

Communication and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS)
Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer
for the period 1 January 2026 to 30 June 2026

1. Introduction

This report relates to the Communication and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS) (“the Scheme”), operated by CEDR (Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution). It deals with complaints made about various providers – primarily of internet and telephone services - that are members of the Scheme.

The report covers the six month period from 1 January 2026 to 30 June 2026.

2. Background

I am a self-employed independent consultant. I work remotely and am not an employee of CEDR. I am not involved in case handling or advice; my role is to act purely as an Independent Complaints Reviewer.

CEDR is a registered charity and non-profit organisation. It provides independent dispute resolution services 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:

- To review cases that are escalated to me at Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure. This happens when a user of the Scheme has complained and, having been through CEDR’s internal 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, *nor* the process by which that decision was reached or the procedure adopted by the adjudicator.
- To review complaints about the Scheme as a whole and produce a report every six months, based upon my examination and analysis of a random sample of at least 80% of the complaints handled by CEDR, including any cases that were escalated to me.

4. Complaints Procedure

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, in which a CEDR 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

In the course of the half year to 30 June 2026, a total of 12,333 complaints were made through CISAS, compared to 5,622 for H2/2025. A total of 2,726 decisions were issued and 3,509 cases were settled.

During the six month period, CEDR received a total of 63 complaints, which represents a significant increase from H2/2025, during which period 30 complaints were received. Of these complaints, 47 have been concluded; 16 were still in progress as at 30 June 2026 (the 30 working day response period having not expired) and therefore are not included in my analysis. These cases will be included in my next report.

I understand that three significant new telecoms contracts have been won by CEDR during the period, which explains the increase in new cases.

(2) My Review

I reviewed a random sample of 38 cases (i.e. 80% of the total of 47). These are analysed further in section (3) below.

In the 27 cases that were upheld or partially upheld, total goodwill payments of £1098.00 [£560.00¹] were offered to complainants, an average of around £41.00 [£70.00] per case, the lowest amount being £15.00 [£25.00] and the highest £263.00 [£300.00].

All complaints were acknowledged and addressed within, or well within, the appropriate timescales.

Three cases were escalated to Stage 2 (compared to two cases for H2/2025) and no cases were escalated to me at Stage 3 (same as for H2/2025). One of the Stage 2 cases is still in progress for which the decision is due by the late August. I shall report the outcome of this case in my report for H2/2026.

(3) Case Statistics

In Scope

- (i) 6 of the 47 complaints were deemed in scope;
- (ii) 3 were upheld;
- (iii) 2 complaints were partially upheld;
- (iii) 1 complaint was not upheld.

Out of Scope

13 complaints were deemed wholly out of scope and therefore were not upheld.

Partly in Scope

- (i) A total of 28 complaints were considered partly in scope;
- (ii) 20 complaints were partially upheld;

¹ Figures in brackets are the numbers for H2/2025 and are included for comparison

- (iii) 6 complaints were not upheld;
- (iv) 2 complaints were fully upheld.

6. Case Review

The following is a summary of 38 cases selected at random from the 47 cases processed during the six month period:

In Scope

1. The complaint related to missed and/or late appointment calls, accessibility issues with the portal, alleged delay in handling the complaint and the process generally.

Outcome: At Stage 1, the complaint was partly upheld and the customer received an apology for not addressing her requests and for service failings. A goodwill payment of £231.00 was offered.

The complaint was escalated to Stage 2, the customer complaining that her case had been logged but not progressed; that her request for communication adjustment had not been implemented properly; that her access to the portal had been removed; and that the goodwill payment was not adequate. A further apology was offered for admitted service failings and an increased goodwill payment of £263.00 was offered.

2. The customer complained of a failure to respond to messages submitted via the portal.

Outcome: This complaint was partly upheld and an apology offered for the lack of responses. It was observed that there is no automatic notification of messages received via the portal, though it is checked manually from time to time. A goodwill payment of £50.00 was offered.

3. This customer raised two separate complaints (counted separately in the total of 47): (i) that case officers had refused to speak to the customer's husband; and (ii) that the customer had been asked to provide information to which she had no access and that customer service was generally poor.

Outcome: Complaint (i) was not upheld, as it was correct that case officers cannot speak with a third party without written consent. Complaint (ii) was upheld, as the case had been closed in error. It was re-opened immediately and a goodwill payment of £50.00 was offered.

4. The complaint was that this case had, in error, been rejected initially.

Outcome: The complaint was upheld as it was found that the required 8 week period had in fact expired since the customer had first raised his complaint with the supplier and that two deadlock letters had been issued. The case was therefore eligible and was re-opened. A goodwill payment of £30.00 was offered.

5. The customer complained of: multiple requests for the same information; confusion caused by changes in case officers; delays and inconsistencies in communication; the complaint not being formally logged; and a late request for a complaint form.

