



# Press Distribution Review Panel Annual Report 2021

## Executive summary

For many reasons , 2021 was a significant year for the PDRP and the complaints process as businesses returned towards normality given the devastating impact of the pandemic.

In April 2021, the PDF Charter was relaunched in a digital format, delivered via a new website which provided quick and easy access to the Charter. The revised Charter included an updated complaints process, which significantly shifted from a three to a more simplified two-stage online model.

The complaints process was more accessible and navigable, with improved guidance for retailers. In addition, the relaunch was supported by an extensive publicity campaign to drive retailer awareness.

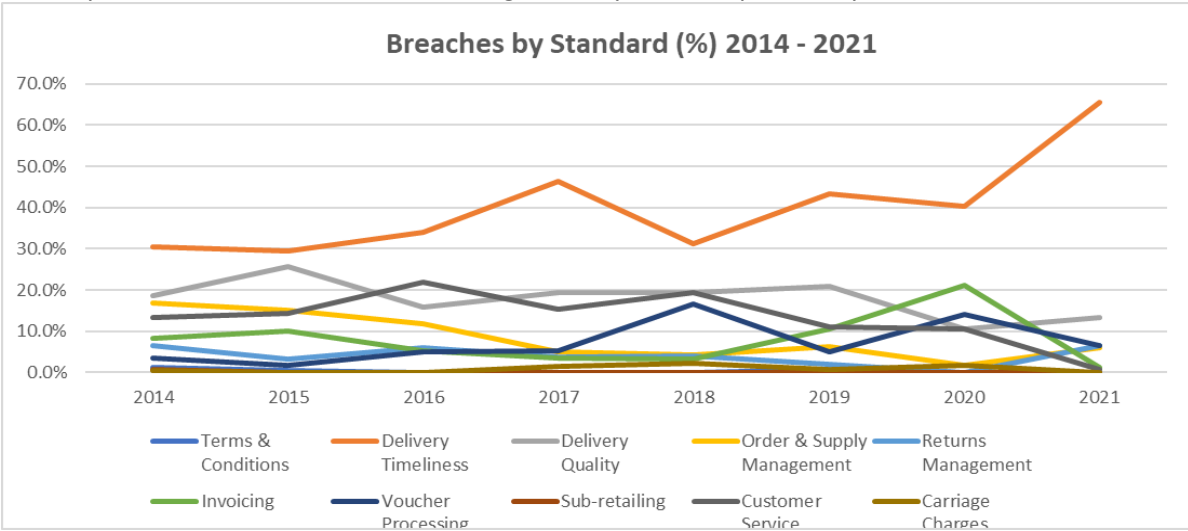
During 2021 we have seen the volume of complaints significantly increase towards more typical levels.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Wholesale houses originating complaints</b>	40	34	47	40	27	40
<b>Number of completed Stage 1 forms</b>	167	289	283	153	54	135
<b>Number of Stage 1 Breaches</b>	266	324	284	162	57	151
<b>Number of complaints escalated to Stage 2</b>	9	22	41	13	3	6

It is unlikely that the increase in complaints is due to a significant deterioration in service levels, more probable was a return to business as usual for many retailers, and a response to the re-launch publicity.

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

Historically (2014 to date) the highest proportion of complaints relate to delivery issues, particularly Delivery Timeliness which has increased significantly over the past two years as illustrated below as a %.

