

complaint

Mr B complains that British Gas Insurance Limited ("BGI") provided poor service when it attended to his gas boiler under his HomeCare policy.

background

In March 2014 BGI came to Mr B's house and carried out a routine service and safety check of his gas central heating boiler and system. Later that day, the pilot light failed to come on. So the engineer returned that day, relit the pilot light, and rechecked the system. The next day, the system failed. The engineer called and replaced several components. However, the system failed again the next day. A different engineer called and reset the time clock which dealt with the issue.

The following month, the system failed again. BGI said the diverter valve was faulty. The system was stripped down and cleaned and Mr B was advised to have a PowerFlush to clean out the system. BGI said that water components were failing as a result of the age of the system and the quality of the water flowing through it.

Although it did not consider its engineers were at fault for the problems Mr B had experienced, BGI offered him £150 as a gesture of goodwill for the inconvenience he had suffered. Mr B did not think this was adequate compensation and brought this present complaint.

He said that he and his wife were elderly, and a reliable heating system was essential for their health. They had no problems with their system until BGI serviced it, and then they had several days without heating and hot water, which caused them stress and anxiety. They held BGI responsible for the problems they had suffered.

Our adjudicator did not recommend that this complaint should be upheld. She said that BGI had fulfilled its obligations under Mr B's HomeCare policy. It had carried out the service and relevant safety checks. When faults occurred, it came and repaired them promptly. She had not seen any evidence that BGI had acted negligently or was responsible for the faults.

The policy was intended to provide a customer with maintenance and repairs for their system. BGI could not guarantee that customers would not experience problems with their boilers. BGI had offered Mr B £150 for the distress and inconvenience Mr and Mrs B had suffered, which she considered reasonable.

Mr B responded to say, in summary, that they had no problems in the period before the service. He thought that the engineer who serviced the boiler, and the succeeding engineers, were inexperienced and not properly trained, and had caused all the faults they had suffered.

my findings

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

I understand the importance of a reliable heating system for Mr and Mrs B, and the stress and upset the various failings of their system caused them. However, I have seen nothing to

suggest that faulty workmanship by BGI's engineers was responsible for the various different faults that occurred.

BGI does not guarantee under its HomeCare policy that problems will not arise with a system. It undertakes to provide repair and maintenance services if they occur. I understand that Mr B's system was installed in 1978. He suffered a number of different problems which BGI attributed to corrosion in the system over time. To provide a more reliable system, it has recommended that Mr B considers a PowerFlush, or perhaps a new system.

When problems occurred, BGI came promptly and dealt with them. It has offered £150 as a goodwill gesture for the upset and inconvenience Mr and Mrs B suffered. I don't consider I can fairly require BGI to do more.

my final decision

For the reasons I have set out above, my decision is that I do not uphold this complaint. I simply leave it to Mr B to decide whether or not he now wishes to accept the £150 BGI has offered.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I am required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 5 July 2015.

Lennox Towers
ombudsman