

The complaint

Mrs O is unhappy that British Gas Insurance Limited (BG) charged her for renewal of her Homecare boiler cover after the first year.

What happened

BG installed a new boiler for Mrs O when parts for her existing boiler became obsolete. Mrs O believed she also had a five-year warranty with the installation so she was unhappy when BG informed her after one year that she would be charged for her Homecare policy.

Our investigator explained that our service couldn't look at Mrs O's complaint about the warranty because it wasn't an insurance product. He explained that although our service could look at the Homecare policy, he didn't think BG had done anything wrong. Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint.

Mrs O didn't agree. She said BG told her there was a warranty with the boiler, so she thought it charged her for a Homecare policy which she didn't need after the first free year.

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.

Although I understand Mrs O will be disappointed, I've decided not to uphold her complaint. I'll explain why.

Firstly, I'll clarify which issues I've considered. It's not within my remit to decide a complaint about the manufacturer's warranty on the boiler BG installed. However, I have looked at the warranty to inform my decision about the Homecare insurance product BG sold to Mrs O.

The issue is that Mrs O doesn't think she needed the Homecare policy BG charged her for a year after her boiler was installed. That's because she thinks it duplicated the cover available to her under her warranty. I've looked at what each of the warranty and the Homecare policy provides to determine whether there is any merit in what Mrs O says.

The product registration certificate confirms that the manufacturer warranty lasts for five years and provides for repair or replacement in the event of a manufacturing fault. It only covers the manufacturer's branded products.

The warranty document, branded as a BG product, specifically states that from year two, it doesn't cover annual servicing or cover for controls or any part of the central heating system.

The Homecare policy confirms cover is for the boiler, an annual service, controls and central heating system. In subsequent years, cover was also available to Mrs O for plumbing, drains and home electrics.

So, comparing the cover available to Mrs O under the warranty and Homecare policy, I'm satisfied that they provide for different events. It's also notable that they complement each other – the warranty isn't valid without an annual service and the Homecare policy provides an annual service. Therefore, I'm satisfied that the Homecare policy didn't provide duplicate cover to that available under the warranty.

Mrs O believed the Homecare cover was free for five years, so she was upset to be charged after the first year. Again, having looked at the documents, BG made it clear that Homecare cover was only free for the first year. I note that it sent renewal documents to Mrs O setting out the charges and when her first policy would end. I also note that BG explained in its warranty documents that Mrs O would need to have her boiler serviced annually, but cover was also available through other providers. So, I see no reason to think BG charged Mrs O for a policy which she didn't need.

Mrs O said BG didn't tell her she needed to register her boiler. BG sent Mrs O a £50 cheque as a gesture of goodwill in recognition of the possibility that it didn't tell her to register her boiler for the five-year manufacturer's warranty. As Mrs O provided this service with a copy of the registration certificate, it's clear that the boiler was registered. Her current boiler cover provider told her it should've registered automatically, so it's likely that's what happened. I can't see that BG did anything wrong here.

Overall, I haven't seen any evidence that BG sold Mrs O a product that duplicated cover under her warranty, or that it sold her a policy which she didn't need from the second year onwards. As there's nothing for BG to put right, I won't be asking it to do any more.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs O to accept or reject my decision before 22 April 2022.

Debra Vaughan
Ombudsman