



Consumer Dispute Resolution

An approved alternative dispute resolution provider



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT TO CHARTERED TRADING
STANDARDS INSTITUTE FOR THE PERIOD SEPT 2019 – OCT
2020

Pursuant to The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent
Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 (As amended)

INDEX

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Complaints dealt with/Membership.....	4
3. Statistics	4
4. Average length of ADR procedure	6
5. ADR procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons.....	7
6. Compliance with ADR outcome percentages	7
7. Co-operation with other ADR entities in relation to cross-border disputes	7

Schedules:

1. Complaint statistics in excel
2. Problems encountered in excel

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 5th May 2015 Consumer Dispute Resolution Limited (“CDRL”), which at the time traded as “The Retail Ombudsman” was approved by Chartered Trading Standards Institute (“CTSI”), pursuant to the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes Regulations 2015, as an approved provider of alternative dispute resolution services (“ADR”).
- 1.2 Following approval by CTSI in 2015, CDRL operates the following ADR schemes :
- 1.2.1 RetailADR
 - 1.2.2 AviationADR
 - 1.2.3 UtilitiesADR
 - 1.2.4 CommsADR
 - 1.2.5 Consumer Arbitration
- 1.3 In June 2017 CDRL ceased to run its ‘retail’ scheme as an ‘ombudsman’ and as a consequence rebranded the scheme to ‘RetailADR’. CDRL has since increased it’s ADR schemes to provide Arbitration to encourage engagement in non-mandatory sectors and reduce consumer deterrent. For the purposes of the remainder of this Annual activity report is reference to CDRL.
- 1.4 The schemes within the CTSI approval form part of this Annual activity report. AviationADR is approved by the Civil Aviation Authority and CommsADR is approved by Ofcom. These schemes are therefore subject to separate reporting direct to the applicable competent authorities.
- 1.5 CDRL provides ADR in respect of unresolved disputes between consumers and:
- Retailers (in relation to purchases online and instore)
 - Hotels and leisure providers
 - Restaurants
 - Furniture
 - DIY
 - Health & Beauty services
 - Florists

 - Supply of home fuels (ie: oil and LPG)
 - British Gas (Non- regulated)
 - Npower (Non- regulated)
 - EON (Non- regulated)
 - SSE (Non- regulated)

Note: complaints in relation to regulated activities (ie: the actual supply of energy) are dealt with by Ombudsman Services: Energy.

2. Complaints dealt with/Membership

2.1 CDRL deals with complaints in relation to members and non-members.

2.2 In relation to complaints received about non-members, CDRL deals with such complaints where the non-member trader agrees to engage with CDRL and abide by its scheme rules in relation to the particular complaint. Many traders work with CDRL on this basis.

3. Statistics

3.1 Schedule 1 contains raw data in relation to domestic and cross-border complaints.

3.2 CDRL has specifically recorded complaints relating to:

3.2.1 Complaint types:

- Not of satisfactory quality – *this includes complaints relating to returns due to goods being faulty (including boilers)*
- Not as described
- Late delivery
- Cancelled/no delivery – *this includes where the retailer states goods have been delivered and the consumer claims they haven't*
- Out of stock – *this includes general complaints about stock levels and complaints where breach of contract is claimed as the retailer fails to deliver out of stock items despite taking the consumer's money (ie: invitation to treat issues).*
- Service issues- this includes customer service issues, issues with staff (being rude etc..), issues with the provision of services (including trade and energy provider home services complaints).
- Other- *this includes 'not fit for purpose' complaints, returns complaints where the complainant 'changed their mind' and complaints relating to 'pricing'.*

3.2.2 Goods/services categories:

- Electrical goods
- Clothing
- Food – which includes complaints relating to supermarkets, restaurants and takeaways
- Other - including 'trade' and energy provider home services complaints.

3.3 Stats overview (complaints 'accepted')

Domestic disputes per complaint type/type of goods:

4. Average length of ADR procedure

4.1 The average length of CDRL's ADR process has been:

4.1.1 RetailADR: 78 days

4.1.2 Utilitiesadr: 84 days

4.1.3 Consumer Arbitration: 29 days

5. ADR procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons

CDRL has no data to report here.

(from the date, the complaint was received), during the period applicable to this report.

