

The complaint

Ms F has complained that British Gas Insurance Limited cancelled her Homecare policy.

What happened

In March 2020 Ms F bought a Homecare policy with British Gas. Under its conditions it said it would arrange a visit to check if Ms F's boiler was suitable for it to provide cover for.

In June 2020, following a visit by an engineer, British Gas told Ms F that it couldn't provide cover for her. It provided a refund in line with the terms of the policy for these circumstances. It discovered that Ms F had bought similar policies in the past which had resulted in those policies also being cancelled – so it made a note on its record not to agree to further set ups or reinstatements of a homecare policy.

In November 2020 British Gas agreed to carry out further remedial work including a second power flush. But a day later the heating in Ms F's home failed so further work was done. This work was outside of the terms of a Homecare policy – but British Gas didn't charge Ms F for the further work.

Unhappy with British Gas, Ms F asked us to look at her complaint. She said it hadn't provided any evidence a second power flush had been done to try and remedy the problem with the boiler.

Our investigator didn't recommend the complaint should be upheld. He explained that in relation to Ms F's complaint about the engineer's works, British Gas had provided Ms F with details of the appropriate complaints resolution body to refer this to.

British Gas paid Ms F £150 as a goodwill gesture for setting up policies in the past and cancelling them – even though it was entitled to do this in line with the conditions of the policies – due to the age and condition of Ms F's boiler. It also refunded the costs of the invoice for the second power flush as it accepted that the advice the engineer gave didn't fix the problem. Our investigator thought British Gas had done enough to resolve Ms F's complaint.

Ms F didn't agree. She's unhappy we haven't taken her complaint about the power flush into account - and that British Gas allowed her to set up policies on several occasions only to cancel them.

So the case has been 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.

Ms F's boiler is over 40 years old and many of its parts are obsolete. British Gas' homecare policy says it will replace a boiler if they can't repair it provided its either less than seven years old or between seven and ten years old and fitted by a British Gas approved installer.

Notes provided by British Gas show that since 2013 it told Ms F that it wouldn't be able to provide cover for her boiler – but the pattern of Ms F setting up a new policy and having the policy cancelled for the same or similar reasons was repeated several times since – until British Gas made a note not to allow further agreements or reinstatements in 2020.

I think British Gas could have managed the situation better to prevent the allowance of policies to be set up and then cancelled after an engineer inspected Ms F's boiler each time. When things go wrong, we look at what the impact was and what a business did to put things right. I think what British Gas did here to put things right was fair and reasonable. It refunded the premium Ms F paid each time – and it paid her £150 compensation for not managing her expectations better. It refunded the costs of the invoice to carry out a power flush.

I understand Ms F is disappointed we haven't looked at her complaint about the power flush work. She says British Gas hasn't provided her with evidence these works were carried out. But as the investigator explained, this isn't a complaint we can look at for her. In January 2021 British Gas provided Ms F with details of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Service for utilities which Ms F would need to refer this particular complaint to – and within the timeframe provided.

I realise Ms F will be unhappy with my decision. But taking into account the complaints we can decide upon, I think British Gas has done enough to put things right and therefore acted reasonably in resolving her complaint. So I'm not asking it to do any more.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms F to accept or reject my decision before 3 January 2022.

Geraldine Newbold
Ombudsman