

Postal Redress Service (POSTRS): Independent Complaint Reviewer Report January - June 2023.

1. Introduction

This is my thirteenth report on POSTRS - which deals with complaints about postal operators who are members of the Service. It covers 1 January to 30 June 2023. It will be my last report as I am retiring from the Independent Complaint Reviewer role at the end of October.

2. 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.

I can review cases where users of the Service have complained to POSTRS or CEDR and, having been through the complaints procedure, remain dissatisfied with the outcome. I cannot consider the merits or otherwise of decisions made by CEDR's adjudicators; nor can I investigate or review the substance or outcomes of claimants' applications. I may make recommendations based on my findings.

The second aspect of my role is to review complaints about the Service generally, and produce six monthly reports. These are based on my findings from any individual complaints that I've reviewed; and by examining all or some of the complaints about POSTRS as I see fit.

3. CEDR's Complaints Procedure

CEDR's complaints procedure¹ covers POSTRS. It explains the scope of the procedure and the two internal review stages 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 CEDR's first stage response to a complaint a customer remains dissatisfied they can ask for escalation to stage two of the process, where a senior manager will review the complaint. Where this does not resolve the matter, it can be referred to me for independent review.

¹ <https://www.cedr.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CEDR-Complaints-Procedure-2023.pdf>

4. This Report

This is a short report as CEDR only received six complaints, two of which were in the pipeline for a Stage 1 response at the time of my review. I therefore examined four cases (a 67% sample).

No cases were escalated to Stages 2 or 3.

5. My Findings

(a) Quantitative

POSTRS received 459 applications during this reporting period – 99% more than the preceding six months.

CEDR received six service complaints, representing 1.3% of the applications (the same as the previous six months).

Of the 459 total applications, 37% (168) received an adjudicator's final decision. The remaining 63% either fell outside of POSTRS' scope, or were settled without progressing to adjudication. The corresponding figures for the previous six months were 56% and 44% respectively – so POSTRS adjudicated far fewer claims (down 19 percentage points) during this reporting period.

Of the 168 adjudicated claims, POSTRS found wholly for the claimant in three cases (1.8%); partly for the claimant in six cases (3.6%); and wholly for the postal operator in 159 cases (94.6%). Corresponding percentages in the previous six months were 3.9%, 6.9 % and 89.2 % - so there's been a slight increase in claims found in favour of the postal operator.

It's not my role to comment on the volume of claims or their outcomes; I include these data for contextual purposes only.

(b) Qualitative

(i) Timescales

CEDR acknowledged 100% of the complaints they received within their two working day target.

CEDR completed all four Stage 1 responses within their 30 working day target, with an average of 27.25 working days and a range of 22 to 30.

(ii) Casework and Outcomes

Of the four cases that had completed the complaints procedure at the time of my review, one was in scope and CEDR upheld it in full; and three was out of scope.

The in scope complaint was about the return of a document to the complainant. This was a straightforward oversight, which the Stage 1 review acknowledged and remedied by sending the customer the document in question. CEDR awarded £20.00 compensation for the inconvenience caused, which the customer accepted.

All three out of scope complaints were unexceptional and were entirely about the adjudicator's decision so were rightly rejected.

6. Conclusion

Complaint volumes remain low, and I'm content that POSTRS is maintaining a very good overall performance.

The Stage 1 responses I reviewed were of a good standard, giving clear information to the complainants.

I have no further comments.

7. Recommendations

I have no recommendations.

Acknowledgements

I conducted my review remotely, with open and unrestricted access to the systems and records that I needed. I'm grateful to CEDR for facilitating this. As I mentioned earlier, I'm retiring from this role at the end of October. It has been a privilege to be of service to CEDR and its customers for the last seven years.

Chris Holland



Independent Complaint Reviewer
20 July 2023