

complaint

Mr B complains that British Gas Services Limited gave him poor service under a home care policy.

background

In early 2011 – when he had no hot water – Mr B called British Gas. Its engineer did some work including fitting a new programmer unit. Three years later, Mr B complained that British Gas had left the programmer wired incorrectly, increasing his gas bills.

The adjudicator did not recommend that the complaint should be upheld. She did not conclude that British Gas had caused an increase in Mr B's gas usage.

Mr B disagrees with the adjudicator's opinion. He says that his house was built in about 2009 and he was paying high gas bills in 2010. If British Gas had left the programmer working properly in 2011, his gas usage would have been about 35% different – as shown by the reduction after his engineer fixed the fault in 2014, Mr B says.

my findings

I have considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Mr B was unable to provide copies of gas bills covering the periods before British Gas visited in March 2011. But his energy supplier gave the adjudicator the following details:

8 November 2010	£610.53
24 January 2011	£757.54
8 April 2011	£785.74

I have seen no evidence that these bills included gas usage in prior periods such as during the construction and drying out of the house.

After the British Gas visit in March 2011 - Mr B's timer was incorrectly wired. I accept the email from Mr B's heating engineer as follows:

*“the British gas timer had been wired incorrectly.
Please note the switch wire connected into terminal 1 on the timer has been erroneously connected to terminal 7 in the junction box.
Terminal 1 is a switch wire which becomes live when the timer is off and is not normally used on a [proprietary] system.
The consequences of this are that the underfloor heating will run continuously...”*

But I bear in mind Mr B's already high gas bills. And I find it likely that the wiring had been incorrect since it was first installed in about 2009. On balance I accept that British Gas fitted a new programmer unit without changing or re-wiring the back plate. Keeping in mind the terms of the agreement, I do not think British Gas treated Mr B unfairly or unreasonably by not checking and correcting the wiring.

I accept that Mr B's gas usage went down after his engineer re-wired the back plate in March 2014.

British Gas offered to refund about £180 as a gesture of good will.

But I have not found that it was at fault. So I do not think it would be fair and reasonable to order British Gas to do anything further.

my final decision

For the reasons I have explained, my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint. I make no order against British Gas Services Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I am required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 29 June 2015.

Christopher Gilbert
ombudsman