

complaint

Mr C is unhappy that British Gas Services Limited wrongly notified him that an engineer would be visiting his property. This inconvenienced him and he doesn't think the compensation offered is enough.

background

Mr C received an e-mail telling him that an engineer would be visiting his property on a particular date. Mr C says he waited in all day, but no-one turned up.

He complained to British Gas who found that he'd received the notification in error. His e-mail address was linked to his previous property. And an engineer's visit had been organised for that property, not the one he now lived at.

British Gas offered Mr C a total of £80 – broken down as:

- £30 for the inconvenience of an engineer not turning up when he'd been told one would
- £50 for delays in responding to Mr C, after he'd raised a complaint

Mr C referred his complaint to this service. An investigator here thought that £50 was enough to reflect the customer service issues Mr C had encountered. But he thought that in relation to the engineer not turning up, British Gas should increase the compensation payment by £45 to a total of £75.

Neither British Gas nor Mr C accepted the investigator's recommendation, so the complaint has been passed to me for a final decision.

my findings

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

Having done so, I uphold this complaint. I'll explain why.

British Gas has conceded that it made an error when Mr C was incorrectly told that an engineer would be visiting his property on a particular day. So the only thing I need decide is what level of compensation is appropriate.

British Gas says that the £30 it already paid Mr C is the standard level of compensation it pays to customers in this situation. Mr C says he earns £350 a day and so British Gas should pay him that amount to reflect the fact that he missed out on those earnings by staying at home waiting for the engineer to arrive – when he could've been working.

The investigator has already explained to British Gas that we treat each case on its individual merits. The level of compensation due is based on the impact that an error has had on a particular customer. The same error could impact different consumers in quite different ways – depending on their circumstances. The levels of distress and upset caused by a particular error could be quite different.

In this case, a compensation payment of £75 is warranted. From what I've seen, British Gas' error has caused Mr C a fair amount of frustration and upset – and a payment of £30 isn't enough to reflect that.

Mr C was asked to provide evidence of the loss of earnings that he said he'd suffered as a result of British Gas' error – but he says he can't provide this.

Taking everything into account, I've decided that it would be fair and reasonable for British Gas to pay Mr C a total of £75 for the frustration and upset caused by its error.

my final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint. I direct British Gas Services Limited to pay Mr C a total of £75. I understand that British Gas has already paid Mr C £30 relating to this. That being the case, it needs to pay Mr C a further £45. If British Gas hasn't already paid Mr C anything, then it needs to pay the full £75.

For clarity's sake, the £50 British Gas says it has paid Mr C for poor customer service, is separate to this. Mr C is free to accept this if he would like to do so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 20 April 2018.

Ben Brewer
ombudsman