

The complaint

Miss F is unhappy that British Gas Services Limited failed to remove a radiator from her property when it carried out some work under her home emergency policy.

What happened

Miss F contacted British Gas to replace a radiator in her home as part of her HomeCare insurance policy. British Gas left the old radiator in the garden and was meant to arrange for its collection. However, no-one came to collect the radiator. Miss F chased for the radiator to be removed but, over a year later, the radiator was still in her garden and it fell over and landed on her puppy, injuring it.

Miss F complained to British Gas. A British Gas manager went to Miss F's home to discuss the incident with her and arranged for the radiator to be removed the next day. British Gas also offered her £20 as a gesture of goodwill.

Miss F complained to this service. Our investigator upheld the complaint. He said that British Gas should have arranged to take the radiator away much sooner. He said British Gas should pay £200 compensation.

British Gas increased its offer of a goodwill gesture while the complaint was being dealt with by this service. However, British Gas wouldn't agree to our investigator's view that it should pay £200 compensation, as it wanted to see evidence of the cost of Miss F's phone calls. As agreement couldn't be reached, 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.

When British Gas replaced Miss F's radiator, the engineer put the radiator in her garden and should have arranged for it to be removed. However, according to British Gas' records, it didn't make any arrangements for this to happen. Miss F contacted British Gas to ask for the radiator to be removed and was given the details of a contractor that she then had to phone to make the arrangements. The contractor only kept its phone records for one month so it hasn't been possible to obtain these, however, Miss F says that she contacted the contractor on five or six occasions to ask it to remove the radiator. It was still not removed. It was only when Miss F contacted British Gas to say that the radiator had injured her puppy, over a year after the radiator was meant to have been collected, that British Gas arranged for its removal.

I've limited my decision to focus only on aspects relating to British Gas' failure to collect the radiator as part of the original call out to replace a radiator. British Gas doesn't dispute that it should have arranged for the radiator to be removed. Although records aren't available to show how many times Miss F chased to have the radiator removed, I have no reason to doubt that she did so on a number of occasions, and that she wouldn't have had to do this at all if the radiator had been removed as part of the original job. On that basis, I'm satisfied

that British Gas failed to arrange for the radiator to be collected when it should have done so and that Miss F then had to deal with the consequences of this.

Putting things right

I've thought about the above and what this means for an appropriate level of compensation. I think that British Gas should pay Miss F £200 compensation in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused to her by having to store the radiator in her garden for over a year and having to chase on multiple occasions before it was finally removed. To be clear, this is £200 in total and includes any offers and payments that British Gas has already made to Miss F.

My final decision

For the reasons I have given, it is my final decision that the complaint is upheld and that British Gas Services Limited is required to:

- Pay Miss F £200 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss F to accept or reject my decision before 2 September 2020.

Louise O'Sullivan
Ombudsman