

## **The complaint**

Mr P complained that a repair to his washing machine took too long under his home care policy with British Gas Insurance Limited ("British Gas") and he was unhappy with the level of customer service provided.

## **What happened**

When Mr P's washing machine broke down he made a claim on his policy for it to be repaired. Mr P raised the claim on the 5 October 2021. Mr P said he was unhappy with the service he received as he said it had been difficult arranging appointments due to availability of British Gas' engineers. Mr P also complained that British Gas had failed to attend several appointments that had been arranged.

Mr P's washing machine was fixed by British Gas on 10 November 2021. Mr P said the delay caused an inconvenience for his family as they had to visit a launderette to get their clothes washed – which cost them money in bus fares and launderette washes. Mr P said a member of his family had taken time off work when the missed appointments occurred.

British Gas accepted its service wasn't good enough during the claim and paid three separate payments of compensation which totalled £250. Mr P didn't think this amount fairly compensated him for what had gone wrong.

Our investigator decided to not uphold the complaint. He thought British Gas had recognised where it had gone wrong and had compensated Mr P fairly for the inconvenience caused. Mr P disagreed, so the case has been referred to an ombudsman.

## **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.

Mr P said it took British Gas too long to fix his washing machine and it should've offered him the opportunity to get the repairs done by his own contractor and refunded the costs. So, I've considered this.

A British Gas engineer first inspected the washing machine on 12 October 2021 and arranged for a part to be ordered for the washing machine to be fixed. Mr P said he received a text from British Gas indicating the parts were received on 15 October 2021. I think British Gas attended in a reasonable timeframe and managed to arrange the necessary part in an efficient manner.

It then took British Gas just under four weeks to arrange an engineer to visit to complete the repair. Mr P has explained how this timeline was drawn out for two reasons – he said British Gas didn't have available engineers and he said British Gas didn't attend when he had been expecting them to as appointments hadn't been logged / scheduled properly.

I would've expected British Gas to have arranged an appointment and repaired the washing machine promptly after the part was received. I think it would've been reasonable to expect this to have been completed no later than 7 to 10 days after the part had been received, so by 25 October 2021. The repair happened about two weeks after this, so I think there is some avoidable delay here.

Therefore, I have considered whether the £250 compensation is fair for the two-week delayed repair of the washing machine, along with the associated costs of getting a temporary washing solution at the launderette and for the missed appointments. I appreciate that Mr P would like to understand how much compensation is given for every component of the failed service, but that's now how our service looks at compensation. I will consider what I think the overall impact of the failures are on Mr P and I will then provide an overall award of compensation comparable with what our service would offer for similar issues and inconvenience.

In any claim there will be a level of inconvenience – its unfortunate Mr P's washing machine wasn't available, but its not reasonable to hold British Gas responsible for this until 25 October 2021 (the date I said I would've expected the repair normally to have been completed by). I think it's fair that British Gas cover the cost of the interim washing solution after this date (for two weeks) as it caused an avoidable delay. I can see there is some disagreement on exactly what appointments were scheduled and which were missed. However, Mr P has made a passionate case and I think he is genuine when he has said he has been let down more than once by British Gas.

That been said, I do think the £250 compensation paid by British Gas is significant and is fair for the level of distress and inconvenience caused in the circumstances. I think it's consistent with the award our service would consider as reasonable for the costs of getting washing cleaned at the launderette for two weeks and for the inconvenience of the missed appointments.

Whilst Mr P is reasonable in saying British Gas should've allowed him to appoint his own contractor from the start. I think it's reasonable to expect another contractor would need to order parts as well as arrange a supplementary appointment, so I can only award compensation for the avoidable delays caused which is what I have done. Therefore, I don't uphold this complaint.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint. I don't require British Gas Insurance Limited to do anything more.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 24 August 2022.

Pete Averill  
**Ombudsman**