7 November 2023 - £200
- 23 November 2023 - £200
- 14 January 2024 - £300

Within the final response letters Admiral accepted it had handled the claim poorly, apologised and paid £1,375 compensation in total. The Investigator agreed the claim had been handled poorly and recommended Admiral pay Mr N a further £325 to reflect the impact this had on Mr N, bringing total compensation to £1,700. Admiral accepted the Investigator's recommendation. Mr N didn't think this was enough money given the stress and heartbreak he'd been through, and that his home still hadn't been fully put right.

Given Mr N, Admiral and the Investigator all agree the claim has been handled poorly, I will not set out what's gone wrong in detail here. But for completeness, I too find it handled the claim poorly, for the same reasons the Investigator set out in her recommended outcome. Compensation is clearly appropriate, and while I sympathise with Mr N, I find £1,700 – in total – fairly and reasonably reflects the impact Admiral's poor claim handling has had on him. It follows I'm not going to require it to pay him more than this, for this complaint.

There are two secondary issues to this complaint – heating bills and renewal premiums. Mr N nor Admiral have challenged our Investigator’s findings on these points, but for completeness, I will address them. Mr N was concerned about his heating bills. Admiral agreed to consider reimbursing these on receipt of the relevant information. I find that was fair and reasonable. Mr N was concerned with the increase in his premiums. The Investigator reviewed underwriting evidence from Admiral (which I have also reviewed) and found Mr N’s premiums had been calculated correctly. I agree with her assessment.

My final decision

I uphold this complaint and require Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited to pay Mr N a further £325 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Mr N to accept or reject my decision before 18 December 2024.

James Langford
Ombudsman