



Case study: Insurance

HOME INSURANCE CLAIM REJECTED DUE TO ENGINEER'S MIS-DIAGNOSIS OF PROBLEM

Themes: Home insurance; accredited engineer; second professional opinion

A home emergency insurance claim was rejected because the home insurance company's appointed engineer mis-diagnosed an error, leading to the belief that the issue was not covered by the complainant's home insurance policy.

Mr D's boiler failed leaving him with no hot water. Mr D contacted his home insurance company, and an engineer was dispatched to examine the boiler. The engineer advised that the boiler's heat exchanger was blocked, and this was unfortunately outside of Mr D's home insurance policy cover. The engineer also recommended additional work that would be needed at a cost of between £500 - £1,000. As the additional work was not covered by Mr D's home insurance policy, the engineer was unable to complete the repairs and left.

Mr D was not convinced with the first engineer's diagnosis and contacted another accredited engineer to re-examine his boiler. Mr D's engineer found that the issue was related to a seized pump that was covered by Mr D's home insurance policy and not a blockage as the first engineer had concluded. Mr D contacted his home insurer again to advise of this new advice, but the home insurer stated that the seizure must have been caused by the blockage and rejected Mr D's home insurance claim. Mr D felt he had no alternative but to commission his engineer to complete the work at a cost of approximately £600 as he had no hot water. Whilst Mr D's engineer completed the work, he advised Mr D that there was no blockage and that the additional work required according to the first engineer, costing between £500 and £1,000, was not necessary.

Mr D made a formal complaint to his home insurance company as he believed the actual boiler issue was covered by his home insurance policy. Consequently, Mr D requested his home insurance company refund him the cost of the repairs. Mr D's home insurance company investigated and upheld Mr D's complaint. They apologised to Mr D but stated that Mr D's repair costs were unreasonable and offered Mr D approximately £450 towards the repairs with no compensation for distress or inconvenience. Mr D accepted this offer and took his complaint to CIFO in an effort to retrieve the rest of the repair costs and compensation.

Mr D complained to CIFO, requesting a refund of the outstanding £150 repair costs and £50 for the distress and inconvenience he had suffered. CIFO investigated and found that Mr D's home insurance company's engineer had originally mis-diagnosed the problem which had led to Mr D's complaint. CIFO also noted that Mr D's home insurance policy did cover the actual boiler issue. Therefore, notwithstanding the previous agreement for the amount offered by the insurer, CIFO upheld the complaint and recommended Mr D's home insurance company cover the remaining costs

for the boiler repairs and compensate Mr D £100 for the distress and inconvenience they had caused. The recommendation was accepted by the insurer.