Outcome: It was decided that, although the complainant was not in fact a customer of the supplier in question, there had been service failings in dealing with the matter and so a goodwill payment of £40.00 was offered.

6. This was a complaint that the case had been closed as settled in full, when in fact this was not correct.

Outcome: It was found that the case had in fact been closed on two occasions by mistake and recorded as 'settlement in full'. It was therefore re-opened and a goodwill payment of £50.00 was offered.

Partly in Scope

1. The customer complained that he had been "pushed" into accepting a settlement offer from his supplier and that CISAS advisers did not consider the information that he had provided.

Outcome: The complaint was not upheld. The customer had accepted the offer from the supplier and the supplier had complied. There was no reason to re-open the case.

2. The complaint was that: (i) the supplier had been allowed to submit a defence after the deadline; (ii) the customer had not received a response to his request for a copy of the CEDR complaints procedure; and (iii) CEDR did not enforce the adjudicator's decision.

Outcome: It was decided that (i) and (iii) were out of scope. Issue (ii) was in scope and the customer was offered an apology for overlooking the request and a good will payment of £20.00.

3. The customer complained: (i) that he did not receive responses to his requests for clarification of certain points and (ii) that the time allowed for him to accept or reject the settlement offer was insufficient.

Outcome: The decision was that (ii) related to the process and was therefore out of scope and as to (i) an apology for the oversight and a goodwill payment of £15.00 was offered.

4. In this case the complaint was that the supplier was given extensions to comply with the adjudicator's final decision and that CEDR had not assisted him.

Outcome: The decision was that the issue of compliance was out of scope but that customer service issues were not. However, the complaint was not upheld, as the supplier had complied fully with the adjudicator's order.

5. This customer raised a number of issues: he claimed (i) that the complaint process is 'rule heavy'; (ii) that there is a lack of clarity in the procedure; (iii) that his evidence was discounted, whilst the supplier's evidence was accepted; (iv) that he had received an indication that his case might be closed on procedural grounds; and (v) that there was a failure to provide adequate explanations.

Outcome: At Stage 1, it was held that the supplier had followed the correct process, but some service failings were identified and so a goodwill payment of £50.00 was offered.

The case was then escalated to Stage 2 and the customer raised seven issues: (i) that he had received no explanation as to the reasonable adjustments applicable to his case; (ii) he claimed that reliance was placed on 'unwritten practices' and 'discretionary decisions'; (iii) failings in the supplier's processes for complaint closure; (iv) lack of safeguards to prevent early closure of a case; (v) different evidential standards were applied to him; (vi) the adjudication placed significant weight on a 'lack of contact between him and the supplier'; and (vii) a lack of transparency and/or explanation for the adjudicator's decision.

Issues (iii) to (vii) inclusive were determined as out of scope. Issue (i) was agreed as a service failing. Issue (ii) was not found to be a service failing, as the adjudicator has the power to extend timelines if the extension does not impact upon the fairness of the process.

A goodwill payment of £80.00 was offered.

6. This complaint concerned the handling of the case after the supplier's failure to comply with the adjudicator's final decision within the required timeframe. The customer claimed that the additional time allowed to the supplier was improper and unauthorised.

Outcome: It was decided that the extension of time was permitted. However, the Case Officer's message contained incorrect information concerning the matter and therefore a goodwill payment of £15.00 was offered.

7. The customer complained: (i) that there were multiple problems with the management of the case; (ii) 'incorrect' pronouns had been used; (iii) case administration and document management had been inadequate; (iv) he had had to spend additional time and effort reviewing documents; and (v) the frustration, distress and uncertainty he had suffered.

Outcome: It was held that, whilst the complaint was partly in scope as regards the service received, none of the heads of complaint could be substantiated and therefore the complaint was not upheld.

8. The customer originally claimed the sum of £6,000.00 against the supplier and complained that CISAS had reduced this to £200.00 without informing him. He also raised issues concerning the adjudicator's decision.

Outcome: It was decided that, in line with standard practice for inconvenience and distress, CISAS had advised the customer that payments for inconvenience and distress do not normally exceed £200.00 and that his claim had not been altered. However, it was accepted that this should have been communicated more effectively to the customer and a goodwill payment of £100.00 was offered.

9. In this case, the customer had (i) rejected the adjudicator's final decision and (ii) expressed dissatisfaction with the service she had received from a Case Officer during a telephone call.

Outcome: It was decided that (i) was out of scope and as to (ii), whilst the information given to the customer was correct, it was felt that the Case Officer's tone was at times 'inappropriate' and therefore a goodwill payment of £25.00 was offered.

10. The customer had experienced difficulties submitting a complaint through the portal and also complained about the handling of evidence, documents and communications.

