



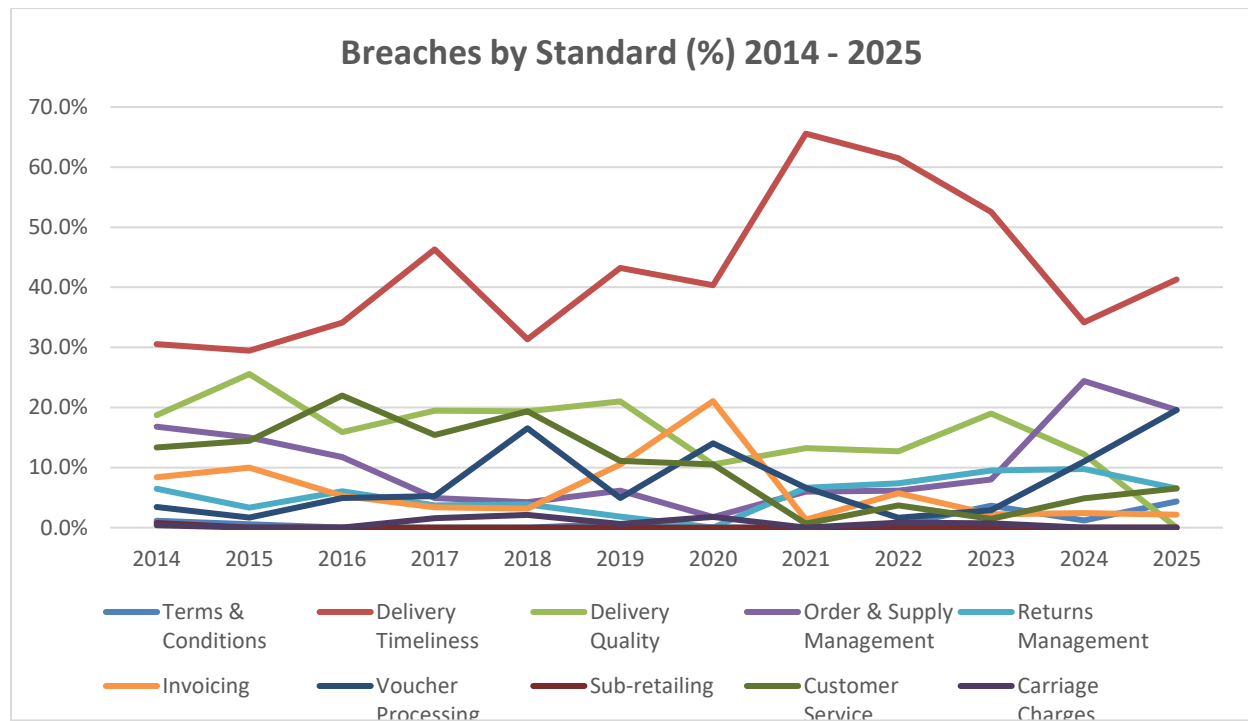
Press Distribution Review Panel Annual Report 2025

Executive summary

During 2025 we saw a further decrease in the overall volumes of formal retailer complaints. In total there were forty-six breaches to PDF service standards, and two complaints were escalated to Stage Two Arbitration.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Wholesale houses originating	na	na	40	34	47	40	27	40	44	29	30	19
Number of completed Stage 2	15	11	16	28	28	15	54	13	20	105	65	27
Number of Stage 2 Breaches	26	18	26	32	28	16	57	15	24	137	82	46
No of complaints escalated to	na	15	9	22	41	13	3	6	8	11	4	2

