

complaint

Mr A complains about the service he received from British Gas Insurance Limited under his home care policy.

background

Mr A made several complaints to British Gas about its poor service under his home care policy. His complaints included that he couldn't access his on-line account due to its system's failure, its staff didn't contact him when they said they were going to, British Gas gave phone numbers that he couldn't call a specific person on, its automated phone system didn't recognise his numbers and its general poor complaints handling.

British Gas accepted its service had caused Mr A some inconvenience and offered £60 as compensation. Mr A didn't accept and complained to us. He wants a personal apology from British Gas' directors and more compensation as he said £60 didn't reflect the time he'd spent dealing with the matters.

British Gas increased its offer of compensation to £90. It apologised for the problems Mr A experienced. It said it was looking into the problem with Mr A's on-line account.

Our adjudicator thought British Gas' offer of £90 compensation was reasonable and the apology it had given Mr A was sufficient.

Mr A disagreed. He said there was nothing to suggest changes would be made to the issues he'd complained about or that British Gas had given a whole hearted apology. He wanted to engage with its directors.

my findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

British Gas has made a reasonable apology and offer to pay Mr A compensation of £90 in total in response to this complaint. I'll explain why.

I don't have the power to require British Gas to change its business practices. So I can't, for example, say that it must give consumers specific phone numbers for individual staff.

I can look at whether British Gas should pay compensation to Mr A for its poor service. It accepts he's had some inconvenience due to its service. He's not been able to access his on-line account and there have been some issues with its communication.

I understand Mr A's on-line account access remains a problem. But British Gas has explained to him the contents of the emails he hasn't been able to open. And if there's account information he urgently needs in the future a practical solution may be for him to ask British Gas for the information if there's still an access problem.

Mr A says the compensation offered doesn't reflect the time he's spent with British Gas on his complaints. I see that in some of his emails he's said he wants defined amounts of money for time he's spent. But I don't generally award compensation on a time spent basis and there are no reasons for me to do so in these circumstances. I think £90 in total is a

reasonable sum to reflect the overall level of inconvenience Mr A has had due to British Gas' poor service.

Mr A wants direct correspondence with British Gas' directors and their apology. British Gas told Mr A that its customer managers worked on behalf of the relevant director. So its apology was on the director's behalf and it is a sufficient apology.

my final decision

British Gas has made a reasonable apology and offer to pay Mr A compensation of £90 in total in response to his complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 5 June 2017.

Nicola Sisk
ombudsman