

**Postal Redress Service (POSTRS)**  
**Report of the Independent Complaint Reviewer**  
**for the period 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025**

## **1. Introduction**

This is my second report for the POSTRS scheme, operated by CEDR (the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution). It deals with complaints made about postal operators that are members of POSTRS.

The report covers the twelve month period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025. Previously, these reports were provided at six-monthly intervals, but in light of continuing low complaint volumes, they are currently issued on an annual basis. This report is the second annual report.

## **2. Background**

I am a self-employed 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 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 an annual report, based upon my examination and analysis of complaints handled by CEDR. This includes any cases that were escalated to me at Stage 3 of the process and, depending upon the volume of complaints, to review either all of them, or a random sample of at least 80%.

## **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 2025, a total of 1,009 [2024:683] cases were received in the POSTRS scheme, representing a 47% increase over 2024. Of those cases, 35 were settled. Decisions were reached in 464 cases.

During the same twelve month review period CEDR received a total of 10 [2024:4] complaints:

- One in each of the months January, February, March, April, June, October, November and December; and two in July.
- One complaint is still in progress at the time of this report and a decision was due to be delivered to the complainant by the end of January 2026.
- Save for one complaint that was escalated to Stage 2, all of the complaints concluded were dealt with at Stage 1. No complaints were escalated to Stage 3.

Given the low complaint volumes, this report is relatively brief.

Although the number of complaints received (10) remains low, the number represents an increase over the 2024 number of 4. By way of comparison, the totals received in 2022 and 2023 were 4 and 15 respectively, so, whilst the numbers are consistently on the low side, there is no identifiable pattern.

The total of goodwill payments offered to complainants was £425.00, ranging from £25.00 to £150.00.

### **(2) Cases**

As only 9 complaints have been concluded by CEDR, I have reviewed each of them rather than a sample. 4 complaints were in scope; 3 were partly in scope; and 2 were out of scope.

#### In Scope

- (1) The customer complained that she had not been offered reasonable adjustments for her disability and that her complaint had been mis-recorded. She was also unhappy that she had been misgendered by the adjudicator in his written decision. The complaint was partly upheld and a goodwill payment of £40.00 offered. It was concluded that the misgendering ('his' instead of 'her') was simply a typing error.
- (2) The customer alleged that he had not been offered reasonable adjustments for his disability and also that he had been discriminated against as a result. He was also unhappy with the level of customer service. It was found that there was a lack of reasonable adjustments, but this only arose late on in the case, as CEDR had not been advised of the customer's disability previously. The complaint was partly upheld and a £75.00 goodwill payment offered.

I noted that this customer was abusive to members of staff at CEDR and that the unacceptable behaviour policy was applied.

The customer was unhappy with the Stage 1 decision and escalated his complaint to Stage 2. He demanded:

- i. increased compensation by reference to the 'VENTO' scale (a scale used to calculate compensation for injury to feelings in Employment Tribunal cases);

- ii. that the ruling under the unacceptable behaviour policy be retracted;
- iii. that the original adjudicator's decision be reopened;
- iv. that he receive a personal apology from CEDR's CEO;
- v. that his Stage 2 escalation be addressed within 14 days.

It was decided that, unfortunately, there had been serious failings as regards making reasonable adjustments and consequently the previous goodwill payment offered was increased to £150.00. However, there was no retraction of the ruling on unacceptable behaviour; the VENTO scale does not apply to CEDR's process; and the CEO does not involve himself in dealing with individual complaints. The complaint was dealt with within the standard timescale of 30 days. The original adjudication, of course, would not be re-opened.

- (3) A complaint regarding the level of service received by the customer and that he had had to chase for updates. The claim had initially been rejected in error and the customer had not been notified of the adjudication. The service failings were due to a CEDR systems failure and the complaint was therefore upheld. A goodwill payment of £75.00 was offered.
- (4) Another complaint about the customer not being offered reasonable adjustments. It was decided that her request for reasonable adjustments had not been fully complied with and a goodwill payment of £100.00 was offered.

#### Partly In Scope

- (5) The complaint was against The Post Office, and was accepted in error (the Scheme does not include The Post Office). The complaint was partly upheld because it had been accepted incorrectly and a goodwill payment of £35.00 offered. The complaint that the correct process had not been followed was not upheld.
- (6) A complaint concerning the administrative process and that it took a considerable time to decide that the complaint was out of scope. This was partly upheld and a goodwill payment of £25.00 offered.
- (7) This complaint involved an item that had been sent using a business contractual service. The provider objected to the claim on the basis that such a service is outside the scope of the Scheme (which it is). The objection was upheld and there was found to be no administrative failing. The complaint was not upheld.

#### Out of Scope

- (8) A similar case to (7) above. The complaint was that mail had been withheld improperly from an elderly lady. Because a business contractual service had been used, the complaint was rejected by the provider. The complaint was ruled out of scope.
- (9) In this case, the customer was dissatisfied with the adjudicator's final decision. The complaint was ruled out of scope.

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 particular themes or causes for concern. Although three of the nine cases

involved claims by customers that reasonable adjustments had not been offered or provided, my reading of these cases does not suggest any systemic issue.

CEDR handled the complaints that 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.



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

19 February 2026