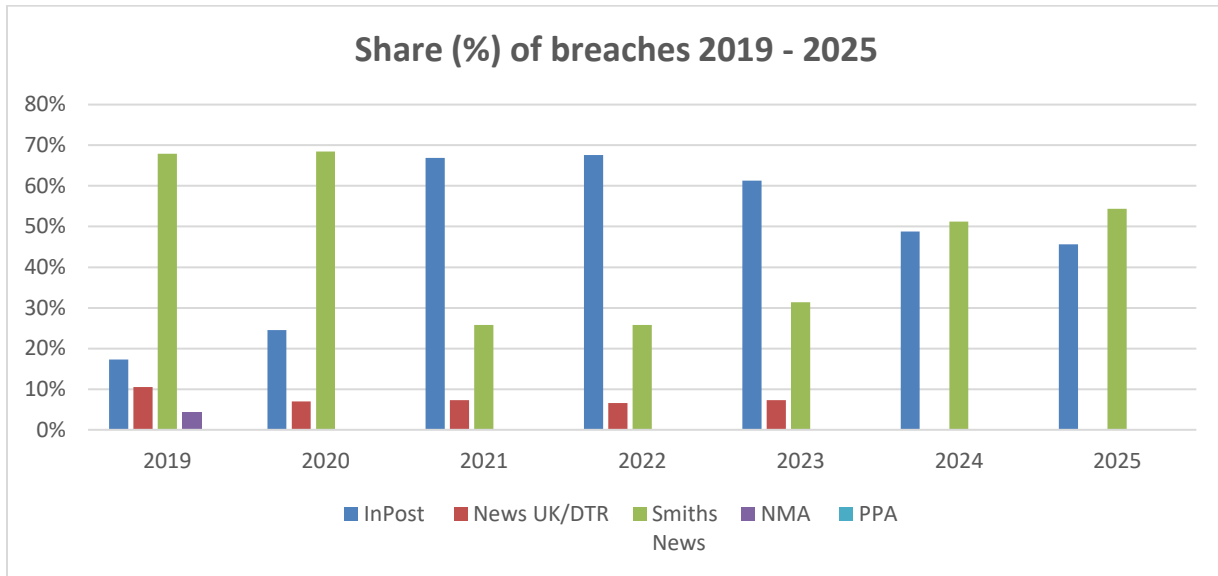
The chart below shows the % share of all formal complaints by Standard since 2014.



Again, the highest proportion of complaints relate to Delivery Timeliness which despite reducing its share remains the dominant cause of breaches to PDF standards. Delivery issues (Timeliness and Quality) prompt issues with Returns Management, and collectively these categories accounted for over 48% of all formal complaints during 2025. This represents a fall compared to 2024, driven by a drop in Delivery Quality complaints to zero compared to the average of the previous eleven years which ran at 17.9%.

Complaints by Association / Wholesaler

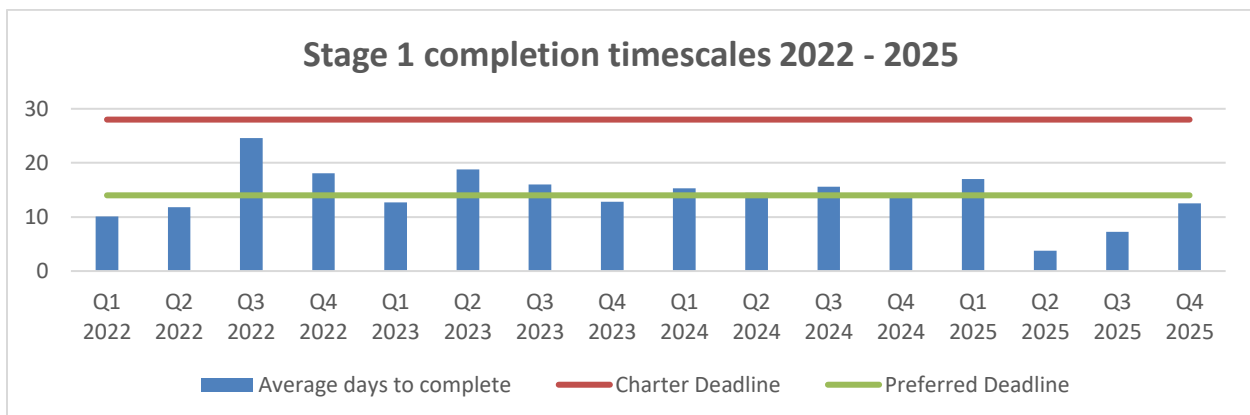
The chart below shows the share of complaints by from 2019 to 2024.



In terms of overall complaints for 2025 Smiths News had a higher share with 54%. There were no complaints from NMA or PPA.

