



Press Distribution Review Panel Annual Report 2022

Executive summary

2022 was a significant year for the PDRP and the complaints process as it represented a full year of operation for the new charter, online process and of course a year not impacted by lockdown.

The year also saw the Magazine and Newspaper industry suffer supply chain issues which lingered from 2021, notably creating staff recruitment and retention challenges for the Wholesalers.

The year also saw a significant increase in formal complaints with a total of 244 breaches to PDF service standards and eight complaints escalated to Arbitration.

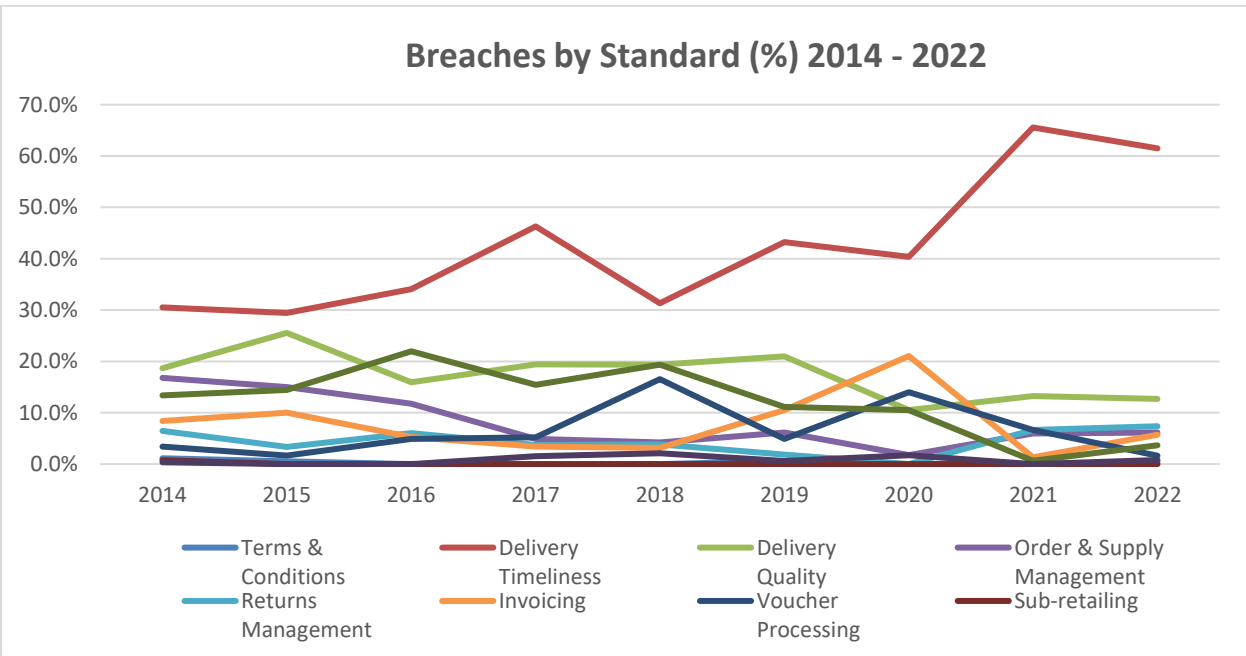
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Wholesale houses originating complaints	n/a	n/a	40	34	47	40	27	40	44
Number of completed Stage 2 forms	159	117	167	289	283	153	54	135	207
Number of Stage 2 Breaches	262	180	264	324	284	162	57	151	244*
No of complaints escalated to Stage 2 (3)	n/a	15	9	22	41	13	3	6	8

*Excludes five complaints not resolved October-December 2022.

Despite the increase the year-on-year comparison will be distorted as the UK remained under various forms of lockdown until May 2021, during which period there was reduced pressure on the supply chain, given a slower news agenda with little football therefore Newspaper production schedules were less impacted. In addition, Wholesalers had good staff retention minimising the impact on service levels.

The chart below shows the % share of all formal complaints by Standard since 2014.

Complaints by Standard.