Outcome: It was decided that complaints concerning the operation of CISAS, its processes, governance arrangements and scheme procedures, fall outside of the scope of the complaints process. However, some aspects of the service by Case Officers did not meet the expected standard and so a goodwill payment of £30.00 was offered.

11. The customer was unhappy with the support he received when he asked for clarification of an adjudicator's decision and claimed that reasonable adjustments had not been given.

Outcome: It was conceded that customer service could have been better and that the Case Officer should have explained the customer's option to revert to the adjudicator for clarification. A goodwill payment of £20.00 was offered.

12. This complaint concerned the handling of a case pending allocation to an adjudicator. The customer had received repeated holding responses that did not provide a clear timeframe and claimed that this caused him uncertainty and frustration.

Outcome: An apology and a goodwill payment of £15.00 were offered for the repeated messages concerning the delay with no indication of a revised timescale. His concerns regarding the process and procedures were deemed out of scope.

13. This case was rejected originally because it appeared to have been considered already by the Communications Ombudsman, which made it ineligible. Subsequently, it was clarified that that was a separate matter, which had been resolved.

Outcome: It was acknowledged that the initial rejection was an error (for which an apology was given) and a goodwill payment of £15.00 was offered.

14. The customer had been asked to provide further information to support his complaint but was awaiting a response to a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act that he had served on his supplier. He appeared to have difficulty explaining his problem to the Case Officer and his case was not handled effectively as a result.

Outcome: It was accepted that there were some service failings and he was offered a goodwill payment of £35.00.

15. In this case there was a delay in the appointment of an adjudicator. No update or explanation was given to the customer, who said that this had an impact on his mental health and wellbeing.

Outcome: It was decided that this complaint was partly in scope as regards the delay in Case Officers responding to the customer's requests for updates. Nevertheless, all responses were within OFCOM mandated KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and so this complaint was not upheld.

16. The customer complained of redundant and repetitive requests, unnecessary delays and a failure to make reasonable adjustments.

Outcome: The complaint was considered in scope as regards the Case Officer's handling of the matter and it was decided that reviews of the case had not been carried out effectively. A goodwill payment of £20.00 (subsequently increased to £40.00) was offered.

This case has been escalated to Stage 2 and a decision is expected by 25 August 2026.

17. This was a complaint that the case had been closed without any explanation and that reasonable adjustments had not been made.

Outcome: The complaint was partly in scope as regards the issue of reasonable adjustments but out of scope on the issue of case closure on procedural grounds. It was decided that no disability had been identified and that accordingly no reasonable adjustments were required. The issue had been addressed correctly and the complaint was not upheld.

18. This case was closed in error due to an oversight.

Outcome: The case was re-activated and allowed to proceed and a goodwill payment of £25.00 was offered.

19. The customer complained that the supplier had not complied with the adjudicator's settlement order and that CISAS was not responding to requests for assistance.

Outcome: This complaint was held to be partly in scope as regards to how the Case Officers dealt with notification of non-compliance. An apology and a goodwill payment of £40.00 was offered for this administrative oversight. Non-compliance with the settlement was out of scope.

20. Due to an administrative error, the customer's CISAS application was rejected initially.

Outcome: The case was reinstated and is proceeding; the customer was offered an apology for the error, plus a goodwill payment of £25.00.

Out of Scope

12 of the cases that I reviewed as part of my sample of 38 were held to be out of scope and therefore were not upheld, for the following reasons:

- Related to decision of adjudicator: 8 cases
- Related to alleged non-compliance with an adjudicator's decision: 2 cases
- Complaint regarding process: 2 cases

7. Conclusion

On this occasion, I have no specific observations arising from my review and in the 38 cases that I have examined I found no evidence of any systemic issues, themes or causes for concern.

The number of complaints involving allegations of a lack of reasonable adjustments in the sample I have reviewed was 5 (H1/2025:3), one of which was not upheld. In each case the issue featured as part of a wider allegation concerning customer service and I do not consider the allegations to be significant or a cause for concern, especially given the larger sample of cases in this review (38 cases) as compared with H2/2025 (22 cases).

I also note that 8 of the 38 cases involved complaints about an adjudicator's decision, as compared with 6 of the 26 cases reviewed in my H2/2025 report. The percentage for H1/2026 is 21% as compared with 23% for H2/2025, and has therefore fallen slightly. Clearly, these complaints are out of scope, but nevertheless customers continue in their attempts to question and/or appeal an adjudicator's decision.

Once again, I have found that CEDR handled the complaints they received to a good standard, addressing customers' concerns and, in dealing with some of the more difficult complaints, demonstrating patience and forbearance.

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

7. Recommendations

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 obliged to CEDR for facilitating this.



Alan Squires LLB(Hons) LLM PGDipAML Solicitor
Independent Complaints Reviewer

6 August 2026