Timescale to resolve complaints.

The chart below shows that the average time to conclude a complaint is well within the 28-day deadline, however efforts continue to ensure complaints are resolved within the preferred 14-day deadline.



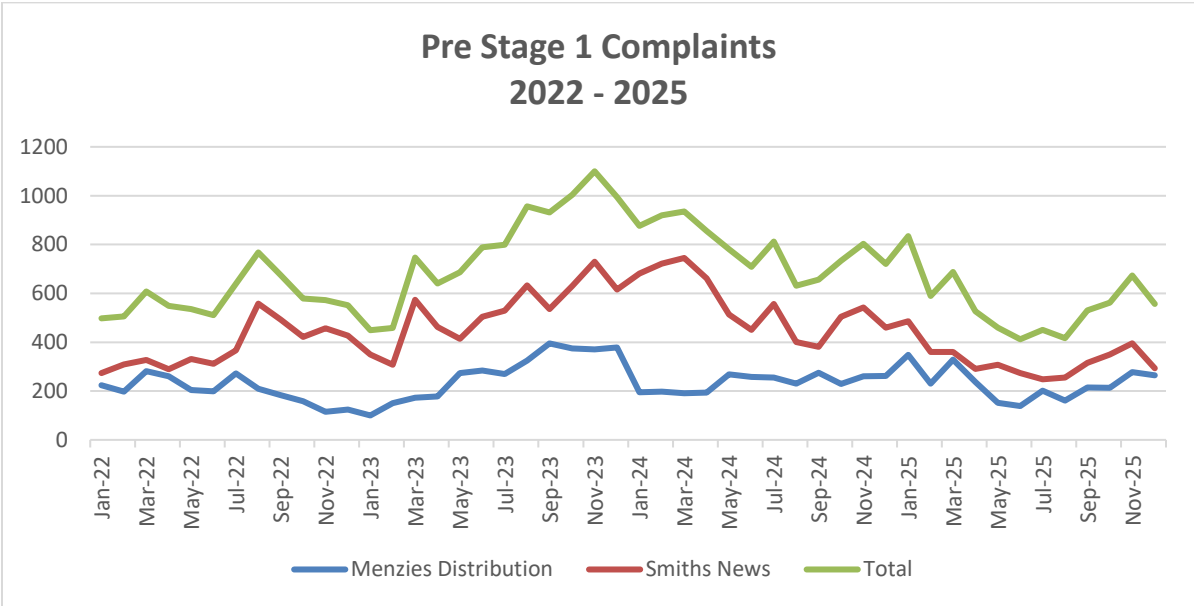
Pre-Stage 1 formal complaints.

Wholesalers continue to provide details of retailer complaints raised prior to formal escalation and during 2025 there were a total of 6,813 informal complaints which compares to 9,433 in 2024 which is a significant and encouraging overall reduction.

2024 Complaints pre Stage 1													
Wholesaler	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
InPost Newstrade	195	198	191	194	268	258	255	230	275	229	261	262	2816
Smiths News	681	722	745	662	513	450	557	401	381	504	542	459	6617
Total	876	920	936	856	781	708	812	631	656	733	803	721	9433
YoY	93.0%	99.6%	25.1%	33.3%	12.5%	-10.5%	1.5%	-34.1%	-29.6%	-27.0%	-27.0%	-27.5%	-1.5%

2025 Complaints pre Stage 1													
Wholesaler	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
InPost Newstrade	348	230	328	237	152	202	202	161	215	213	277	264	2829
Smiths News	486	360	360	290	307	274	298	255	316	349	396	293	3984
Total	834	590	688	527	459	476	500	416	531	562	673	557	6813
YoY	-4.8%	-35.9%	-26.5%	-38.4%	-41.2%	-32.8%	-38.4%	-34.1%	-19.1%	-23.3%	-16.2%	-22.7%	-27.8%

If we look at this compared to previous years in a graphical format.



