

Postal Redress Service (POSTRS)
Report of the Independent Complaint Reviewer
for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024

1. Introduction

As the recently appointed Independent Complaints Reviewer (ICR), this is my first report for the POSTRS, which is run by CEDR (the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution). It deals with complaints made about postal operators who are members of POSTRS.

This report covers the twelve month period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. Normally, these reports are provided at six-monthly intervals, but due to the low complaint volumes, CEDR has decided for these reports to be issued on an annual basis. I agree with this change.

2. Background

I am an independent consultant. I work remotely and I am not an employee of CEDR. I am not involved in direct case handling or advice; my role is to act solely as an Independent Complaint Reviewer.

CEDR is a registered charity and non-profit organisation. It provides independent dispute resolution for consumers who experience problems with a company and who have exhausted that company's internal complaints procedure.

3. My Role

There are two aspects to my role:

- (i) To review cases that are escalated to me at Stage 3. This happens when a user of the POSTRS has complained and, having been through CEDR's complaints review process, remains dissatisfied. Under my Terms of Reference and the Complaints Procedure I can consider complaints about CEDR's *handling* of the complaint, but *not* about a decision made by an adjudicator, how that decision was reached or the procedure adopted.
- (ii) To review complaints about the Scheme as a whole and produce a report every twelve months. This is based upon my examination and analysis of all or some (as I deem appropriate) of the complaints handled by CEDR, along with any cases that were escalated to me.

4. Complaints Review Policy and Process

CEDR's Complaints Procedure explains its scope, along with the two internal stages of review that take place before, if necessary, a complaint is referred to me. It provides clear information about timescales and what can be expected. In brief, if, after the Stage 1 response complainants remain dissatisfied, they can ask for escalation to Stage 2 of the process, at which a senior manager will review the complaint. If this does not resolve the matter, it can be referred to me for independent review at Stage 3.

5. My Findings

(1) Statistics

During the calendar year January to December 2024, a total of 683 cases were received in the POSTRS scheme. Of those 683 cases:

- 482 cases were deemed within the scope of the scheme ; and
- 201 cases were deemed out of scope.

Of the 482 cases deemed in scope:

- 347 cases were adjudicated;
- 44 were found wholly or partly in favour of the complainant; and
- 303 were not upheld.

During the same twelve month review period CEDR dealt with a total of only 4 complaints:

- 1 in October;
- 2 in November; and
- 1 in December 2024.
- Three of these complaints were dealt with at Stage 1 of the procedure and none were escalated to either Stages 2 or 3.
- The fourth complaint is still in progress at the time of this report and a decision was due to be delivered to the complainant in January 2025.

Therefore, due to the low complaint volumes, this report is relatively brief.

The relatively low number of complaints in 2024 contrasts with the 2023 where a total of 15 complaints were registered, but is in line with the total of 4 complaints received in 2022.

(2) Cases

As only 3 complaints have been concluded by CEDR, I have reviewed each of them.

- (1) The first complaint related to a consumer who was dissatisfied with the adjudicator's decision and the fact that he was not able to appeal from it. The Complaints Manager quite rightly rejected the complaint as being completely out of scope, as it concerned a decision made by the adjudicator in the case.
- (2) The second complaint was in relation to a consumer who was unhappy with the service provided by CEDR, particularly with regard to telephone contact and using the online portal. The complaint was partially upheld and compensation of £25.00 offered.
- (3) The third complaint was one whereby the consumer said that he had experienced problems when trying to use the online portal and that his case had been withdrawn following an objection by the company due to the subject of the complaint. The latter issue was held to be out of scope, as it related to an adjudicator's decision, but the technical issues were considered

in scope and the Complaints Manager offered £25.00 for the inconvenience suffered by the complainant.

All complaints were addressed within the appropriate timescales.

6. Conclusion

I have no specific observations and, unsurprisingly given the small number of cases, I have found no evidence of any themes or causes for concern.

CEDR handled the few complaints they received to a good standard and addressed all of the complainants' concerns in their responses.

Timescale performance was also very good with acknowledgements and responses all either within, or well within internal targets.

7. Recommendations

Accordingly, I have no recommendations to make.

I conducted my review remotely, but I was provided with all the data and information required for this report and I had open and unrestricted access to the systems and records that I needed. I am grateful to CEDR for facilitating this.



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Independent Complaints Reviewer

7 February 2025