

complaint

Mr C complains about British Gas Insurance Limited's handling of his home emergency insurance claim. Mr C is unhappy that British Gas left equipment lodged in his drains after a visit to attend to a blockage.

background

Mr C contacted British Gas in April 2012 to report a blockage in the drain at his property. British Gas attended to clear the blockage however, a piece of drain rod became lodged in the drain during this visit.

Following a number of unsuccessful visits to remove the rod by British Gas, Mr C raised a complaint. British Gas responded to the complaint by offering to contribute up to £750 towards the cost of removing the drain rod and associated remedial work.

Mr C declined to accept this offer, and British Gas invited him to submit quotations demonstrating the cost of the remedial work required. Following receipt of the quotations, British Gas declined to increase its offer of £750.

As Mr C remained unhappy with this offer, he brought his complaint to this service. Following our involvement, British Gas offered to complete the work necessary to resolve the problem. Our adjudicator put this offer to Mr C, but was informed that the problem had now been resolved by his home insurer.

Our adjudicator then recommended the complaint should be upheld and British Gas should offer Mr C £500 to account for the distress and inconvenience caused.

British Gas did not agree that £500 was reasonable, but agreed to offer £300. Our adjudicator put this offer to Mr C, who declined it considering the amount unreasonable.

As our adjudicator was unable to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of both parties, the matter has been referred to me for final determination.

my findings

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

Following the complaint being referred to this service, British Gas stated that it believed the complaint to be justified and offered to resolve the problem with the drain rod. As this matter has already been resolved by Mr C's home insurers, it is not necessary for me to address this matter any further; I have therefore considered the distress and inconvenience caused to Mr C.

Having done so, in my view, an award of £500 compensation is warranted in the circumstances.

I say this having had regard to the length of time the rod was lodged in Mr C's drain as well as the inconvenience to him in having to make a claim for the matter under his home insurance policy. £500 is at the higher end of our usual awards and reflects my opinion that British Gas could have acted sooner here.

my final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

British Gas Insurance Limited must pay Mr C the sum of £500 compensation to account for the distress and inconvenience caused by its handling of the matter.

Christopher Tilson
ombudsman