



The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer
Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information)
Regulations 2015

Schedule 5 & 6
Annual Activity Report

Schedule 5: 01/01/2024 - 31/12/2024

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CTSI Activity Report, Schedule 5 – Rail Ombudsman- 2024

(a) the number of domestic disputes the ADR entity has received

No. enquiries received (domestic)	No. enquiries received (cross-border)	No. disputes received (domestic)	No. disputes received (cross-border)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (domestic)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (cross-border)
10,074	Split unknown	3,918	93	2,360	50

(b) the types of complaints to which the domestic disputes and cross-border disputes relate

Unresolved customer complaints about rail service providers.

(c) a description of any 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

The drivers for disputes between consumers and rail service providers are published quarterly and commonly involve both complaints handling issues and source issues on the network (such as whether train services run on time and the operation of the delay repay process). This details the nature of In Scope and Out of Scope disputes.

The Rail Ombudsman has identified that irrespective of the overarching subject of a complaint (e.g. Train Service Performance, Complaint Handling) it is often the provision of information associated with these issues – what information was available and consumer understanding of it – that can be the focus of dispute resolution.

(d) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how the problems referred to in paragraph (c) could be avoided or resolved in future, in order to raise traders’ standards and to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices

The Rail Ombudsman makes recommendations where it deems it appropriate on a case-by-case basis and liaises with the industry, regulator and stakeholders to share learnings. The case studies published on our website include examples of recommendations made: <https://www.railombudsman.org/resource-area/faq-3/case-studies/>

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Additionally, 2024 saw the publication of our Annual Review 2023, containing key recommendations to the industry. We discussed recommendations at an individual operator level and at industry-wide forums. Rail service provider participation in the scheme's governance arrangements, namely the Scheme Member Panel, provides a further avenue for sector engagement on recommendations. Recommendations broach a range of themes, but clarity of information provided and consistency across the sector are helpful focus areas in mitigating the escalation of disputes.

(e) the number of disputes which the ADR entity has refused to deal with, and the percentage share of the grounds set in paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 on which the ADR entity has declined to consider such disputes

Total no. of disputes rejected	1,659 (based on cases closed in 2024)
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Reason	No. rejected	Percentage of rejected
a) the consumer has not attempted to contact the trader first	991 (nb this accounts for no attempt and not exhausting complaint procedure).	59.7
b) the dispute was frivolous or vexatious	0	0
c) the dispute had been previously considered by another ADR body or the court	0	0
d) the value fell below the monetary value	0	0
e) the consumer did not submit the disputes within the time period specified	8	0.05
f) dealing with the dispute would have impaired the operation of the ADR body	0	0
g) other (enquired too early, not yet complained to trader, trader not member, advice call etc.	668	40.3

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(f) the percentage of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons and, if known, the reasons for discontinuation

	No. discontinued	Percentage of discontinued
Discontinued for operational reasons	0	0

Reasons for discontinuation:

N/A

(g) the average time taken to resolve domestic disputes and cross-border disputes

	Domestic	Cross-border
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint)	16 working days	14 working days
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from 'complete complaint file')	16 working days	14 working days

Total average time taken to resolve disputes	16 working days
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(h) the rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes the alternative dispute resolution procedures (amongst your members, or those you provide ADR for)

100%

Please add any additional information or data you think might be useful or interesting at the bottom of this report.

With regard to systemic issues and recommendation made, the Rail Ombudsman produced a Casework Deep Dive Report for the regulator – the Office of Rail and Road – during 2024. This document is available at:

<https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/rail-ombudsman-casework-deep-dive-report-2024.pdf>

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CTSI Activity Report – Schedule 6 Rail Ombudsman – 2023/2024

(a) the number of disputes received by the ADR entity and the types of complaints to which the disputes relate

2023

No. enquiries received (domestic)	No. enquiries received (cross-border)	No. disputes received (domestic)	No. disputes received (cross-border)	No. disputes accepted (domestic)	No. disputes accepted (cross-border)
16,130	Split unknown	4,319	103	2,747	60

2024

No. enquiries received (domestic)	No. enquiries received (cross-border)	No. disputes received (domestic)	No. disputes received (cross-border)	No. disputes accepted (domestic)	No. disputes accepted (cross-border)
10,074	Split unknown	3,918	93	2,360	50

Types of disputes:

Unresolved customer complaints about rail service providers.