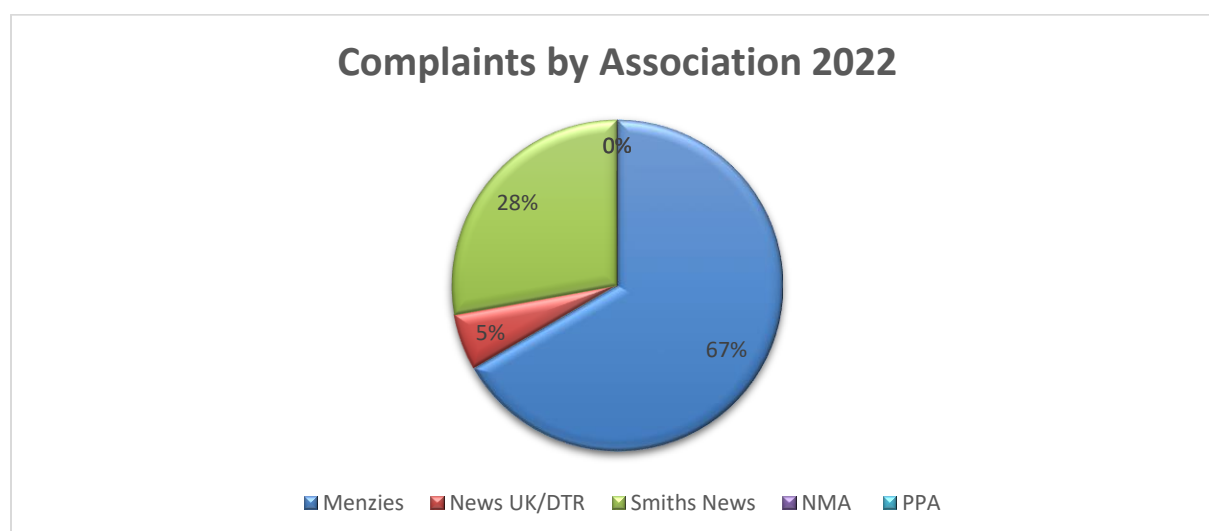
Again, the highest proportion of complaints relate to Delivery Timeliness which has increased significantly over the past two years as illustrated.

Feedback from Wholesalers would suggest that one of the prime reasons for this increase is the shortage of delivery drivers, and the time taking to recruit and train replacements. However, a consequence of delivery issues is the impact on returns collections which has also seen an increase in complaints during 2022.

Please see full details in 1. Full year comparisons including breakdown by standards within Summary Data, page 6.

Complaints by Wholesaler.

The pie chart below shows the share of complaints by Association during 2022



In terms of overall complaints for 2022, Menzies had the highest share with 67%, whilst there were no complaints from NMA or PPA.

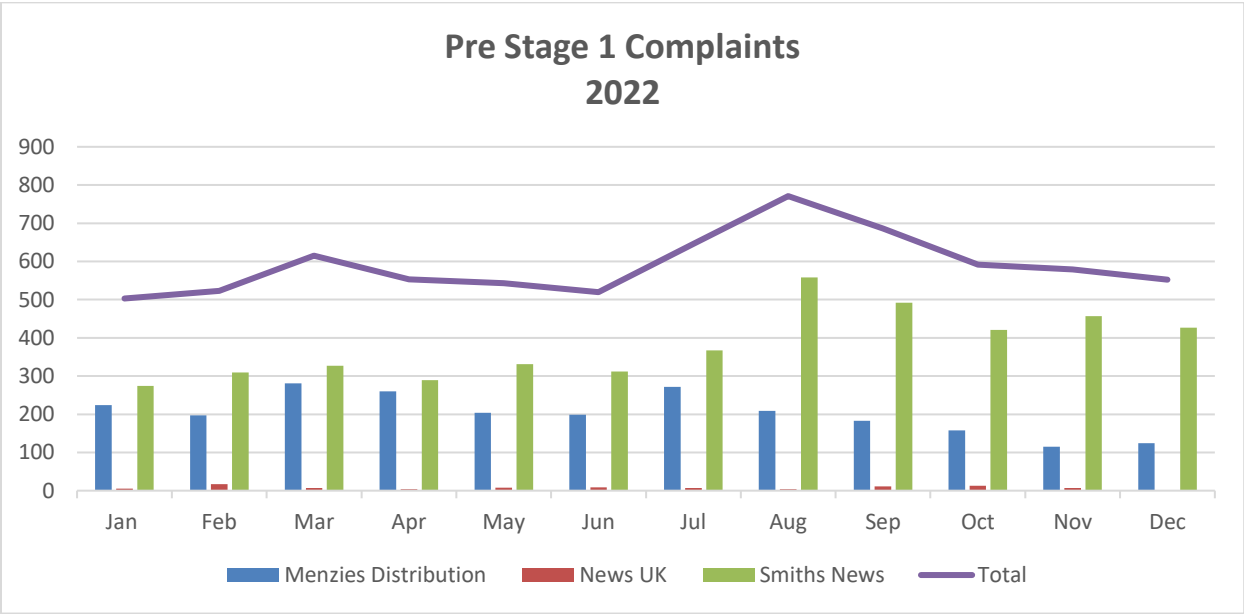
Whilst most Stage 1 complaints were completed within the preferred 14-day timescale, a considerable proportion again took more than the 28 days. Wholesalers have been reminded again of the importance of adherence to agreed Charter deadlines.

