

ADR Entity Reporting - Biennial Report

Communications & Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS)

Reporting period: 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2023

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 24,873 disputes. Of these, 19,396 disputes came within the scope of what CISAS can deal with, while 5477 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	5140
Service quality	3903
Contract issues	4247
Customer service	2891
Mis-selling	1850
Equipment	1186
Security	179

- (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 3717 cases for operational reasons. This represents 14.9% of the total amount of disputes received by CISAS.

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	54%
The consumer submitted an incomplete application to CISAS which could not be taken forward owing to the lack of information	1%
The trader that the consumer is complaining about was not registered with CISAS as its ADR entity	1%

The consumer was not a 'customer' of the trader under the definition set out in the CISAS Scheme Rules	15%
The consumer voluntarily withdrew their dispute from CISAS while it was in progress	29%

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

Disputes took an average of 19 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

Identifying vulnerable customers quickly and accurately, as well as providing them with relevant assistance and reasonable adjustments will increase the likelihood that those customers' problems will be resolved in an effective and timely manner, avoiding the need for such disputes to be referred to ADR.

Providing an accessible and responsive customer service function is an essential for all public-facing companies, particularly when an increasing number of consumers are affected by health, financial and other social vulnerabilities. Improving the work of customer service functions to equip them with the tools to identify and resolve issues quickly is a key tool in preventing complaints from escalating into disputes that are referred to ADR.

(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.

(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 best practice on decision-making techniques, including writing decisions for a consumer audience and providing effective closure to disputes.

(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. Users of CISAS experience a swift and simple process for the resolution of a deadlocked dispute, with legally trained adjudicators applying the law and standards of fairness and reasonableness to the evidence and submissions put forward by both parties.

CISAS is looking to make changes in the future to its procedural rules that govern the process by which all CISAS cases are run. These changes will propose the introduction of a process designed to facilitate the parties in resolving their disputes by mutual agreement prior to going to adjudication, avoiding the need for an adversarial process. They will also propose the production of summary procedural rules that contain highlights of the most important rules for consumers to be aware of. This will result in a more streamlined process geared towards effective dispute resolution that is clear to all stakeholders.