

Communication and Internet Services Adjudication Scheme (CISAS)
Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer
for the period 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025

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 – of primarily internet and telephone services - who are members of the Scheme.

The report covers the six month period from 1 January 2025 to 30 June 2025. My previous report covered the full 12 months of 2024. Although I have included numbers from the 2024 report for comparison, it should be borne in mind that the two periods are not of equal length.

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 purely to act 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 their 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 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. 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 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 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 January to June 2025, a total of 4,227 complaints were made through CISAS, compared to 6,805 in the full year January to December 2024 (bearing in mind that the current period under review is only a six month period).

For comparison purposes, previous (full year) figures are shown in brackets throughout this section:

- 3,075 [5,124] were in scope
- 1,152 [1,681] were out of scope (withdrawn/closed rejected)
- 339 [835] were not upheld
- 556 [1,544] were found in favour of the claimant in full or in part
- the total of adjudicated claims was 895 [2,739].

During the six month period, CEDR received a total of 30 [44] complaints. Four of these complaints were still in progress as at 30 June 2025 (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.

- 7 [12] cases were deemed partly in scope, of which 4 were not upheld and 3 were partly upheld;
- 12 [13] cases were deemed wholly out of scope and therefore were not upheld; and
- 7 [14] cases were in scope, of which 2 were not upheld, 5 were upheld and 0 were partially upheld.

In 12 cases, total goodwill payments of £1,145.00 [£1,188.00] were offered to complainants, an average of around £95.00 [£85.00] per case, the lowest amount being £25.00 [£20.00] and the highest £300.00, being the maximum goodwill payment amount. [£150.00].

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

Four cases were escalated to Stage 2 (compared to one case for the full year 2024) and two cases were escalated to me at Stage 3 (compared with one case for the full year 2024).

These cases are referred to in more detail below.

(2) Cases

I reviewed 26 cases (i.e. 100% of the total). My observations are as follows:

In Scope

- (i) 7 of the 26 complaints were deemed in scope.
- (ii) Only one of these complaints involved issues of disability, namely an allegation that the customer's disability had not been taken into account and that 'reasonable adjustments' had not been made in line with legislation.
- (iii) Four of the complaints involved compliance issues, by which I mean that complaints included allegations that a provider had not complied with an adjudicator's decision.
- (iv) Five complaints were upheld:

- 1) A complaint concerning a call handler and an allegation that reasonable adjustments had not been made for the customer's mental condition. He claimed that he needed further assistance in providing further information to an adjudicator. It was decided that the information provided to the complainant was correct but that account should have been taken of his disability and his concerns. He was offered a £30.00 goodwill payment.
 - 2) The adjudicator was unable to proceed due to health issues. Unfortunately, the adjudicator did not inform CISAS and there was a delay of several days once a substitute adjudicator had been appointed. The complainant received an apology and an offer of a goodwill payment of £50.00.
 - 3) The complainant had been told that if he did not provide information as requested his case would be closed. His case was then closed. The complainant claimed that he had already provided the information and asked CISAS to acknowledge this and re-open his complaint. He was asked to re-submit the evidence and his case was then re-opened. He was offered a goodwill payment of £50.00.
 - 4) The complainant claimed that his application and complaint details had not been taken down properly during a telephone call. CEDR agreed but did not consider this material to the complaint. Indeed, in the meantime the customer had accepted the adjudicator's decision. However, he was offered a goodwill payment of £30.00 for the oversight.
 - 5) A complaint case had been re-opened when the customer had asked for it to be closed. It was agreed that this was a service failing. However, the complainant then asked for it to be closed as he did not wish to proceed. He was offered £50.00 as a goodwill payment for the service failings.
- (v) Two complaints were rejected:
- 1) The customer claimed he had mental health issues. He had a telephone conversation with a case officer in order for his complaint to be taken down, assuming that there would be a transcript. However, only a recording of the call was added to the file. The customer claimed that this left him inadequately represented and that he had received insufficient support from CISAS. He was advised that CEDR is unable to transcribe calls and that recordings are uploaded so as to avoid any misunderstanding. That said, the customer accepted the adjudicator's decision and the provider's offer. It was found that there was no administrative failing and the complaint was not upheld. The customer was dissatisfied with this decision and his case was escalated to Stage 2 (see below).
 - 2) The customer complained that some of the documents he had submitted were not included in the file seen by the adjudicator and so had not been taken into consideration. He also alleged that the outcome had been "manipulated" by CISAS. He asked for the adjudicator's decision to be cancelled and the process re-started with different caseworkers. The Complaints Manager could not identify any missing evidence but offered to investigate if the complainant could be more specific. The complainant did not respond and his complaint concerning the adjudicator was ruled out of scope.
- (vi) Case 1) above was escalated to Stage 2. It was decided that the customer should have been told at the outset that the call would not be transcribed and also that a request for telephone contact means that a case file will not be accessible. He was offered a goodwill payment of £50.00.

