

## **complaint**

Mr S complains about the service provided by British Gas Services Limited when it conducted an annual service of a gas fire under a home care policy.

## **background**

Mr S had a Homecare policy with British Gas. This policy covered the annual service of a gas fire. When the engineer attended Mr S's home in June 2015 he found signs of 'spillage' and downdraught. This meant that the fire might not have been safe and in accordance with gas safety regulations he disconnected it. The engineer couldn't discover the fault so recommended Mr S arranged a visit from a flue specialist to inspect the flue.

Mr S organised a visit from a gas safe registered engineer. He attended and conducted a smoke bomb test on the flue. He couldn't find any fault. Mr S was charged £80 for the visit.

British Gas returned to Mr S's home to reconnect the fire. But weren't able to do so when it discovered the private engineer hadn't done a spillage test on the fire. British Gas told Mr S he needed to have his flue looked at by a specialist firm.

Mr S then organised a visit from another engineer who was able to conduct a spillage test. He couldn't find anything wrong but did recommend Mr S had some work done to his flue.

Mr S complained to British Gas. He felt it hadn't properly tested the fire and had disconnected it unnecessarily. Mr S believed that British Gas should repay him the £80 it had cost for the first private engineer to attend and the cost of the work undertaken to his flue. British Gas didn't agree but did offer to pay £80 as a gesture of goodwill. Mr S complained to this service.

Our adjudicator investigated the case. He didn't recommend that Mr S's complaint should be upheld. He felt that the British Gas' engineer had acted reasonably. He thought the offer of the £80 goodwill gesture was appropriate. But he didn't think British Gas should cover the costs of the work undertaken on the flue. This was because Mr S's policy didn't cover any repair work to the flue. Mr S has disagreed and the case has been passed to me.

## **my findings**

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

The issue for me to decide is whether British Gas had acted unreasonably when it disconnected Mr S's fire.

Mr S says British Gas didn't properly test the fire before it disconnected it for the suspected spillage problem. When the flue company had recommended work he had felt pressured to get it done so that British Gas would agree to reconnect the fire.

I haven't seen any evidence that the British Gas' engineer didn't find any signs of spillage when he visited. And if there is any sign that there are products of combustion entering the room then the gas safety rules say that the appliance must be investigated before it can be left operational. So I think British Gas acted reasonably in requesting the flue be inspected by a specialist company and disconnecting it until that had happened.

There was some confusion about who Mr S should have called out to inspect the fire. So I think the £80 goodwill offer by British Gas was fair. But I don't think it's reasonable to make British Gas pay for the cost of the work undertaken on Mr S's flue.

This is because I've seen that the policy doesn't cover the cost of repairing or replacing the flue. And although I understand that Mr S was anxious to get his fire re-connected I don't think British Gas put him under any pressure to have work done. It wanted to be sure his fire was safe before reconnecting it. British Gas would've made it operational after the first private engineer if the correct test had been done. It had tried to assist Mr S by recommending a suitable firm to inspect the flue after that visit.

I'm not upholding Mr S's complaint.

### **my final decision**

For the reasons I've given above, I'm not upholding Mr S's complaint. I make no award against British Gas Services Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 29 December 2015.

Jocelyn Griffith  
**ombudsman**