

complaint

Mr V complains SSE Home Services Limited (SSE) has provided poor customer service.

background

Mr V had a SSE Shield Gas Heating Care agreement. But he cancelled it as he felt SSE had failed to fix his boiler after two visits. He feels this left him with a dangerous boiler. He had to pay his own contractor £55 to repair the boiler. And SSE charged him a cancellation fee of £91.

After Mr V complained to SSE it eventually agreed to waive the cancellation fee. But it's refused to pay expenses, such as postal costs, that Mr V wants covered. He also wants compensation for distress and inconvenience he says SSE's caused him. It's since offered to pay him the £55 cost of the repair.

Our investigator thought SSE had acted reasonably. She didn't think it needed to pay Mr V any extra. He disagreed, so the complaint has come 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'm not going to make SSE pay Mr V any extra.

There's a dispute about what sort of engineer visit was requested initially. But I don't think that really makes a difference. A service took place. I'd expect a service to address any pressure problem the boiler was displaying. The engineers report doesn't mention one. It says the boiler was in good working order. So I think it probably wasn't displaying signs of a pressure problem at the point it was serviced.

Mr V requested a further engineer a few days later. SSE sent one in reasonable time. The report says pressure was released and a gate valve replaced. The engineer seems to have thought this was successful. Unfortunately it wasn't. The boiler showed a warning sign soon after.

I don't agree that this means SSE did something wrong. It says boiler pressure problems can be caused by a range of causes, including faulty gate valves. And that as the system was working after its replacement it was reasonable of the engineer to think the problem had been fixed. It also says pressure problems can be intermittent. I've no reason to doubt what SSE says about this. So SSE took reasonable steps to try to fix the boiler.

Soon after SSE's unsuccessful second visit, Mr V sent it a letter asking it to contact him about the continuing problem. It looks like SSE didn't respond to this. That was poor customer service. But Mr V didn't chase SSE up or give it a call. Even if SSE had twice tried unsuccessfully to fix the problem, it would've been reasonable for him to have given it another chance.

But instead he cancelled his agreement and paid for a repair privately. It was Mr V's choice to do that. So it wasn't SSE's fault his boiler wasn't repaired until a few months after the second visit.

SSE has acted reasonably by fully waiving the cancellation charge and covering the cost of the repair. I don't think it had to do either. And it wouldn't be fair to make it pay Mr V any extra.

I don't know if SSE's paid Mr V the £55 for the repairs yet. If it hasn't I expect it to honour the offer.

my final decision

For the reasons given above, SSE Home Services Limited will need to pay Mr V, if it hasn't already, the £55 it's offered him. But I'm not going to make it pay him any extra.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr V to accept or reject my decision before 9 November 2017.

Daniel Martin
ombudsman