

## **The complaint**

Mrs H is unhappy that British Gas Insurance Limited said it couldn't fit a new central heating timer when it carried out boiler services as part of her home emergency policy and then, at a later visit, was able to do so.

## **What happened**

Mrs H had her boiler serviced each year by British Gas. When the central heating timer broke, at the next service, Mrs H asked British Gas if it could be replaced. British Gas said that it couldn't, as the timer was obsolete. Each year when the boiler was serviced, Mrs H asked British Gas if the timer could be replaced and was told that it couldn't. However, when she asked at her most recent service, British Gas said that it could fit a timer and offered her three different options to do this. Mrs H chose an option and the timer was fitted.

Mrs H complained to British Gas. British Gas replied and said that a replacement timer had always been available and apologised for the inconvenience caused by her being misinformed. It said the issue might have been because another timer for the central heating system, for the immersion heater, was obsolete and the engineers might have looked up the wrong part. British Gas said that it was aware that Mrs H had cancelled her policy, but if she wanted to reinstate it, it would look at reducing her renewal pricing.

Mrs H complained to this service. Our investigator upheld the complaint. He said that British Gas should have replaced the timer when Mrs H first raised it. He said that British Gas should pay £200 in compensation.

As Mrs H didn't think that the level of compensation was high enough, the complaint has been referred to me.

## **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.

It isn't in dispute that British Gas could have fitted a new timer much sooner than it did. Although British Gas can't say for certain why it seems to have taken a number of years for an engineer to identify this, it appears that it might be because, on several occasions, the engineers looked up the wrong part.

Mrs H says that as a result of the significant delay in replacing the timer, she either had to manually turn on the heating, which meant that the house was often cold, or leave the heating on all the time, which meant that this cost more in energy bills. I can understand her frustration at this and have thought about what this means in terms of compensation.

## **Putting things right**

Our investigator said that British Gas should pay Mrs H £200 in compensation. In my view, based on the issues raised by Mrs H and the case as a whole, I also think that £200 is an appropriate amount of compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused, and is in line with the compensation awarded by this service in comparable cases.

## **My final decision**

For the reasons I have given, it is my final decision that the complaint is upheld. British Gas Insurance Limited is required to pay Mrs H £200 compensation.

British Gas Insurance Limited must pay the compensation within 28 days of the date on which we tell it Mrs H accepts my final decision. If it pays later than this it must also pay interest on the compensation from the date of my final decision to the date of payment at 8% a year simple.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs H to accept or reject my decision before 4 August 2020.

Louise O'Sullivan  
**Ombudsman**