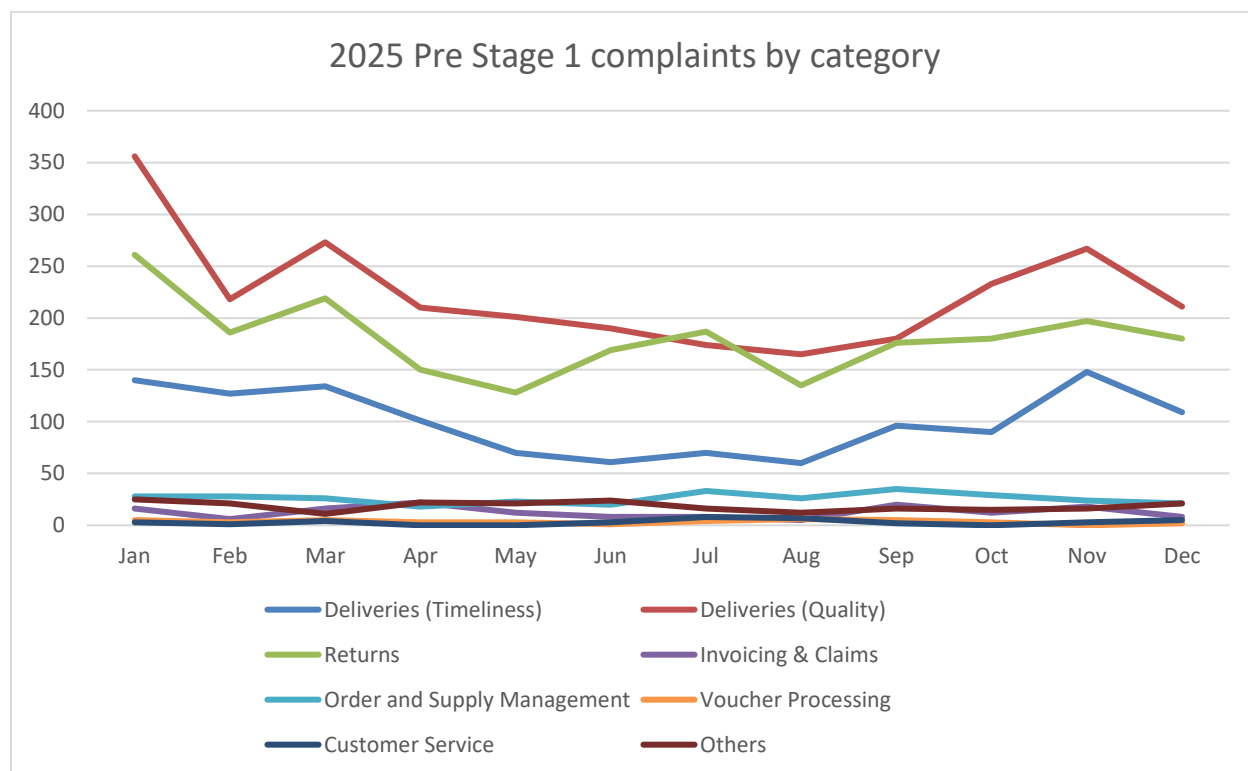
Notably Smiths News, which had shown significant increases in informal complaints during 2023 and 2024, have reduced complaint volumes from late 2024 through 2025. This reduction has been driven by improved communication and stronger engagement within SN operations teams.

Both In Post Newstrade and Smiths News have robust internal processes to manage complaints once received. These include a 48-hour (24 hour if possible) response period with updates provided to the retailer, and a three-stage escalation process. Internal processes are continuously reviewed by both wholesalers.

Consolidated Pre-Stage 1 complaints 2025.

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

Generic category 2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	FY	%
Deliveries (Timeliness)	140	127	134	101	70	61	70	60	96	90	148	109	1206	18%
Deliveries (Quality)	356	218	273	210	201	190	174	165	180	233	267	211	2678	39%
Returns	261	186	219	150	128	169	187	135	176	180	197	180	2168	32%
Invoicing & Claims	16	6	16	22	12	8	8	5	20	12	18	8	151	2%
Order and Supply Management	28	28	26	18	23	20	33	26	35	29	24	21	311	5%
Voucher Processing	5	3	5	3	3	1	4	6	5	3	0	2	40	1%
Customer Service	3	1	4	0	0	3	8	7	2	0	3	5	36	1%
Others	25	21	11	22	21	24	16	12	16	15	16	21	220	3%
TOTALS	834	590	688	526	458	476	500	416	530	562	673	557	6810	100%



The dominant categories are Delivery related (Timeliness and Quality) accounting for 57% of informal complaints followed by Returns, which will be a consequence of delivery issues. The collective total of Delivery and Returns related complaints accounted for 89% of all informal complaints.