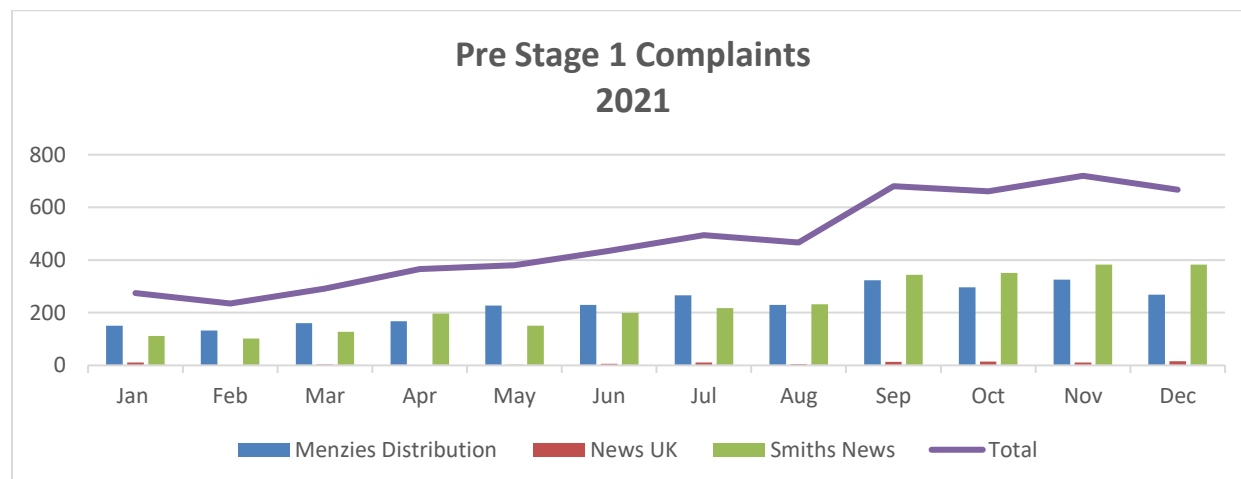


Source: Summary Data 1.

A significant development in 2021 was the alignment in wholesale reporting of complaints received prior to formal escalation. This data provides further useful insight into service issues that impact on retailers.

Total pre-Stage 1 complaints received 2021.

		Complaints pre Stage 1													
Wholesaler	Retailers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	% Total
Menzies Distribution	24,861	151	132	160	168	227	230	266	230	323	296	326	268	2,777	0.11
News UK	5,200	11	1	4	1	2	6	11	5	13	14	11	16	95	0.02
Smiths News	23,978	112	102	128	197	151	199	217	232	344	351	383	383	2,799	0.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,039</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>5,671</b>	<b>0.10</b>

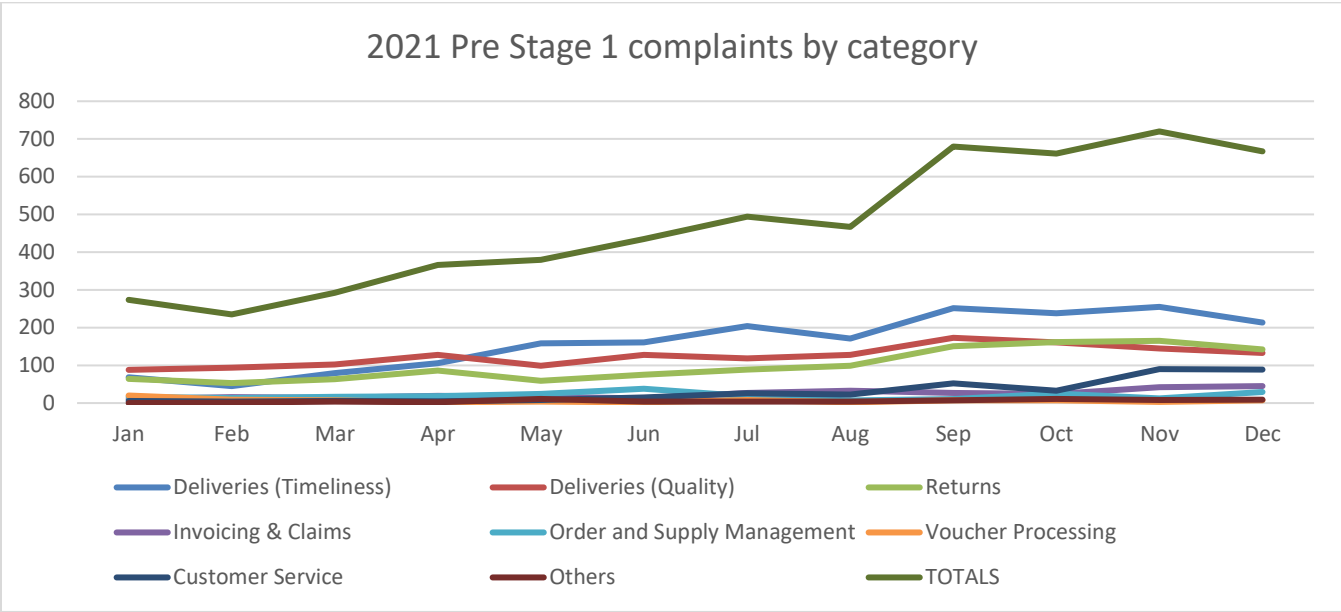


The chart (and data) shows a steady increase in pre-Stage 1 complaints over the course of 2021, with a more significant rise during September.