(b) the percentage share of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued before an outcome was reached

2023

Reason	No. disputes discontinued	Percentage discontinued
Rejected for operational reasons	0	0
The consumer has not attempted to contact the trader first	965(nb this accounts for no attempt and not exhausting complaint procedure).	59.8
The dispute was frivolous or vexatious	1	0

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The dispute had been previously considered by another ADR body or the court	0	
The value fell below the monetary value	0	0
The consumer did not submit the disputes within the time period specified	4	0.3
Dealing with the dispute would have impaired the operation of the ADR body	0	0
Case withdrawn by consumer	12	0.7
Case withdrawn by trader	0	0
Solution reached without ADR	73	4.5
The trader was not a member of the ADR scheme (if this is a requirement)	0	0
Other – Out-of-Scope*	560	34.7

2024

Reason	No. disputes discontinued	Percentage discontinued
Rejected for operational reasons	0	0
The consumer has not attempted to contact the trader first	991 (nb this accounts for no attempt and not exhausting complaint procedure).	60.0
The dispute was frivolous or vexatious	0	0
The dispute had been previously considered by another ADR body or the court	0	0
The value fell below the monetary value	0	0
The consumer did not submit the disputes within the time period specified	8	0.5
Dealing with the dispute would have impaired the operation of the ADR body	0	0
Case withdrawn by consumer	13	0.8
Case withdrawn by trader	0	
Solution reached without ADR	29	1.8
The trader was not a member of the ADR scheme (if this is a requirement)	1	0.1
Other – Out-of-scope*	617	37.4

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* Other – Out-of-scope refers to the categorisation of disputes not achieving an outcome via Alternative Dispute Resolution, on grounds not captured within the criteria set out, in particular as a result of subject matter. The nature of Out-of-scope cases is reported in the Rail Ombudsman's quarterly Industry Statistical Report, available on our website.

(c) the average time taken to resolve the disputes which the ADR entity has received

2023

	Domestic	Cross-border
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint)	18 working days	14 working days
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from 'complete complaint file')	18 working days	14 working days

Total average time taken to resolve disputes	18 working days
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2024

	Domestic	Cross-border
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint)	16 working days	14 working days
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from 'complete complaint file')	16 working days	14 working days

Total average time taken to resolve disputes	16 working days
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(d) the rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes of its alternative dispute resolution procedures

100% in 2023 and 2024.

(e) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders could be avoided or resolved in future

The Rail Ombudsman makes recommendations where it deems it appropriate on a case-by-case basis and liaises with the industry, regulator and stakeholders to share

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learnings. The case studies published on our website include examples of recommendations made: <https://www.railombudsman.org/resource-area/faq-3/case-studies/>

Our published Annual Reviews contain key recommendations to the industry. We discussed recommendations at an individual operator level and at industry-wide forums. Rail service provider participation in the scheme's governance arrangements, namely the Scheme Member Panel, provides a further avenue for sector engagement on recommendations. Recommendations broach a range of themes, but clarity of information provided and consistency across the sector are helpful focus areas in mitigating the escalation of disputes.

(f) Not used

(g) where the ADR entity provided training to its ADR officials, details of the training it provides

All new Ombudsman staff are subject to a rigorous induction programme with a minimum of two weeks validated training, including shadowing and supervised casework. All staff under-go a two-day City & Guilds accredited training on the legalities or consumer disputes and managing complaints in the Rail Sector and one-day City & Guilds accreditation on GDPR and Data Protection Compliance and all staff have passed the validation to date. Comprehensive internal training covers all aspects of the consumer-facing service delivered by the Rail Ombudsman.

Training on all internal policies including information security/data protection and related fields is mandatory.

Other subjects covered in 2023 and 2024 included: Plain English / Drafting; Supporting Neurodivergent Consumers; Disability Awareness; Mental Health First Aid; Vulnerable Consumers; Neuro Linguistic Programming; Sexual Harassment.

Staff have also participated in sector-specific learning including Rail Wellbeing and Wellness seminars.

Staff learning and development is centrally managed and supported through regular one-to-one reviews.

(h) an assessment the effectiveness of an alternative dispute resolution procedure offered by the ADR entity and of possible ways of improving its performance

The period covered by this report includes the expiry of the Rail Ombudsman's initial five-year contract and reappointment following a competitive tender exercise run by the Office of Rail and Road. This procurement exercise required detailed solutions and evidence pertaining to the effective operation of an alternative

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dispute resolution procedure. In this regard, based on the Rail Ombudsman's track record of delivering the service, it has been found to have delivered effectively.

The organisation continues to monitor and report on performance to the regulator. Furthermore, the Rail Ombudsman continues to work constructively with other stakeholders in the complaint landscape to ensure the most seamless consumer experiences.

We actively seek to understand consumer, member and stakeholder perceptions of our service, and conduct a range of surveys from which we can derive learnings.

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