

## **The complaint**

Mr A is unhappy that British Gas Services Ltd (BG) twice rescheduled his annual boiler service appointment.

## **What happened**

Mr A had HomeCare Four cover with BG, which included his boiler, heating and plumbing. Two days before BG was due to attend to complete Mr A's annual boiler service, it rescheduled to a date seven weeks later. BG said emergencies in the area had taken priority. Mr A was unhappy with the change and BG offered a token goodwill payment as an apology. Mr A declined it.

Before the rescheduled appointment, Mr A reported a leak from his radiator and asked BG to fix it when it completed his boiler service. On the day of the appointment, BG rescheduled again to a date four weeks later because of emergencies taking priority. Mr A complained because his appointment had already been moved once.

BG said it had made a mistake when booking the appointment and it apologised. BG also offered Mr A £40 by way of apology for the inconvenience. He declined and escalated his complaint.

BG completed the service and repaired the leak on the second rescheduled appointment, which was over two months later than his original appointment.

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. She thought that BG had acted in line with the terms and conditions when rescheduling the first appointment and it had given Mr A two days' notice. She agreed that there was a shortfall when BG made mistakes scheduling the second appointment, but she thought it had made a fair offer in recognition of that. She didn't think BG needed to do any more.

Mr A disagreed. He said that BG should have enough resource in place to anticipate emergencies and complete the annual boiler checks. He also said that the leak he reported could've caused thousands of pounds of damage, yet BG prioritised other appointments over his.

The complaint was 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.

I've decided not to uphold Mr A's complaint for broadly the same reasons as our investigator. I'll explain.

The facts are not disputed here. BG rescheduled Mr A's annual boiler service appointment twice. It prioritised emergencies but confirmed the second reschedule was avoidable. BG offered Mr A £40 by way of apology, but he didn't think that was enough.

What remains for me to decide is whether BG's offer to Mr A was fair in the circumstances.

BG rescheduled Mr A's annual boiler service appointments. The policy terms and conditions state that this may happen if BG needs to prioritise other appointments. I would expect BG to prioritise emergencies or appointments for vulnerable customers over routine boiler checks, so the policy term doesn't seem unfair. BG gave Mr A two days' notice for the first change but told him on the day of his appointment about the second change. While I can understand that getting notice on the day is an inconvenience, the nature of emergencies means that BG may not be able to give more notice than that. So, while this would've been inconvenient to Mr A, I don't think it warrants a goodwill payment of more than £40.

Mr A says the leak he reported before his second appointment was due to take place could've caused significant damage. I understand his point. But I'm not aware that it did cause damage. He reported a leaking radiator and asked BG to investigate when it attended the boiler service appointment. That indicates to me that he didn't feel it was an emergency. If it had become worse, he could've asked BG to prioritise his appointment, but I don't think he did. So I don't think BG was wrong to prioritise other emergency appointments over his.

That said, BG confirmed that the second rescheduled appointment was avoidable. It has apologised to Mr A and it offered a goodwill payment, which he declined. I haven't seen anything to suggest that the error caused Mr A any loss. Although I accept it added to his frustration, I don't think it warrants an increase in the goodwill payment BG has already offered.

Mr A says he had cover so that he could rely on BG when he needed its service, yet it failed to deliver. He feels the service wasn't available to him for those months. He also says there's no accountability for BG because it can cancel appointments at any time and always claim emergencies took priority without proving that was the case. Mr A thinks BG should pay him at least £100, which covers the excess he paid and the time without service.

I understand the point he's making but I don't agree. The service was available to him because BG serviced his boiler and repaired the leaking radiator within the policy year. So the excess and policy premiums are valid charges. BG might not have carried out the work as soon as Mr A would've liked but it has acted in line with the terms of the policy. I would also expect that if Mr A's need was considered an emergency, BG would've prioritised his appointment over a routine appointment for another policyholder. I think that's a fair expectation for policies of this nature.

In summary, I'm satisfied that BG made a fair offer to Mr A in recognition of the avoidable rescheduling error. If he wishes to accept the offer, he will need to contact BG directly.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons given above, my final decision is that I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 18 September 2020.

Debra Vaughan  
**Ombudsman**