Pre-Stage 1 formal complaints.

Wholesalers continue to provide details of retailer complaints raised prior to formal escalation and during 2022 there were a total of 7079 informal instances.

		2022 Complaints pre Stage 1													
Wholesaler	Retailers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	% Total
Menzies Distribution		224	197	281	260	204	199	272	209	183	158	115	124	2,426	
News UK		5	17	7	4	8	9	7	4	11	13	7	1	93	
Smiths News		274	309	327	289	331	312	367	558	492	421	457	427	4,560	
Total	46,143	503	523	615	553	543	520	646	771	686	592	579	552	7,079	0.15

Please note that the number of retailers has been blended into a single total, consolidating NUK customers so as not to distort the overall totals.



If we look at this compared to 2021.

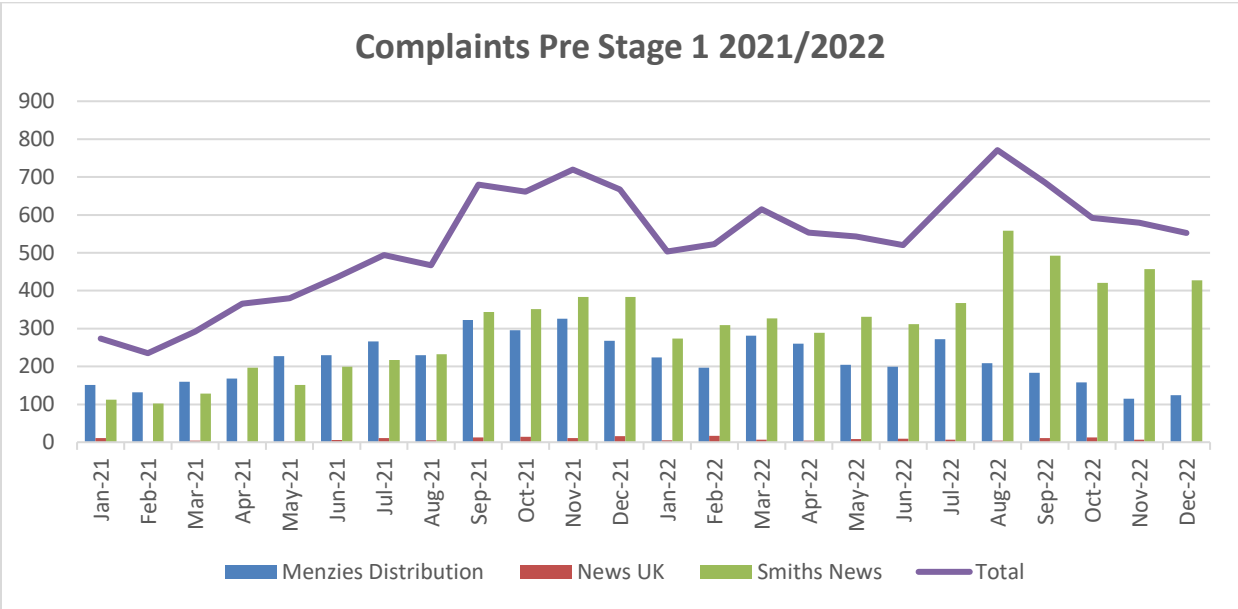
		2021 Complaints pre Stage 1													
Wholesaler	Retailers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	% Total
Menzies Distribution		151	132	160	168	227	230	266	230	323	296	326	268	2,777	
News UK		11	1	4	1	2	6	11	5	13	14	11	16	95	
Smiths News		112	102	128	197	151	199	217	232	344	351	383	383	2,799	
Total	46,143	274	235	292	366	380	435	494	467	680	661	720	667	5,671	0.12

