

The complaint

Mr M has complained about the service provided by British Gas Insurance Limited (British Gas) under a home emergency policy.

What happened

British Gas carried out the annual service on Mr M's boiler. The engineer said no faults were found. Following this, Mr M contacted British Gas to report that the hot water was heating too quickly. British Gas arranged for an engineer visit, but he didn't attend because of a road closure. Mr M told British Gas the road closure didn't prevent access to his property. Another engineer visited the same day and replaced the zone valve in the boiler. However, the heating stopped working that evening. So, another engineer visited the following day and again replaced the zone valve and returned a few days later to fit a wireless control. This fixed the issue.

Mr M complained to British Gas. He said the annual service hadn't been carried out properly, including that he was told the engineer had left a valve open. Following the other engineers' visits, radiators were now working more effectively because an engineer had altered the flow temperature. He said this showed the heating system hadn't been properly serviced by British Gas for several years.

When British Gas replied, it said it hadn't found any issues as a result of the annual service. However, it said it would provide feedback about the engineer who didn't attend due to the road closure. It also said the issues with the boiler could have been resolved in three visits rather than four. It said engineers wouldn't normally alter the flow temperature because this was something a customer could change based on their preference. It refunded the £60 excess Mr M had paid and offered £120 compensation.

So, Mr M complained to this Service. Our Investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He said the evidence didn't show there was a fault caused by the annual service. Mr M also hadn't raised concerns during previous British Gas visits about the radiator temperature and it was something he could control and set to his preference. However, the boiler repairs could have been completed sooner. He said the excess refund and £120 compensation was reasonable in the circumstances to deal with the complaint.

Mr M didn't agree. He didn't think it was a coincidence that a fault had occurred so close to the annual service. British Gas' technical team had said it felt the issues weren't due to the annual service. However, an engineer had visited that was the only one able to resolve the issue. Engineers should also have checked the radiator temperature during their visits. As a result, the complaint was referred to me for a decision.

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.

Having done so, I don't uphold this complaint. I will explain why.

When the engineer completed the annual service, the boiler was working when he left. However, Mr M contacted British Gas because he was concerned about the water temperature, which he said was heating too quickly. He has also said he was later told by an engineer that the annual service engineer left a valve open. Mr M thinks the issues with his boiler were down to mistakes by that engineer.

When British Gas sent an engineer to look at the issues with the water temperature, it was found that a new zone valve was required. I note British Gas has also told this Service that if the issue was that a valve had been left open, this could have been resolved by moving a lever to close it, rather than replacing a part. Mr M has also said the second engineer replaced the wrong part. However, I note that when the next engineer visited, he replaced the same part, the zone valve, and ordered another part. Given both engineers replaced the same part, and I can see from the records that this had the same part number, I think this showed that the zone valve needed replacing. Although I'm aware Mr M has said it can't be a coincidence that the issues with the boiler started so soon after the annual service, I think the evidence shows that a part failed. I haven't seen anything that persuades me the annual service engineer caused the problem, including by leaving a valve open.

Mr M was also concerned that British Gas hadn't properly serviced his boiler over several years. It was only when an engineer visited following the most recent annual service that the flow temperature was increased and the radiators started heating up properly. Mr M has also provided a repair/ service checklist that listed a maintenance check as "*Radiators & visible pipework checked for water leaks & operation*", which was ticked as "yes". He said this showed British Gas should have been checking that the radiators were heating up properly at each annual service. But, I don't think the day to day temperature of the radiators, or the flow temperature setting, showed that British Gas didn't carry out the appropriate checks as part of the annual service.

British Gas has also said its engineers wouldn't automatically change the flow temperature as it was something a customer could control and might want to vary, including at different times of year. I'm aware Mr M has said he didn't know anything about boilers and had never been given advice by British Gas on this. However, I'm also aware Mr M hadn't previously raised concerns with British Gas about his radiators. So, I don't think British Gas had any particular reason to think Mr M was concerned there was an issue or that he wanted advice about the radiators.

British Gas has also accepted there were issues with the overall service it provided. This included that an engineer didn't attend and that it took more visits than it should have to fix the boiler when the issues with the hot water were found. It offered £120 compensation and refunded the £60 boiler excess. In the circumstances, I think that was fair.

As a result, I don't uphold this complaint or require British Gas to do anything further in relation to it.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 5 December 2024.

Louise O'Sullivan
Ombudsman