



# ADR Annual Report

October 2023 – September 2024



In June 2015, Flexible Resolution Services (FRS) – previously part of Ombudsman Services – was approved by the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards (CTSI) to provide alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services under the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015 (the Regulations).

As part of that approval, under Schedule 5 of the Regulations, FRS is required to produce an annual activity report containing the below information:

**a) The number of domestic disputes and cross-border disputes the ADR entity has received.**

FRS received 993 disputes during the reporting period. A dispute is defined as a request from a consumer notifying FRS of an unresolved complaint for investigation. Of these cases, 552 fell within scope of what FRS can deal with.

None of the total cases received related to Cross Border disputes.

**b) The types of complaints to which the domestic disputes and cross-border disputes relate.**

The following table sets out the types of domestic disputes that were referred to FRS within the reporting period which came within the scope of what it can deal with.

<b>Complaint Type</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
Claims	108
Repair	209
Quality of Service	129
Sales	38
Other	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>552</b>

**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.**

We have seen a slight increase in complaint volumes this reporting period with the growth in 'Quality of Service', and especially 'Repair' issues, where we saw a 25% increase. Issues were seen right through the repair journey, from reporting of the problem to delays in receiving a response and a suitable resolution.

Overall, we have also noted a slight increase in the rate of upheld complaints. We have found this is largely due to the time and trouble awards offered not sufficiently recognising the impact of the service failures the consumer has suffered. We found that the awards should have been higher, and our decisions have reflected this.

**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.**

In regard to time and trouble awards, we recommend a calibration session as a means to review different scenarios, how awards are decided upon and what factors we consider. Ultimately any award should look to recognise the inconvenience a consumer has suffered and place them back in the position they were in before the problem occurred.

The intent of the calibration sessions will be to align the trader’s approach to time and trouble awards to our own approach, which will result in less consumers having the need to escalate their complaint to our service for review.

**e) The number of disputes which the ADR entity has refused to deal with and upon what grounds.**

We did not record any disputes that we had refused to deal with.

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

The number of complaints that were discontinued by FRS during the reporting period for operational reasons was 371. The table below illustrates the percentage breakdown of the reasons for the discontinuation. In addition, 70 consumers decided to withdraw their complaints from the process.

<b>Reason for refusal</b>	<b>% of cases</b>
The subject matter of the dispute did not fall within the scope of what FRS can consider under its scheme rules	0%
The consumer submitted an incomplete application to FRS which could not be taken forward owing to the lack of information	100%
The trader that the consumer is complaining about was not registered with FRS as its ADR entity	0%
The consumer was not a 'customer' of the trader	0%

**g) The average time taken to resolve domestic disputes and cross-border disputes.**

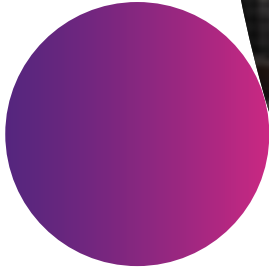
The average time taken to resolve a domestic dispute is 28 days. No cross-border disputes were received.

**h) The rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes of the alternative dispute resolution procedures.**

Data to confirm the rate of compliance is not currently available. However, FRS follows a process to pursue any trader that fails to implement a binding decision within the required timeframe. FRS will review the membership status of any trader that fails to comply with a binding decision, with a view to terminating that membership.

**i) The co-operation if any, of the ADR entity within any network of ADR entities which facilitates the resolution of cross-border disputes.**

FRS has not needed to co-operate with other ADR entities, as we received no Cross Border disputes.



**Flexible  
Resolution  
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### Getting in touch

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### Additional support:

We are committed to treating everybody with fairness and respect. Our commitment includes providing additional support to consumers needing help to access our services fully.

Please see below some of the services we can help with:

- Speaking to us in a foreign language & translation services
- Visual impairments (including Braille)
- Hearing impairments (including Sign language)
- Accessibility

If you need anymore information or would like to request access to any of the services above, you can do this over the phone, online or in writing.

**[www.flexibleresolutionservices.co.uk](http://www.flexibleresolutionservices.co.uk)**