

## **complaint**

Mrs K complains about the service she received from British Gas Services Limited when she had a leak at her home. She's represented by her daughter, Mrs J.

## **background**

Mrs K has a HomeCare policy which covers central heating, plumbing and drains, and home electricals.

In late 2016 British Gas was called out to fix a leak in Mrs K's bathroom, which it repaired. A few months later Mrs K reported a leak from the bathroom into the kitchen. It seems the leak occurred because the repair from late 2016 hadn't been successful. British Gas attended again, and made some mistakes around what was needed to repair it. This led to some extra works being needed which were completed around July 2017.

Mrs J was unhappy with the service Mrs K received from British Gas, so she complained on her behalf. British Gas accepted that the service could've been better, apologised, and offered Mrs K £120 compensation in recognition of what had happened. It later increased its offer to £210. Mrs J didn't think this was enough, saying £1,000 was more appropriate in the circumstances.

One of our investigators looked into the matter. She noted, amongst other things, that it had taken British Gas around nine months from when the leak was first reported until it was completely resolved. She considered Mrs K's serious poor health over this period, the distress and inconvenience of numerous calls and visits from workmen to her home, the effect of seeing a relative injured because of how the bathroom floor was left after a British Gas visit, and the frustration of having her bathroom floor damaged unnecessarily.

The investigator thought this could've been avoided if British Gas had resolved the leak properly at the outset. Taking all of this into account, she thought £500 compensation was a fair and reasonable reflection of the impact British Gas' mistakes had had on Mrs K.

British Gas remained of the opinion that £210 compensation was fair. Mrs J remained of the opinion that £1,000 compensation was fair. As an agreement couldn't be reached, the complaint has been passed to me to decide.

## **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've come to the same conclusion as the investigator, for the same reasons.

I'm aware that Mrs K's family has also been affected by what's happened. But Mrs K is the policy holder, so I can only take into account the impact that this matter has had on her.

I have a good deal of sympathy for Mrs K. I'm aware of her serious poor health, and that the last thing she would've wanted was a leak turning into a long-winded issue which took months to resolve. But our awards aren't meant to punish a business. Instead, they're to compensate someone for the impact a business's mistakes have had on them.

I've taken into account everything that Mrs J has told us. I think this matter would've been distressing for Mrs K – especially having her home in need of repairs for several months. And I'm sure having workmen around when she was trying to rest would've been inconvenient. I'm pleased Mrs K's family were able to help with this. I'm sorry to hear a relative hurt her foot on the bathroom floor. I'm sure this would've concerned Mrs K. Overall though, I think £500 is fair and reasonable compensation in the circumstances.

**my final decision**

I uphold this complaint, and require British Gas Services Limited to pay Mrs K £500 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs J, on behalf of Mrs K, to accept or reject my decision before 13 November 2017.

James Langford  
**ombudsman**