		2022 Complaints pre Stage 1													
Wholesaler	Retailers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	% Total
Menzies Distribution		224	197	281	260	204	199	272	209	183	158	115	124	2,426	
News UK		5	17	7	4	8	9	7	4	11	13	7	1	93	
Smiths News		274	309	327	289	331	312	367	558	492	421	457	427	4,560	
Total	46,143	503	523	615	553	543	520	646	771	686	592	579	552	7,079	0.15

Total Year on Year %		84%	123%	111%	51%	43%	20%	31%	65%	1%	-10%	-20%	-17%	25%	
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Overall there was a 25% increase in pre formal complaints in 2022 compared to 2021. The period January to April showed a significant year on year increase across major wholesalers, driven by supply chain challenges. However, for Smiths News the increase was greater and more prolonged to some extent because of a new customer Careline in launched in late 2021 which increased awareness and an increase in complaints.

Smiths News has reacted to the increase and undertaken analysis into the root causes which primarily relate to delivery complaints about drivers, missing titles, RDT adherence and returns collections. Smiths News were particularly impacted by the national driver shortages in several locations compounded by a training lag for new recruits. During the latter part of 2022 the business resolved several its challenges with a demonstrable reduction in the number of non-formal complaints.

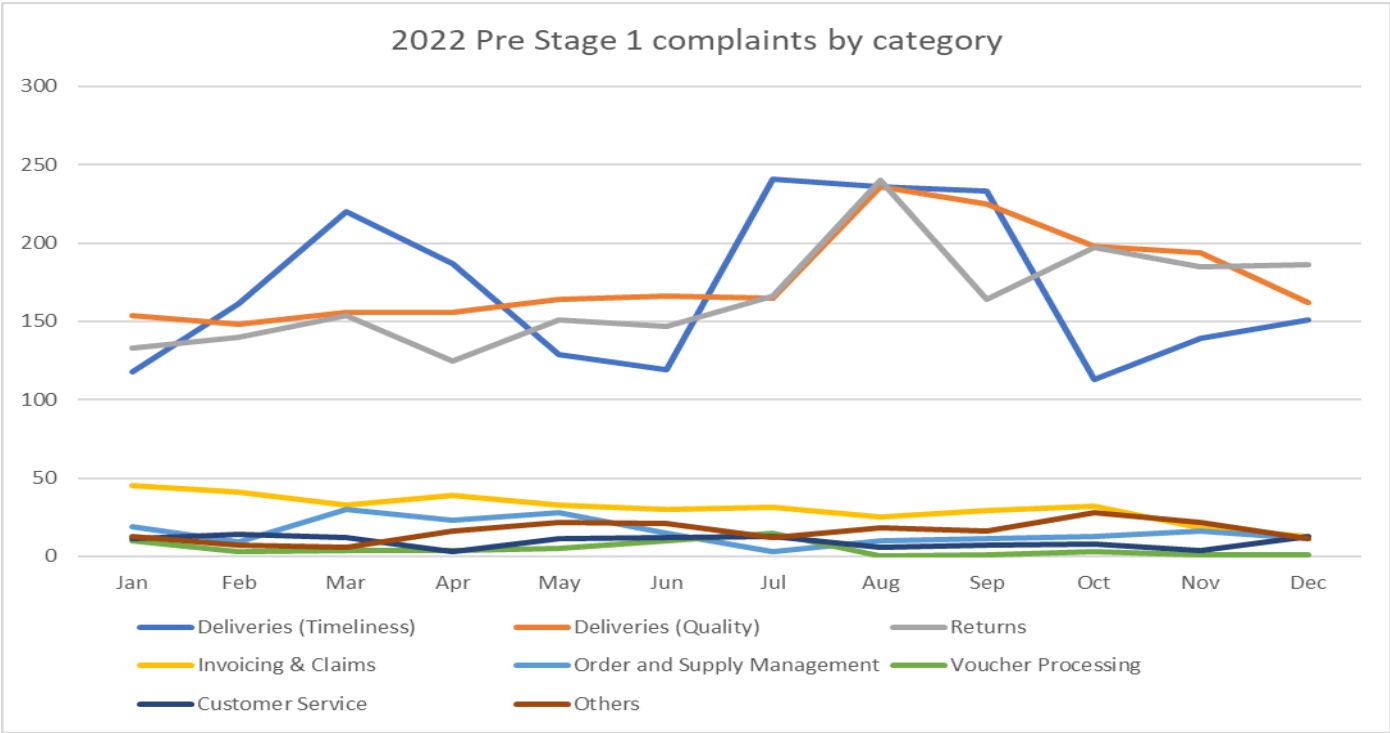


Consolidated Pre-Stage 1 complaints 2022.

The PDRP continues to consolidate pre-Stage 1 complaints into generic categories, which are summarised below.

Generic Category 2022	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	FY	%	YoY %
Deliveries (Timeliness)	118	161	220	187	129	119	241	236	233	113	139	151	2047	29%	5%
Deliveries (Quality)	154	148	156	156	164	166	165	236	225	198	194	162	2124	30%	42%
Returns	133	140	154	125	151	147	166	240	164	197	185	186	1988	28%	65%
Invoicing & Claims	45	41	33	39	33	30	31	25	29	32	18	13	369	5%	29%
Order and Supply Management	19	9	30	23	28	15	3	10	11	13	16	11	188	3%	-18%
Voucher Processing	10	3	4	4	5	10	15	0	1	3	1	1	57	1%	-27%
