

complaint

Mr H complains British Gas Services Limited hasn't carried out annual services when it should have done and has provided poor customer service.

background

Mr H had a new boiler installed in late 2013 and at the same time took out a five year HomeCare policy. He complained to British Gas several times about the policy, including complaining about his annual services been delayed and missed as well as poor service.

British Gas investigated Mr H's complaints and offered compensation. Mr H was unhappy that he kept on having problems with British Gas and so complained to us.

One of our investigators looked into Mr H's complaint and said that there were some issues that we couldn't look into – because he'd complained more than six months after British Gas had issued a Final Response or because British Gas hadn't had an opportunity to look into the issues as they were new complaints. Our investigator did, however, think that the compensation British Gas had offered for the issues we could look at wasn't enough given the impact on Mr H. So they recommended that British Gas pay Mr H an additional £150.

my findings

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

Mr H took out a five year HomeCare policy in late 2013 for which he paid just over £600. British Gas agreed to service his boiler on an annual basis under that policy and the policy also covered his boiler during that period. Both sides now agree that Mr H's policy was an insurance product – not all British Gas policies are – so we can look into complaints about it.

I can see that Mr H is frustrated with British Gas – he's been let down on a number of occasions meaning he hasn't always had the annual checks when they were originally scheduled. He's also had several different examples of poor customer service, ranging from receiving an email that was meant for another customer, to not getting a call from the engineer to say that they were running late because the engineer had been given an out of date contact number. Mr H has already complained about a number of these issues, and British Gas has offered him compensation and sent out cheques that he hasn't paid in. Mr H accepts that we can't look into those issues now – but British Gas has confirmed that it will pay the compensation it has previously offered issuing fresh cheques and cancelling the old ones that Mr H hasn't paid in yet. Mr H also accepts that if he wanted us to look at the new issues he's raised British Gas needs to have an opportunity to consider them first. That means the only issue I'm looking at are the problems Mr H has had with the annual service that was re-arranged for January 2018 which was rescheduled a number of times and didn't take place until April 2018. I will, however, take the previous problems Mr H has had with British Gas into account as I accept that these are likely to have made the re-arranging and rescheduling of the January 2018 appointment more frustrating for Mr H than it might otherwise have been.

Our investigator recommended British Gas pay Mr H an additional £150 in compensation for the frustration that the re-arranging and rescheduling of the January 2018 caused. Having reviewed the file, I consider that this fairly reflects the impact the additional problems had on

Mr H. I'm, therefore, going to require British Gas to pay Mr H £150 in compensation. In addition, I'm going to require British Gas to issue fresh cheques paying Mr H the compensation it has previously offered to the extent that Mr H hasn't paid those cheques in. I'm doing so on the basis that British Gas will cancel the other cheques it has previously sent Mr H.

my final decision

My Final Decision is that I require British Gas Services Limited to pay Mr H £150 in compensation. In addition, I require British Gas Services Limited to issue fresh cheques paying Mr H the compensation it has previously offered to the extent that Mr H hasn't already paid those cheques in.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 8 June 2019.

Nicolas Atkinson
ombudsman