6. Compliance with ADR outcome percentages

6.1 From the information provided (calculating on a pro-rata basis):

6.1 Member compliance – 96%

6.2 Non-member compliance – 64%

6.3 Complainant compliance (where they accepted determination) – 93%

7. Co-operation with other ADR entities in relation to cross-border disputes

CDRL has not had any opportunity to co-operate with any other ADR entity in relation to cross-border disputes. Annual complaint figures for September 2019 - October 2020 are as follows:

Dispute type	Number of complaints (Domestic)			Number of complaints (Cross-boarder)			Totals Accepted	
	rec'd	rejected	Accepted	rec'd	rejected	Accepted		
Not of satisfactory quality								
Electrical goods	212	114	98	21	12	9	100	
Clothing	83	42	41	7	5	2	36	
Food	43	20	23	4	2	2	18	
Other	581	297	284	57	31	26	260	
Total	878	473	405	87	50	37	414	
Not as described								
Electrical goods	178	132	46	17	14	3	42	
Clothing	215	160	55	21	16	5	53	
Food	33	20	13	2	2	0	6	
Other	64	44	20	6	5	1	14	
Total	490	356	134	46	37	9	115	
Late delivery								
Electrical goods	114	92	22	11	9	2	17	
Clothing	170	141	29	17	15	2	24	
Food	7	6	1	1	1	0	1	
Other	116	94	22	11	10	1	16	
Total	386	333	53	40	35	5	58	
Cancelled/no delivery								
Electrical goods	109	76	33	11	7	4	30	
Clothing	103	71	48	17	7	10	35	
Food	9	6	6	1	1	0	3	
Other	144	102	13	11	11	0	35	
Total	365	255	110	40	26	14	103	
Out of stock								
Electrical goods	64	32	32	6	4	2	27	
Clothing	116	62	54	11	6	5	52	
Food	9	5	4	1	0	1	5	
Other	144	78	66	15	9	6	65	
Total	533	177	356	33	19	14	149	
Other								
Electrical goods	168	129	39	17	14	3	35	
Clothing	148	112	36	15	11	4	33	
Food	28	22	6	2	2	0	6	
Other	180	138	42	17	14	3	38	
Total	524	401	123	51	41	10	112	
Service issues								
Electrical goods	162	129	40	14	10	4	37	
Clothing	141	112	29	15	11	4	33	
Food	35	22	13	2	2	0	6	
Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	172	138	34	17	15	2	36	
Total	510	401	109	48	38	10	112	
TOTALS	3360	2396	964	Cross B	345	246	99	1063

SCHEDULE 2

Problems encountered

SYSTEMATIC OR SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS OCCURRING FREQUENTLY	HOW CAN THIS PROBLEM BE AVOIDED OR RESOLVED IN THE FUTUR
1 Consumers failing to complain to the retailer/trader first before either coming to CDRL	Promotion of best complaint practice to consumers. In relation to the EU ODR platform this needs to filter complaints where the consumer has bypassed the retailer at the start of the complaint form
2 Retailers/traders failing to engage with ADR	Whilst a high number of retailers/traders have engaged with CDRL there are still brands that will not engage. To make ADR fully successful it should be made mandatory rather than voluntary with the only mandatory requirement to signpost, if we are to assist with the reduction of consumer detriment and improve consumer confidence.
3 Covid19 pandemic on response times and complaint handling times by both ADR and companies who have engaged in the process	2020 has been an unusual and unprecedented year due to the global pandemic, lockdown etc as a result of Covid19, has impacted not just the schemes, its members but also consumers. Not only have we had an increase in our overall response times due to staff furloughs and the continued management of cases submitted to us, but we have had to make allowances and adjustments to both companies and consumers to submit evidence or respond to our queries etc, as we have to acknowledge and understand that not all businesses are fully staffed or given they have had to instantly react to the need for staff to become remote workers, self isolate as well as balance working commitments around children due to child care and school closure nationally, we have had to provide a degree of flexibility to parties for responses and submitting evidence which has impacted in turn our turn around times.
	While staff have been working remotely, it has limited our ability to interact with consumers as well as deal with parties via telephone on occasion, as it is not always appropriate to take or receive calls when remote working given the background noise, such as kids being off school etc pets etc.