

complaint

Mr M and Mrs M have complained about the service they received from British Gas Insurance Limited following a fault with their boiler.

background

Mr M and Mrs M had a problem with their boiler – there was intermittent hot water and heating. Engineers attended on various occasions and tried different things but no-one could fix the problem. A dispute then arose with British Gas over what was needed and who was going to pay for it. All the while the problem with the hot water and heating remained.

Mr M and Mrs M eventually complained to us about how they'd been treated. To resolve the problem they thought British Gas should agree to a power flush free of charge, and to replace the boiler if that doesn't fix the problem. They also thought British Gas should pay them £1,200 compensation for the inconvenience they've suffered.

British Gas later offered £100 compensation and to arrange a power flush. Mr M and Mrs M were happy with the offer for the power flush. But they thought the compensation was too low.

Our investigator thought the complaint should be partially upheld. He thought fair compensation was £300. British Gas agreed with this but Mr M and Mrs M didn't. They remained of the view that £1,200 was a more realistic figure.

my findings

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

My consideration of this complaint has only been in respect of the compensation. This is because the other part of the complaint has effectively been resolved due to British Gas's offer for the power flush and Mr M and Mrs M's acceptance of it. I realise the power flush has recently taken place and that the matter is now being considered further. If the problem isn't fixed and Mr M and Mrs M remain unhappy they will need to lodge a new complaint with British Gas.

For the compensation, I don't think there is any doubt that Mr M and Mrs M have been inconvenienced here. They've had to live for many months without proper hot water or heating, they've made lots of calls trying to sort the matter out, and they've spoken to many people at British Gas (including a number of managers). Some of this inconvenience was inevitable – even if things had run smoothly Mr M and Mrs M would have been inconvenienced to a degree. But I think British Gas's poor handling of the matter led to them suffering more than normal.

However, I'm satisfied that the £300 compensation suggested by our investigator is fair. I don't think there are grounds for me to ask British Gas to pay any more. The amount it's now agreed to pay is in the region of what I would have made it pay had there been no offer on the table.

my final decision

I uphold this complaint. I require British Gas Insurance Limited to pay Mr M and Mrs M £300 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M and Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 19 December 2016.

Paul Daniel
ombudsman