

ADR Entity Reporting – Biennial Report

Communications & Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS)

Reporting period: 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2021

In June 2015 CISAS was approved by Ofcom to provide alternative dispute resolution under the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”).

As part of Ofcom’s approval, CISAS is required under Schedule 6 of the Regulations to communicate the following information every two years:

- (a) The number of disputes received by the ADR entity and the types of complaints to which the disputes related

In the reporting period, CISAS received a total of 40,912 disputes. Of these, 36,416 disputes came within the scope of what CISAS can deal with, while 4496 were either out of scope or were discontinued for operational reasons.

The following table sets out the types of disputes that were referred to CISAS in the reporting period which came within the scope of what CISAS can deal with.

Complaint Types	Number of Cases
Billing	9686
Service quality	7958
Contract issues	7114
Customer service	5931
Mis-selling	3348
Equipment	1956
Security	423

(b) The percentage share of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued before an outcome was reached

During the reporting period, CISAS discontinued a total of 2683 cases. This represents 6.5% of the total amount of disputes received by CISAS.

The following table sets out the percentage share of the reasons for which CISAS discontinued cases:

Reason for Discontinuance	Percentage Share
The subject matter of the dispute did not fall within the scope of what CISAS can consider under its Scheme Rules	1.8%
The consumer submitted an incomplete application to CISAS which could not be taken forward owing to the lack of information	16%
The trader that the consumer is complaining about was not registered with CISAS as its ADR entity	0.2%
The consumer was not a 'customer' of the trader under the definition set out in the CISAS Scheme Rules	51%
The consumer voluntarily withdrew their dispute from CISAS while it was in progress	31%

(c) The average time taken to resolve the disputes which the ADR entity has received

Disputes took an average of 36 calendar days to resolve.

(d) The rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes of its alternative dispute resolution procedures

CISAS does not record data on the rate of compliance with outcomes.

CISAS has a process in place whereby a trader that fails to comply with an adjudicator's decision that has been accepted by the consumer has their membership of CISAS suspended. If non-compliance persists, the trader's membership of CISAS is terminated.

- (e) Any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders could be avoided or resolved in future

It is important that traders have clear policies in place for dealing with vulnerable customers and that they train their staff effectively to identify and make adjustments for those with vulnerabilities.

As the pandemic comes to an end, traders should take stock of how their customers were served and any improvements that could have been made, particularly by reference to identifying and catering to vulnerable customers. This will ensure that traders have a greater level of preparedness for similar events in future.

- (f) Where the ADR entity is a member of any network of ADR entities which facilitates the resolution of cross-border disputes, an assessment of the effectiveness of its co-operation in that network

Since 2019, CEDR has been a founding member of the Telecoms-Net group of European ADR entities facilitating the sharing of best practice in dispute resolution in the telecommunications sector. Due to the pandemic, meetings have been suspended for much of the reporting period, but the intention is to resume co-operation more intensively in the near future.

- (g) Where the ADR entity provides training to its ADR officials, details of the training it provides

CISAS supports the continuing training and development of its ADR officials. In this reporting period, training has been provided to ADR officials on the following topics:

- Ofcom's automated compensation scheme
- Traders' identification and reasonable adjustments for vulnerable customers
- Best practice on decision-making techniques, including requests for further evidence from the parties and making directions

(h) An assessment of the effectiveness of an alternative dispute resolution procedure offered by the ADR entity and of possible ways of improving its performance

CISAS remains a highly effective alternative dispute resolution procedure which has evolved and innovated during the period covered by this Biennial Report.

All disputes referred to CISAS are processed through an online case management platform which the parties to the dispute can log into, upload all relevant evidence and submissions, and where the adjudicator can ask queries of the parties and upload their decision on the dispute. This platform, which provides 360-degree visibility for all parties, has been highly successful in providing users with a transparent and effective dispute resolution procedure.

Following a number of large communications providers deciding to move to CISAS within the period covered in the previous biennial report, CISAS has managed to handle the increased caseload well within the period of 90 days required by law. This demonstrates that CISAS' operating model is highly effective in dealing with the increased dispute volumes that have been received.