The PDRP is now able to regularly report the breakdown in pre-Stage 1 complaints into generic categories, which are summarised below.

**Consolidated Pre-Stage 1 complaints 2021**

Generic category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	FY	% YTD
Deliveries (Timeliness)	68	45	79	106	158	161	204	171	252	238	255	213	1950	34%
Deliveries (Quality)	88	94	102	128	99	128	118	128	173	161	145	133	1497	26%
Returns	64	53	63	86	59	75	89	99	151	162	165	142	1208	21%
Invoicing & Claims	11	16	14	19	17	12	27	33	27	24	42	45	287	5%
Order and Supply Management	17	13	17	18	24	38	18	7	11	25	12	29	229	4%
Voucher Processing	20	9	7	2	4	2	8	2	7	7	3	7	78	1%
Customer Service	6	4	6	5	8	15	26	23	52	33	90	89	357	6%
Others	0	1	4	2	11	4	4	4	7	11	8	9	65	1%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>5671</b>	<b>100%</b>



The dominant categories for both formal and informal complaints are delivery related accounting for approximately 60% of Stage 1 and informal complaints. Recent supply chain challenges, notably driver shortages are likely to be one of several factors in these recent statistics. The PDRP will undertake further analysis into these issues during Q1 2022.

Whilst the increase in the number of informal complaints is of concern, and formal complaints have increased highlighting ongoing retailer frustration, it should be noted that the current level of service issues, as a proportion of total supply chain activities that could trigger service failures, remains low.

In summary, despite obvious challenges 2021 was a good year for the PDRP delivering positive changes, and as Chair I would like to thank the group, and the PDF Administrator for their input and support.

Performance (Summary) data is summarised from page 4 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 and graph below summarise total forms completed, breaches, Stage 2 arbitrations, and breaches by Standard by full year 2014 – 2021.

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
All years	1357	1684	99	5	654	315	150	75	105	115	2	249	14
All years %				0.3%	38.8%	18.7%	8.9%	4.5%	6.2%	6.8%	0.1%	14.8%	0.8%

### 2. Full year breaches by Wholesaler / Association

	Association	Standard										
		Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply	Returns Mgt	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	Total
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
	<b>Total</b>		0	99	20	9	10	2	10	0	1	0
2020	Menzies	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
	News UK/DTR	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	Smiths News	0	5	6	1	0	12	8	0	6	1	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
	<b>Total</b>		0	23	6	1	0	12	8	0	6	1

### 3. Timeliness of Stage 1

#### 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

#### 2020

Wholesaler/Publisher	Number of Complaints	Not completed in 28 days	Average time for completion (days)
DTR London	2	0	1.8
Menzies Distribution	16	0	9.7
Smiths News	39	1	3.6

## Appendix 1: 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>151</b>

## 2020 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	
Birmingham	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Bodmin	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Bow	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bristol	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
DTR London	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Dundee	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Exeter	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Gloucester	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Hammersmith	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Hemel Hempstead	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
Hornsey	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
Lancing	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Leicester	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Linwood	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Milton Keynes	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	5
Preston	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
SEL	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sheffield	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Shrewsbury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Slough	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Southampton	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Stevenage	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Stockton	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Taunton	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Wakefield	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Worcester	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>57</b>

## **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 streamline two stage 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 the standards and get 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 directed.

Stage 2 – If unsatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 or you think Stage 1 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 2021**

The PDRP members for the year under review were:

Alison Morris, Michael Williams, 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)

### **Independent Arbitrator**

Neil Robinson