Customer Service	11	14	12	3	11	12	13	6	7	8	4	13	114	2%	-68%
Others	13	7	6	16	22	21	12	18	16	28	22	11	192	3%	195%
TOTALS	503	523	615	553	543	520	646	771	686	592	579	548	7079	100%	25%

Whilst the dominant categories are delivery related accounting for approximately 60% of informal complaints during 2022, we also saw a significant increase in Returns related complaints which is a consequence of the driver issues referred to earlier and the non-collection of returns.



Retail Delivery Time (RDT) Performance

Despite delivery related issues remaining a concern, the agreed industry metric, Retail Delivery Times (RDTs), showed a slight overall improvement in performance of 0.5% in 2022 Vs 2021, as the table below demonstrates. Whilst this is positive, continued focus on agreed delivery standards is important.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2021	93.1%	93.5%	92.3%	90.8%	91.4%	90.2%	89.4%	93.5%	89.9%	89.0%	89.3%	90.4%	91.1%
2022	93.5%	91.4%	91.2%	92.2%	92.9%	92.4%	92.3%	91.5%	86.7%	92.1%	91.9%	90.7%	91.6%
2021 benchmark	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%	91.1%

During September 2022, the RDTs dropped below expectation due to the news agenda.

It is interesting to note that despite similar retail universes, Menzies (as mentioned) has significantly higher proportion of formal complaints (67.6%) whilst Smiths News has the dominant share of informal complaints (64.4%). This is something the PDRP will investigate further during 2023.

Whilst the current level of service issues, as a proportion of total supply chain activities that could trigger service failures, remains low, the increase in the number of informal and formal complaints is of concern and highlights ongoing retailer frustration. The PDRP remains fully committed to reporting compliance to service standards and positively supporting the supply chain to identify solutions to the benefit of retailers.

As chair of the PDRP I would like to thank the PRDP members, the PDRP Administrator, PDF Administrator, and Arbitrator for their input and support over 2022.

