

Annual Activity Report for Ombudsman Services (CTSI)

October 2020 - September 2021



In June 2015, Ombudsman Services (OS) was approved by the Chartered Institute of Trading Standards (CTSI) to provide alternative dispute resolution services (ADR) 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, OS is required to produce an annual activity report that contains the information below:

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

OS received 473 disputes during the reporting period. A dispute is defined as a request from a consumer notifying OS of an unresolved complaint for investigation. Of these cases 237 fell within scope of what OS 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 tables set out the types of domestic disputes that were referred to OS within the reporting period which came within the scope of what OS can deal with.

Non-Cross Border Complaints

Complaint Type	Number of cases
Claims	96
Repair	63
Quality of Service	41
Other	37
Grand total	237

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 largest dispute driver in the period related to claims for a repair or replacement of a product under a purchased extended warranty policy. Specifically, the decision to reject a claim was the main issue.

A contributory factor to these disputes was the lack of explanation around the rejection of a claim when the outcome is delivered via letter. The lack of detail, results in the consumer not understanding the reasons behind the rejection and escalating their concerns.

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

While we agreed with the majority of decisions to reject claims, we would recommend referencing the relevant terms and conditions within their explanation to aid understanding and potentially prevent a dispute. It is apparent that the level of detail provided when a decision is provided over the phone is a lot more comprehensive and results in fewer disputes. We would recommend that this level of detail is replicated when responding by letter to improve the consumer journey.

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

The number of disputes which OS has refused to deal with during the reporting period was 21. The grounds for rejection has not been recorded.

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 OS during the reporting period for operational reasons was 167. The table below illustrates the percentage breakdown of the reasons for the discontinuation:

Reason for refusal	% of cases
The subject matter of the dispute did not fall within the scope of what OS; Energy can consider under its scheme rules	0%
The consumer submitted an incomplete application to OS 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 OS 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 30 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, OS follows a process to pursue any trader that fails to implement a binding decision within the required timeframe. OS 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

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



0330 440 1624 | Partners.Ombudsman-Services.org | Ombudsman-Services.org

The Ombudsman Service Limited. Registered office: 3300 Daresbury Park, Warrington, Cheshire WA44HS
Registered in England & Wales. No. 4351294