

The complaint

Mr W and Mrs W are unhappy about the service provided by British Gas Insurance Limited dealt (British Gas) under their home emergency policy.

What happened

Mr W and Mrs W contacted British Gas under their HomeCare policy because their central heating wasn't working properly. An engineer visited and told Mr W and Mrs W that their central heating system required a powerflush. There were then issues related to the powerflush and when it took place.

Mr W and Mrs W complained to British Gas. When British Gas replied, it accepted that there had been delays in dealing with the central heating system and offered Mr W and Mrs W £50 compensation.

Mr W and Mrs W complained to this service. Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He said that he thought that British Gas had responded reasonably to the issues raised by Mr W and Mrs W and didn't need to do anything further.

As Mr W and Mrs W did not agree, 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.

I'm aware that Mr W and Mrs W have said that their issues with the central heating took several months to resolve. However, I can only look at the aspects that took place before British Gas' final response to this complaint was issued. I also note that parts of the complaint relate to a powerflush. As previously explained by our investigator, that isn't a service provided by British Gas under the terms of its HomeCare contract. So this service is unable to comment on anything related to the powerflush because it doesn't come within our jurisdiction.

So, taking the above into account, I've only been able to consider two of the British Gas visits. Having done so, I don't uphold this complaint. I will explain why.

When Mr W and Mrs W first contacted British Gas about their central heating, this was under their HomeCare policy. British Gas sent an engineer. The engineer found a lot of sludge in the system and said that a powerflush was required. Mr W and Mrs W said that when the engineer left they didn't have any central heating. It isn't clear to me why this was the case and whether it was an error by the engineer or the result of the issues with the central heating. However, British Gas offered to pay up to £50 for electric heaters, which Mr W and Mrs W used to buy an additional heater to supplement the two that they already owned. I think that was a reasonable in the circumstances in order to deal with the immediate need for heating.

An engineer then visited to carry out a powerflush. I'm unable to comment on this any further, for the reasons I've already given.

Another engineer then visited a few days later under Mr W and Mrs W's HomeCare policy. Mr W and Mrs W haven't raised any concerns about the actions of the engineer and confirmed that the engineer was able to restore their heating system to how it had been operating before the first engineer's visit. So, I haven't seen anything that suggests that there was an issue with what British Gas did during this visit.

I'm aware that Mr W and Mrs W have said that using electric heaters wasn't really a suitable way to heat their home and that, as a result, their electricity bill was much higher over the period it took to resolve the heating issues. Mr W and Mrs W have also said that they had no hot water, which, based on what Mr W and Mrs W explained, seemed to be following the visit to carry out the powerflush. I've noted these points but, given that I've already explained what I'm able to look at as part of considering this complaint, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to make a finding on these issues.

When British Gas responded to Mr W and Mrs W's complaint, it accepted that there were issues and offered Mr W and Mrs W £50 compensation. I think that was reasonable based on the circumstances that I have been able to consider. So, I don't uphold this complaint or require British Gas to do anything further.

My final decision

For the reasons I have given, it is my final decision that the complaint is not upheld.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W and Mrs W to accept or reject my decision before 6 January 2021.

Louise O'Sullivan
Ombudsman