

The complaint

E complains that British Gas Insurance Limited has provided poor service when E called it on 23 October 2024.

E says it spent two hours on the phone before the call dropped. The agent didn't return the call to E and this resulted in E needing to call back, spending more time on the phone to resolve the issue. In total, nearly 3 hours was spent on the phone to discuss a gas safety check at one of E's properties.

E called British Gas the following day and a call back was promised which wasn't made. E said this has caused it a great deal of inconvenience, its director had recently been unwell and the considerable wait times and call backs not being provided, stopped it from being able to carry out other business activities.

E also complained about the complaint handling process and British Gas being unable to raise a complaint about these issues when it asked for this to be logged.

What happened

E has multiple properties with cover provided by British Gas and has set out this complaint in detail. It has also provided the details of other issues experienced with British Gas.

British Gas accepted the service provided and the wait time of two hours was beyond what it felt was reasonable. It said the period was particularly busy and this impacted its ability to serve customers and it was sorry that E was inconvenienced. It initially offered E, £80 to reflect this and later increased its offer to £150. E declined this and the complaint was brought to this Service.

Our investigator said they could not comment on the complaint handling and the decisions taken by British Gas in relation to this. This is because complaint handling is not a regulated activity. But they could think about the service provided by British Gas and the inconvenience experienced by E.

Our investigator felt E was inconvenienced by the service provided by British Gas with both the wait times and its failure to return calls. This caused a loss of expectations and impacted E's ability to carry out its operations. They didn't think the award offered of £150 was enough to reflect this impact and they recommended this be increased to £250.

E accepted the recommendation but British Gas did not, it said its previous offer was fair and it didn't think it had been demonstrated why this award should be increased. Our investigators opinion remained unchanged, and the complaint was referred for 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.

I've decided to uphold this complaint, for much the same reasons as our investigator and I'll

explain why.

As our investigator set out, I am not able to consider the complaint handling concerns E has raised. Complaint handling is not a regulated activity and how British Gas operates its complaint handling function is something it is able to determine itself.

However, I can comment on the overall service provided to E and the impact of this. I have mentioned in the background to this complaint that E has multiple properties covered with British Gas and has also set out the details of issues it has experienced with British Gas. While I haven't considered these issues, I have taken account of them when thinking about the impact of the inconvenience on E when there was service failings after its call on 23 October 2024.

It is not in dispute that there has been issues with the service provided, with both the wait time of the first call and a failure for British Gas to provide call backs. It is the level of inconvenience and award to fairly recognise this which needs to be determined.

British Gas doesn't think the recommended award is justified. It feels its offer of £150 is fair and sits within the same band as that of the investigators recommendation of £250. I understand the questions over this, but just being in the same band as what has been recommended doesn't mean the increase isn't justified. Importantly, it's the impact on the complainant that needs to be reflected.

Here, E as a limited company is the complainant and the impact on it with the service provided is on its ability to carry out its normal operations. British Gas accepted the response time on the phone call was longer than its normal level of service. I accept it didn't intend to leave E waiting on the call for 2 hours and a surge in demand can impact service levels, but this did cause inconvenience to E being able to complete its normal operations.

This was added to when the call dropped and wasn't returned and call backs promised, were not completed. So, despite being over a short period of time, E spent more time away from its normal work to chase British Gas and get a solution to the issues it had about the gas safety check for one of its properties. This inconvenience was compounded by needing to wait almost an hour for the follow up call with an adviser and I think it is right that the award reflects this.

When there is multiple small errors, the impact can be greater and it is right that this is taken into account. E's director had recently been unwell and the time spent trying to speak with British Gas took away their ability to deal with other parts of the business. And while I cannot compensate its director for any distress added, I think this increased the level of inconvenience to E and I agree the award should reflect this.

Overall, I acknowledge that British Gas took steps to try and resolve E's complaint and made an offer it believed to be fair. But I think it is right the total award for the failings here is increased to £250.

Putting things right

British Gas needs to pay E £250 for the inconvenience added to its business operations.

If it has already paid the £150 already offered, it will only need to now pay the remaining £100.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained above, I uphold E's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask E to accept or reject my decision before 20 October 2025.

Thomas Brissenden
Ombudsman