



CDRL

An approved alternative dispute resolution provider



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT TO CHARTERED TRADING STANDARDS INSITUTE
(CTSI) FOR THE PERIOD OF MAY 2020 – APRIL 2021

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

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Schedules:

1. Complaint statistics in Excel
2. Systematic or significant problems encountered during reporting period

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 (“**the Regulations**”), 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 consequently rebranded the scheme to ‘RetailADR’. CDRL has since increased its ADR schemes to also provide arbitration, with an aim to encourage a wider engagement in non-mandatory sectors and reduce consumer detriment.

1.4. The schemes within the CTSI approval form part of this Annual Activity Report. AviationADR is independently approved by the Civil Aviation Authority and CommsADR is independently approved by Ofcom. These schemes are therefore subject to separate reporting requirements direct to their applicable competent authorities. For the remainder of this Annual Activity Report, all relevant approved sectors shall be referred to as the collective CDRL.

1.5. CDRL provides ADR in respect of unresolved disputes between consumers / businesses and:

- Retailers (in relation to distance sale purchases and in store purchases)
- Supermarkets
- Leisure providers
- Airport lounges
- Supply of home fuels (i.e. oil and liquid petroleum gas)
- British Gas (in respect of non-regulated complaints)
- EON (in respect of non-regulated complaints)
- SSE (in respect of non-regulated complaints)

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

1.6. As part of CTSI’s approval, CDRL is required under Schedule 5 of the Regulations to produce an annual activity report.

2. Complaints CDRL processes

- 2.1. CDRL processes complaints raised in regard to its members and, on occasion, non-members.
- 2.2. In respect of complaints received against 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 (which includes complaints relating to returns due to goods being faulty)
- Not as described
- Late delivery
- Cancelled/no delivery (which includes complaints where the retailer states goods have been delivered and the consumer claims that they have not received them)
- Out of stock (which includes general complaints about stock levels and complaints where the consumer claims the retailer has breached its contract to deliver out of stock items despite money being exchanged by the consumer i.e. issues of invitation to treat)
- Service issues (which includes customer service issues, issues with staff (e.g. allegations of rudeness / discrimination), issues with the provision of services (such as installation issues and energy provider home service complaints))
- Other (which includes 'not fit for purpose' complaints, returns complaints where the consumer has 'changed their mind', discrimination allegations, and complaints in relation to mis-selling and pricing.

3.2.2. Goods/services categories:

- Electrical goods
- Clothing
- Food (which includes complaints relating to supermarkets/dine in halls)
- Other (which includes trade and energy provider home services complaints)

4. Average length of ADR procedure

4.1. The average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint):

4.1.1. RetailADR = 100 days

4.1.2. UtilitiesADR = 111 days

4.1.3. Consumer Arbitration = 13 days

4.2. The average time taken to resolve disputes (from ‘complete complaint file’):

4.2.1. RetailADR = 68 days

4.2.2. UtilitiesADR = 65 days

4.2.3. Consumer Arbitration = 13 days

The pandemic forced CDRL to make changes to its overall response times due to staff furloughs, whilst continuing to manage the complaints that were submitted to us. CDRL also had to make allowances and adjustments to both parties (consumers and members) during the complaint handling process. If extensions were granted, both parties were kept informed of the reasons for the extension. Extensions were granted in instances such as i) a business having staff on furlough or transitioning to remote working and ii) consumers and/or members staff having to self-isolate or unfortunately falling ill with Covid-19.

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. The rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes of its alternative dispute resolution procedures

CDRL has not recorded data on the rate of compliance with outcomes as a matter of course for this reporting period. However, if CDRL receives any reports from consumers that a member has failed to comply with the award set out in the Final Determination within the requisite 28 day period, CDRL duly follows this up with the trader and ensures that the consumer is kept informed throughout in an effort to ensure that the remedy is fulfilled.

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 May 2020 – April 2021 are as follows:

Dispute type	Number of complaints (Domestic)			Number of complaints (Cross-border)			Totals Accepted
	rec'd	rejected	accepted	rec'd	rejected	accepted	
Not of satisfactory quality							
Electrical goods	24	10	14	3	1	2	16
Clothing	37	11	26	4	1	3	29
Food	4	2	2	0	0	0	2
Other	349	94	255	39	10	29	284
Total	414	117	297	46	12	34	331
Not as described							
Electrical goods	26	16	10	3	2	1	11
Clothing	45	32	13	5	4	1	14
Food	2	1	1	0	0	0	1
Other	182	61	121	20	7	13	134
Total	255	110	145	28	13	15	166
Late delivery							
Electrical goods	13	4	9	1	0	1	10
Clothing	21	13	8	2	1	1	9
Food	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	51	20	31	6	2	4	35
Total	86	38	48	9	3	6	54
Cancelled/no delivery							
Electrical goods	43	16	27	5	2	3	30
Clothing	209	75	134	23	8	15	149
Food	6	2	4	1	0	1	5
Other	175	87	88	20	10	10	98
Total	433	180	253	49	20	29	282
Out of stock							
Electrical goods	3	0	3	0	0	0	3
Clothing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Food	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other	10	2	8	1	0	1	9
Total	14	3	11	1	0	1	12
Other							
Electrical goods	516	223	293	57	25	32	325
Clothing	607	258	349	68	29	39	388
Food	76	37	39	9	4	5	44
Other	2287	727	1560	254	81	173	1733
Total	3486	1245	2241	388	139	249	2436
Service issues							
Electrical goods	22	10	12	2	1	1	13
Clothing	15	8	7	2	1	1	8
Food	12	6	6	1	1	0	6
Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	260	94	166	29	10	19	185
Total	309	118	131	34	13	21	212
TOTALS	4997	1811	3186	Cross B	555	200	355

SCHEDULE 2

Problems Encountered During Reporting Period

Systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders of which the ADR entity has become aware due to its operations as an ADR entity	How can this problem be avoided or resolved in future
A lack of awareness and understanding surrounding consumers statutory rights, in accordance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and/or Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013 (and other relevant consumer laws), on behalf of both the consumer and the trader.	It is important that traders' complaints procedures, particularly in relation to dealing with goods that are not of satisfactory quality, are in line with the rights that a consumer is statutorily entitled to under the relevant legislation.
Complaints that arise in relation to a purchase and/or a contract for a service are often exacerbated by the level of customer service received during the complaint handling process when attempting to reach a resolution in respect of their complaint.	It is appreciated that businesses were required to rapidly make agile and decisive changes in order to continue functioning throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, businesses had to change their business model where possible to remote working and some businesses partook in furloughing staff members. However, as we slowly emerge into the next phase of the UK's Covid-19 recovery strategy, it is important that Traders' complaint handling processes are effective and efficient to resolve disputes raised by consumers in a timely manner.