

complaint

Mrs S complains that British Gas Services Limited gave her poor service under her central heating insurance.

background

Mrs S had – for many years – British Gas central heating insurance. In autumn 2016 she got a new boiler. It came with a warranty. Mrs D complained that the new boiler didn't give her proper heating and hot water.

The investigator recommended that British Gas had made a fair settlement of Mrs D's complaint. It had sent a letter in which it apologised to Mrs D for the delays caused. And it had paid compensation of £160.00, the investigator said.

Mrs S disagrees with the investigator's opinion. She says, in summary, that it took from October to March before a British Gas engineer got the boiler working.

my findings

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

From the British Gas documents, I think Mrs D already had central heating insurance cover which was due to run from June 2016 to June 2017. Her new central heating boiler came with a five-year warranty and – for the first year- cover for the rest of her central heating system.

I accept Mrs D's statement that the engineer who installed the new boiler told her to ring him personally – and not British Gas – if she had any problems. That was in early October 2016.

And – within days after the installation - she found a leak in her bathroom. So Mrs D rang the engineer. But – as I don't think he was any longer acting on its behalf– I don't hold British Gas responsible for his response.

Mrs D says she contacted a local plumber. But she hasn't been able to provide us with any evidence from that plumber – or any invoice from him. So I can't ask British Gas to reimburse her.

British Gas engineers attended later in October. From the notes left behind, I think the first engineer found a lot of air in the system. The second engineer set the controls. He didn't note any problems. And I don't think Mrs D complained until nearly a month later. So I think the engineer had left the central heating and hot water working.

Mrs D says she cancelled her central heating insurance cover in December.

From what she says, I think Mrs D was away over Christmas and then unwell in January.

I don't think British Gas responded to her complaint as well as it ought to have done.

British Gas apologised for its delay. It offered Mrs D compensation of £80.00.

But British Gas then missed two appointments in mid-February.

It was only after Mrs D complained to us in March that British Gas got the central heating and hot water working properly.

Later British Gas offered Mrs D a further £80.

I accept that – despite having invested in a new boiler – Mrs D had a difficult winter. Compared to before, the central heating wasn't providing as much heat to the radiators or as much hot water to the shower.

But Mrs D wasn't entirely without heating or hot water. And – after she brought her complaint to us - British Gas got the central heating working as it should.

So, on balance, I'm satisfied that its cheques totalling £160 were fair and reasonable compensation for the trouble and upset caused by the shortcomings in its service.

I don't think it would be fair and reasonable to order British Gas to make any further payment or take any further action in response to Mrs D's complaint.

my final decision

For the reasons I've explained, my final decision is that I uphold this complaint in part. I order British Gas Services Limited to pay Mrs D (insofar as it hasn't already paid her) £160 for trouble and upset.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs S to accept or reject my decision before 14 August 2017.

Christopher Gilbert
ombudsman