Performance (Summary) data is summarised from page 7 of this report. and includes history of breaches by standard, association, and timeliness. Details of breaches by wholesale location are in Appendix 1.

Summary Data

This data summarises the PDRP's monitoring of the PDC and its complaints process and provides transparency of performance against key measures of delivery and customer service.

1. Full year comparisons including breakdown by standards.

The table below shows total forms completed, breaches, Stage 2 arbitrations, and breaches by Standard by full year 2014 – 2022.

Year	Forms	Breaches	Stage 2	Standard									
				Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply Mgt	Returns Mgt	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges
2014	159	262	n/a	3	80	49	44	17	22	9	2	35	1
2015	117	180	15	1	53	46	27	6	18	3	0	26	0
2016	167	264	9	0	90	42	31	16	14	13	0	58	0
2017	289	324	22	0	150	63	16	12	11	17	0	50	5
2018	283	284	41	0	89	55	12	11	9	47	0	55	6
2019	153	162	3	1	70	34	10	3	17	8	0	18	1
2020	54	57	3	0	23	6	1	0	12	8	0	6	1
2021	135	151	6	0	99	20	9	10	2	10	0	1	0
2022	207	244	8	1	150	31	15	18	14	4	0	9	2
All years	1564	1928	107	6	804	346	165	93	119	119	2	258	16
All years %				0.3%	41.7%	17.9%	8.6%	4.8%	6.2%	6.2%	0.1%	13.4%	0.8%

The table below shows the breakdown of all Stage 1 complaints by category as a % of the total number of complaints.

Year	Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply Management	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges
2014	1.1%	30.5%	18.7%	16.8%	6.5%	8.4%	3.4%	0.8%	13.4%	0.4%
2015	0.6%	29.4%	25.6%	15.0%	3.3%	10.0%	1.7%	0.0%	14.4%	0.0%
2016	0.0%	34.1%	15.9%	11.7%	6.1%	5.3%	4.9%	0.0%	22.0%	0.0%
2017	0.0%	46.3%	19.4%	4.9%	3.7%	3.4%	5.2%	0.0%	15.4%	1.5%
2018	0.0%	31.3%	19.4%	4.2%	3.9%	3.2%	16.5%	0.0%	19.4%	2.1%
2019	0.6%	43.2%	21.0%	6.2%	1.9%	10.5%	4.9%	0.0%	11.1%	0.6%
2020	0.0%	40.4%	10.5%	1.8%	0.0%	21.1%	14.0%	0.0%	10.5%	1.8%
2021	0.0%	65.6%	13.2%	6.0%	6.6%	1.3%	6.6%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
2022	0.4%	61.5%	12.7%	6.1%	7.4%	5.7%	1.6%	0.0%	3.7%	0.8%
All years	0.3%	41.7%	17.9%	8.6%	4.8%	6.2%	6.2%	0.1%	13.4%	0.8%

2. Full year breaches by Wholesaler / Association

	Association	Standard										Total
		Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply Mgt	Returns Mgt	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	
2022	Menzies	0	114	14	8	12	6	4	0	6	1	165
	News UK/DTR	0	12	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
	Smiths News	1	24	17	3	6	8	0	0	3	1	63
	NMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	PPA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1	150	31	15	18	14	4	0	9	2	244
2021	Menzies	0	79	5	7	6	1	3	0	0	0	101
	News UK/DTR	0	6	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	11
	Smiths News	0	14	15	1	4	1	3	0	1	0	39
	NMA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	PPA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	0	99	20	9	10	2	10	0	1	0	151

3. Timeliness of Stage 1

2022

Wholesaler/Publisher	Number of Complaints	Not completed in 28 days	Average time for completion (days)
DTR London	16	3	34.8*
Menzies Distribution	165	22	17.8
Smiths News	63	1	9.6

*Impacted by Oct-Dec online issues distorting the average, excluding which is 11.1 days

2021

Wholesaler/Publisher	Number of Complaints	Not completed in 28 days	Average time for completion (days)
DTR London	11	1	4.25
Menzies Distribution	101	20	23.7
Smiths News	39	5	21.9