Out of Scope

- (i) Twelve complaints were deemed wholly out of scope and therefore not upheld:
- Eight of these complaints involved dissatisfaction with an adjudicator's decision, which were clearly out of scope. These included allegations that a complaint had not been properly considered, or because the complainant simply disagreed with the adjudicator's decision.
 - Other complaints were found to be out of scope because the complaint: had been raised two years after the case had been closed; concerned compliance by a provider; was under review by another ADR provider (FOS); involved a provider that is not a member of CISAS.

Partly in Scope

(i) A total of seven complaints were considered partly in scope.

(ii) Five complaints were partially upheld:

- 1) This case comprised of seven heads of complaint, two of which, relating to the process and the adjudicator, were out of scope. The remaining heads concerned alleged failure to make reasonable adjustments for the complainant's poor eyesight, various alleged service failings and alleged failure to respond properly to a Subject Access Request (SAR) under the Data Protection Act. It was acknowledged that there were some failings in relation to service and the customer's disability, but not as regards the SAR. A total of £275.00 was offered as a goodwill payment.

This case was escalated to Stage 2 and Stage 3 but was not upheld at either stage.

- 2) The complainant claimed that the adjudicator's decision related to "an entirely different case". It was accepted that part of the decision had been 'pasted' into the text from a previous case, but that it was not material and that the remainder of the text was accurate. Nevertheless, the complainant was offered a goodwill payment of £250.00 for the error and for the delay in clarifying the position with the adjudicator.
- 3) The provider did not comply with an adjudicator's decision and this resulted in a negative credit reference for the customer. Although the credit default notice would be the subject of a separate complaint with the provider, a goodwill payment of £25.00 was offered for the delay in dealing with the matter.
- 4) The customer complained that the provider took an excessive amount of time to deal with his complaint. This was partly upheld on the grounds that the provider had been allowed ten days to respond instead of the two working days specified in CISAS rules. He was offered a goodwill payment of £30.00.
- 5) A complaint that the provider had not fully complied with a settlement and that the case had been closed before it was fully concluded. Though the provider's non-compliance was out of scope, the premature closure of the complaint was not. It was accepted that the case was closed in error and the complainant was offered £75.00 as a goodwill payment. However, the complainant had raised a separate complaint alleging that the CISAS system was unfair and that there had been communication failures as well as the premature closure of his case. He demanded that the provider be suspended from CISAS. It was,

again, accepted that the case should not have been closed and the offer of £75.00 was repeated. The demand for the suspension of the provider was rejected.

This case was escalated to Stage 2 and Stage 3. At Stage 2, the customer's two complaints were merged into one case (which was then the subject of another complaint). It was determined that some of the heads of complaint were not in scope as they related to process issues, but there had been some service failings. The offer of a goodwill payment was increased from £75.00 to £150.00.

I reviewed this complaint at Stage 3 and whilst I did not uphold any element of the complaint, I affirmed my support for a goodwill payment of £150.00.

- (iii) The remaining two complaints were not upheld, one because it concerned an allegation that the adjudicator was incompetent and the other where the customer alleged that CISAS staff "did not take his complaint seriously". In the latter, no evidence for this allegation was identified and the complaint was not upheld.

6. Conclusion

On this occasion, I have no specific observations arising from my review and in the 26 cases that I have examined I found no evidence of any systemic issues, themes or causes for concern.

However, I should like to follow up on the observation made in my last report for CISAS, covering the 12 months of 2024, when I found that 7 of the 32 cases (22%) I reviewed for that report involved allegations of a failure to make reasonable adjustments for the customer's disability. For this report, I note that three of the 26 cases (12%) involved similar allegations, but in none of these cases do I identify any influence on the eventual outcome. Albeit this is a relatively small sample, and that it is too soon to draw any conclusions, I do note that the percentage of cases has almost halved for H1 2025.

I also note in passing that 8 of the 26 cases involved complaints about an adjudicator's decision, as compared with 10 of the 32 cases reviewed in my last report. Thus, the percentage of cases for the full year 2024 and H1 2025 remain fairly constant at 31%.

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 grateful to CEDR for facilitating this.



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Independent Complaints Reviewer

15 August 2025