

complaint

Mr and Mrs A have complained that British Gas Insurance Limited's engineer carried out a flue test on a fire at their property resulting in smoke coming into their living room and the subsequent damage caused.

background

Mr and Mrs A had a British Gas engineer attend their property in November 2012 in order to carry out a flue test. Unfortunately the living room filled with smoke while the engineer undertook the flue test and he had to open a window to let the smoke out.

Mr and Mrs A believe that he damaged the blinds in the process and they had to have them replaced. They complained to British Gas but the engineer maintained that he was told that the blinds were already broken when he went to open them. British Gas also questioned why Mr and Mrs A took about a month to complain to it about the blinds and so Mr and Mrs A complained to this service.

Our adjudicator considered Mr and Mrs A's complaint and upheld it in part. He was of the view that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the blinds were broken by the engineer, although he accepted that it must have been worrying for Mr and Mrs A to have their house filled with smoke and suggested that British Gas pay them £50 in compensation.

As the matter could not be resolved the matter has been escalated to me for a final decision.

my findings

I have considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

It is clear to me that it must have been worrying for Mr and Mrs A to have had their living room and house fill with smoke following the flue test in their living room. I am satisfied, on balance, that the test went wrong causing their room to fill with smoke. I accept that this must have affected Mr and Mrs A and I agree that £50 is a reasonable amount of compensation as there was no lasting damage.

The more difficult aspect to determine is whether the blinds were already broken or damaged in some way before the engineer touched them while trying to open the window. While I do not doubt Mr and Mrs A's account I do not have sufficient evidence to conclude that the engineer broke them while opening the window. Without any supporting evidence I cannot safely conclude that the engineer broke the blinds and that British Gas should be held responsible.

my final decision

It follows, for the reasons outlined above, that I partially uphold Mr and Mrs A's complaint and require British Gas Insurance Limited to pay £50 compensation.

Colin Keegan
ombudsman