Appendix 1: 2022 Breaches by wholesale location

Wholesale Location	Standard										Total
	Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply Management	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	
Ashford	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Berwick	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Birmingham	0	2	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	9
Bristol Total	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Camberley	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Chester	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	8
Crawley	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Croydon	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
DTR London	0	12	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
Dundee	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Eastbourne	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6
Gloucester	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grays	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Hemel Hempsted	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hornsey	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	6
Hull	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ipswich	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Kendal	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	5
Lancing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Leicester	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Linwood	0	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	14
Liverpool	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Maidstone	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	6
Newbridge	0	4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
Newmarket	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Newport	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Nottingham	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Portsmouth	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Preston	0	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	12
Reading	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ryde	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
SEL	0	11	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	14
Sheffield	0	13	1	1	4	2	0	0	1	0	22
Slough	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Southampton	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Stevenage	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Stockport	0	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	8
Stockton	0	6	5	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	16
Stoke	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Swindon	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Wakefield	0	21	1	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	29
Wednesbury	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Yeovil	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3
York	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	1	150	31	15	18	14	4	0	9	2	244

2021 Breaches by wholesale location

Wholesale Location	Standard										Total
	Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply Management	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	
Aberdeen		1									1
Ashford		1									1
Aylesford			1								1
Barnstable		1									1
Berwick		1									1
Birmingham			3								3
Bow		1			1	1					3
Carlisle		1			1						2
Croydon		1							1		2
DTR London		6		1			4				11
Dundee		2									2
Eastbourne		5									5
Gloucester			1								1
Grays		5									5
Hemel Hempsted		1	1								2
Hull		4	1	2							7
Inverness		1		1							2
Ipswich		2									2
Kendal					1						1
Lancing		1									1
Leicester							1				1
Linwood		8	1								9
Maidstone		6									6
Milton Keynes			1		1		1				3
Newport		3	4		1						8
Norwich		1									1
Peterborough					2						2
Portsmouth		1									1
Preston		9		1			1				11
Ryde							1				1
SEL		3					1				4
Sheffield		11		3	1						15
Southampton			2			1					3
Stevenage		1									1
Stockport		6	3								9
Stockton		3	1		1						5
Swindon				1							1
Wakefield		10			1						11
Worcester							1				1
York		3	1								4
Total	0	86	19	9	9	2	9	0	1	0	151

Appendix 2: Governance

The Press Distribution Review Panel (PDRP) was established to:

- a. Encourage compliance with the Press Distribution Charter (PDC).
- b. Provide comment on compliance issues.
- c. Ensure continuity of arbitration decisions.
- d. Provide an ongoing mechanism for the identification of trends.
- e. Collect, audit, and publish data on compliance.

The Charter is backed by a free, fair, fast, and reliable complaints process which covers most non-commercial aspects of newspaper and magazine distribution. If a retailer has a complaint about a serious or persistent failure to achieve a PDC standard, there are a number of options that can be used to start the complaints process.

The complaints process is a process that puts great emphasis on resolving issues locally yet provides a final independent arbitration.

The PDC provides a simple, 2-step process that enables a retailer to raise any issue on agreed standards and have it resolved efficiently as follows:

Initially it is recommended that the retailer attempts to resolve the issue informally by discussion with the wholesaler.

Stage 1 – If the issue remains unresolved informally, the retailer should contact the company it believes is responsible for the service failure, complete or download a complaint form and return as guided.

Stage 2 – If unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 or it has not been completed by the wholesaler within a reasonable time, the PDF Administrator can ask to refer the complaint to an independent Arbitrator for final adjudication.

Membership of the Press Distribution Review Panel 2022

The PDRP members for the year under review were:

Anya Ahmad, Kaleigh Phillips-Marshall (Smiths News)
Ayk Tahir (NMA)
Brian Murphy (NFRN/ Independent Retailer)
Fiona Campbell, Gillian Scott (Menzies Distribution)
Graham Read (Independent Retailer)
Paresh Vyas (Independent Retailer)
Trevor Hudson (PPA)
Steve Cripwell (Independent Chairman)

Linda Windsor (PDRP Administrator)
Mark Farris (PDF Administrator)

Independent Arbitrator

Neil Robinson