

ADR Entity Reporting - Biennial Report

Postal Redress Service (POSTRS)

Reporting period: 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2023

In June 2015 POSTRS 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, POSTRS 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, POSTRS received a total of 1480 disputes. Of these, 814 disputes came within the scope of what POSTRS can deal with, while 666 were either out of scope or were discontinued for operational reasons.

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

Complaint Types	Number of Cases
Loss of item	250
Damage to item	32
Delay to item	30
Customer service	217
Other / undefined	285

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

During the reporting period, POSTRS discontinued a total of 435 cases for operational reasons. This represents 29.4% of the total amount of disputes received by POSTRS.

Reason for Discontinuance	Percentage Share
The subject matter of the dispute did not fall within the scope of what POSTRS can consider under its Scheme Rules	78%
The consumer submitted an incomplete application to POSTRS which could not be taken forward owing to the lack of information	Nil
The trader that the consumer is complaining about was not registered with POSTRS as its ADR entity	Nil
The consumer was not a ‘customer’ of the trader under the definition set out in the POSTRS Scheme Rules	3%

The consumer voluntarily withdrew their dispute from POSTRS while it was in progress	19%
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(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

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

POSTRS 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 POSTRS suspended. If non-compliance persists, the trader's membership of POSTRS 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

POSTRS has not dealt with any cross-border disputes in the reporting period, and therefore it does not co-operate with any network of ADR entities which facilitate the resolution of such disputes.

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

POSTRS 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

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

Changes have been made to the procedural rules that govern the process by which all POSTRS cases are run, as well as the powers of the adjudicator. The changes have included 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 have also included the production of summary procedural rules that contain highlights of the most important rules for consumers to be aware of. This has resulted in a more streamlined process geared towards effective dispute resolution that is clear to all stakeholders.