

complaint

Mr I has complained about British Gas Services Limited. He isn't happy about the service British Gas Services Limited provided following a repair under his home emergency policy.

background

Mr I made a claim under his home emergency policy. This was because he had problems with his boiler. British Gas's engineer attended but unfortunately damage was caused during the repair. A leak meant that damage was caused to the living room ceiling.

British Gas was told of the problem in August 2017. But it took about seven weeks for it to assess the damage. The repair work was eventually agreed by British Gas's agent and Mr I was sent a cheque for the repair work. But it wasn't cashed as Mr I, and his representative, wanted to finalise compensation for their time off work and inconvenience caused.

British Gas offered £100 compensation. And then increased this to £200 when Mr I complained to this service. When our investigator looked into things he thought that the compensation should be increased to £300. In acknowledgement of the stress and inconvenience caused.

As neither side agreed the matter has been passed to me for review.

my findings

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 think that the complaint should be upheld. But I think that the amount of compensation suggested by the investigator is fair. I'll explain why.

As the repair work costs have already been agreed I will focus on the remaining issue, which is the level of compensation. As has already been outlined our compensation awards are generally modest.

I know Mr I and his representative have been subjected to a fair degree of inconvenience here. After all British Gas was responsible for the leak and damage caused. But then took seven weeks to even assess the damage.

I do accept that Mr I's representative would have had to take some time off work (but I haven't got any evidence of this) and been generally inconvenienced. But I think £300 compensation is fair in the circumstances. And British Gas's agent has already given some compensation in its settlement figure in relation to the damage caused.

Unfortunately there is always a fair degree of stress involved in advancing complaints like this. But the repair could've been undertaken earlier if Mr I had allowed the original company to make good the damage. I can understand that he didn't want the repair undertaken by them as he'd lost confidence. But I don't think it would've been unreasonable to give them the chance to put things right.

I know British Gas thinks its offer of £200 is fairer. But it could've been clearer in explaining how its complaint procedure worked to Mr I. I say this as there was clearly confusion around

what British Gas would look at and what its agent would look at. And it must've been frustrating to wait so long for the inspection given British Gas had caused the damage.

So, I think £300 compensation, in addition to that already paid by British Gas's agent, is fair. And in line with awards we usually make.

my final decision

It follows, for the reasons given above, that I uphold this complaint. I require British Gas Services Limited to pay Mr I £300 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr I to accept or reject my decision before 9 April 2018.

Colin Keegan
ombudsman