

## Postal Redress Service (POSTRS): Independent Complaint Reviewer Report For 2017.

### **Introduction**

This is my second report on POSTRS – which deals with disputes between postal operators who are members of the Service and their customers. This report covers the calendar year 2017. In future, my reports will take place on a six monthly basis.

### **My Role**

I am an independent consultant and am not based at CEDR, nor am I part of that organisation. There are two aspects to my role.

Firstly, I can consider individual complaints about certain aspects of the level of service provided by POSTRS. Under my terms of reference<sup>1</sup> and the rules of the Service<sup>2</sup> I am only able to consider points concerning POSTRS' or CEDR's quality of service in respect of alleged administrative errors, delays, staff rudeness or other such service matters. Other than referring to them where appropriate, I cannot comment on the content or validity of the Service's rules.

I can review cases where a user of the Service has complained to POSTRS or CEDR and, having been through CEDR's complaint process, remains dissatisfied with the outcome of that complaint. I cannot consider the merits or otherwise of decisions made by CEDR's adjudicators; nor can I investigate, consider or comment on the substance or outcomes of cases or applications made by claimants.

Where appropriate, I may make recommendations based on my findings.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cedr.com/postrs/docslib/7-cedr-independent-reviewer-terms-of-reference.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cedr.com/postrs/scheme-rules/>

The second aspect of my role is to conduct overall reviews of service complaints and produce reports accordingly. These are based on findings from my reviews of individual complaints; and by examining and analysing all or some of the service complaints that POSTRS have handled as I see fit.

## **This Report**

I had no complaints referred to me under POSTRS' complaints procedure during 2017. For the purposes of this report I therefore decided to review all the service complaints received by POSTRS during the calendar year 2017.

## **CEDR's Complaints Procedure**

The complaints procedure<sup>3</sup> covers POSTRS and it explains the scope of the procedure along with the two internal stages of review that take place before, if necessary, a complaint is referred to me.

The procedure is articulated clearly with timescales and information about what can be expected. In brief, if after the first stage response to a complaint a customer remains dissatisfied he or she can ask for escalation to stage two of the process, where a Director will review the complaint. Where this does not resolve the matter, the complaint can be referred to me for independent review.

## **My Findings**

### Quantitative

POSTRS continues to receive a very low number of complaints about its service. Out of the 460 cases it handled in 2017 there were just two complaints about POSTRS' own service performance. This represents 0.4%. This is an insignificant amount of complaints.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cedr.com/complaints/>

Of the 460 total claims handled in 2017, 60% (276) received a final decision from an adjudicator. The remaining 40% were either outside the scope for investigation by POSTRS, or were settled without the need to progress to an adjudicator.

Of the 276 adjudicated cases, POSTRS found wholly for the claimant in four (1.4%) cases; partly for the claimant in 43 cases (15.6%); and wholly for the postal operator in 229 cases (82%). This provides a useful context in which to view the complaints made about POSTRS itself; and although the majority of cases were found in favour of the postal operator the fact that only two complaints were made about POSTRS suggests that the Service is functioning well on an operational level.

Table 1 below gives a breakdown of the service complaints about POSTRS:

Table 1

In Scope	Out of Scope	Partly in Scope	Total
0	1	1	2

Table 2 below gives a breakdown by outcome:

Table 2

Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
0	0	2	2

As in 2016, these are very low numbers and it is not possible to identify any trends or themes. However, the very small number of complaints does indicate the absence of any systemic or underlying issues.

Whilst the volumes are very low, it is worth noting that POSTRS received one fewer complaint about its service in 2017 than in 2016 against a higher number of total claims handled by the Service. This is good evidence of a consistent performance, and I have no concerns in respect of the complaint process.

## Qualitative

I examined both cases, and am satisfied that the correct outcomes were reached.

I felt that one case should have been classified as within scope rather than partly in scope – as the Stage 1 response to the customer stated that the complaint was, indeed, within scope. I have drawn this to CEDR's attention and it will be amended on their system. However, the outcome of the case (not upheld) was correct as it concerned confusion about the execution of the remedy awarded by the adjudicator, and that matter was successfully resolved by POSTRS.

The second case was very clearly out of scope.

## **Conclusion**

In the context of the volume of work handled by POSTRS in 2017 the frequency of complaints about its own service levels remains very low at <1%. This is evidence of a continuing good performance.

The service complaints process is well articulated and the evidence from my review shows it to be working effectively. The responses to consumers that I looked at were of a high standard, for which POSTRS is to be commended.

## **Recommendations**

I have no recommendations.

## **Acknowledgements**

I have been given open and unrestricted access to all POSTRS' and CEDR's systems and records along with carte blanche in respect of conducting this audit as I saw fit. I am very grateful for the patience and assistance given to me in terms of navigating systems and dealing with my various questions. I am grateful, too, for CEDR's responses to the occasional points that I raised as I examined the casework.

Chris Holland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C A Holland'.

Independent Complaint Reviewer

21 February 2018