

## Postal Redress Service (POSTRS): Independent Complaint Reviewer Report For 2018.

### **Introduction**

This is my second report on POSTRS – which deals with disputes between postal operators who are members of the Service and their customers. In combination with my interim report<sup>1</sup> of 29 September 2018 it covers the full calendar year 2018.

### **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>2</sup> and the rules of the Service<sup>3</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.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cedr.com/docslib/POSTRS\\_Interim\\_Review\\_2018.pdf](https://www.cedr.com/docslib/POSTRS_Interim_Review_2018.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cedr.com/postrs/docslib/7-cedr-independent-reviewer-terms-of-reference.pdf>

<sup>3</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 as I see fit all or some of the service complaints that POSTRS have handled.

## **CEDR's Complaints Procedure**

The complaints procedure<sup>4</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 customers remain dissatisfied they 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.

## **This Report**

I had no complaints referred to me under POSTRS' complaints procedure during 2018. Therefore this report covers my overall review of the way complaints about the Service have been handled. My quantitative findings incorporate those from my interim report and cover from 1 January to 31 December 2018. My qualitative findings focus on the second half of the year; my interim report covers the first half.

## **My Findings**

### Quantitative

POSTRS continues to receive a low number of complaints about its service. Out of the 403 applications it handled in 2018 there were seven complaints about POSTRS' own service performance. This represents 1.7%, which although up from 0.4% in 2017 remains an insignificant absolute number of complaints.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cedr.com/complaints/>

Of the 403 total applications handled in 2018, 57% (230) received a final decision from an adjudicator. The remaining 43% were either outside the scope for investigation by POSTRS, or were settled without the need to progress to an adjudicator.

Of the 230 adjudicated claims, POSTRS found wholly for the claimant in one (0.4%) case; partly for the claimant in 19 cases (8.3%); and wholly for the postal operator in 206 cases (89.6%)<sup>5</sup>. This provides a useful context in which to view the complaints made about POSTRS itself; and, as in previous years, whilst the majority of cases were found in favour of the postal operator the fact that only seven complaints were made about POSTRS suggests that the Service continues to function 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
3	2	2	7

Table 2 below gives a breakdown by outcome for those complaints that were fully or party in scope:

Table 2

Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
2	3	0	5

As in previous years, these are low numbers and it is not possible to identify any trends or themes. The consistently low volume of complaints indicates the absence of any systemic or underlying issues; and the fact that CEDR fully or partly upheld five out of the seven complaints made suggests that it is taking those complaints seriously and making redress when appropriate.

---

<sup>5</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% due to roundings and as some cases are in the pipeline.

## Qualitative

All complaints were handled within the prescribed 30 working day timescales, with an average of 17.7 days and a range of eight to 29 days. All seven cases were acknowledged within one working day.

For this review I examined all three complaints received between 1 July and 31 December 2018. Please see my interim report<sup>6</sup> for a qualitative analysis of those complaints received during the first half of the year.

The two fully in scope cases were correctly classified. The first was about a poorly handled telephone application, where the customer's appointment was not kept and there were problems getting this sorted out. The response acknowledged what was an administrative oversight and awarded £30.00 compensation.

The second in scope case was about delayed processing and calls not being returned. The response was comprehensive and offered £30.00 compensation, which was increased to £50.00 following some further problems. One of the causes of this complaint was a technical fault with the telephone system at the time – which was quickly rectified.

The partly in scope case was about the decision process (which was out of scope) and the customer's view that some additional needs were not met. The response was thorough and signposted the customer to another agency for the parts of the complaint that were beyond POSTRS' remit; explained how adjustments to the usual timescales had actually been made to accommodate the particular needs of this customer; and awarded £25.00 compensation for elements of poor call handling at various times.

All cases were correctly classified and in my opinion the outcomes were correct.

---

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.cedr.com/docslib/POSTRS\\_Interim\\_Review\\_2018.pdf](https://www.cedr.com/docslib/POSTRS_Interim_Review_2018.pdf)

## **Conclusion**

In the context of the volume of work handled by POSTRS in 2018 the frequency of complaints about its own service levels remains low. This is evidence of a continuing good overall 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 consistently high standard, for which POSTRS is again 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 my annual review 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



Independent Complaint Reviewer

12 February 2019