Through the PDF and PDRP both wholesalers are committed to resolving issues before they become formal complaints.

It is important to again recognise that the level of informal and formal complaints as a proportion of total supply chain activities that could trigger service failures does remain low.

Retail Delivery Time (RDT) Performance

Despite delivery related issues remaining the primary driver of both formal and informal complaints, the agreed industry metric, Retail Delivery Times (RDTs), showed a significant overall improvement in performance of 1.7% in 2025 Vs 2024, maintaining the year-on-year trend as the table below demonstrates. Whilst this is most positive, continued adherence to agreed delivery standards remains important.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
2023	93.0%	93.4%	92.0%	92.4%	92.7%	93.1%	93.5%	91.2%	90.9%	90.7%	91.3%	89.5%	92.0%
2024	93.4%	93.6%	93.2%	92.3%	92.7%	91.2%	91.7%	93.3%	92.7%	93.1%	92.8%	91.9%	92.7%
2025	92.6%	93.7%	94.7%	94.4%	94.2%	95.5%	95.1%	94.6%	94.4%	94.7%	94.2%	93.9%	94.3%
YoY	-0.8%	0.1%	1.5%	2.2%	1.5%	4.4%	3.4%	1.3%	1.7%	1.5%	1.4%	1.9%	1.7%

Retail survey

In 2025 the retailer survey undertaken in previous years in which retailers that had made a formal complaint were invited to give their views was repeated in Q1 2025.

The level of response was extremely poor therefore it was decided not to publicise the results and undertake a survey to the wider retail base in late 2025 seeking to understand overall levels of awareness of The Charter and complaints process.

At the time of drafting this report, full results of the survey are still to be assessed and once complete will be presented as soon as available.

The PDRP remains fully committed to reporting of 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 2025.

Performance (Summary) data is summarised below 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 Press Distribution Charter 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 - 2025.

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
2023	105	137	11	5	72	26	11	13	3	4	0	2	1
2024	65	82	4	1	28	10	20	8	2	9	0	4	0
2025	27	46	2	2	19	0	9	3	1	9	0	3	0
All years	1761	2193	124	14	923	382	205	117	125	141	2	267	17
All years %				0.6%	42.1%	17.4%	9.3%	5.3%	5.7%	6.4%	0.1%	12.2%	0.8%

The table below shows the share (%) of all Stage 1 complaints by category.

Year	Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply Management	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing
2014	1.1%	30.5%	18.7%	16.8%	6.5%	8.4%	3.4%	0.8%
2015	0.6%	29.4%	25.6%	15.0%	3.3%	10.0%	1.7%	0.0%
2016	0.0%	34.1%	15.9%	11.7%	6.1%	5.3%	4.9%	0.0%
2017	0.0%	46.3%	19.4%	4.9%	3.7%	3.4%	5.2%	0.0%
2018	0.0%	31.3%	19.4%	4.2%	3.9%	3.2%	16.5%	0.0%
2019	0.6%	43.2%	21.0%	6.2%	1.9%	10.5%	4.9%	0.0%
2020	0.0%	40.4%	10.5%	1.8%	0.0%	21.1%	14.0%	0.0%
2021	0.0%	65.6%	13.2%	6.0%	6.6%	1.3%	6.6%	0.0%
2022	0.4%	61.5%	12.7%	6.1%	7.4%	5.7%	1.6%	0.0%
2023	3.6%	52.6%	19.0%	8.0%	9.5%	2.2%	2.9%	0.0%
2024	1.2%	34.1%	12.2%	24.4%	9.8%	2.4%	11.0%	0.0%
2025	4.3%	41.3%	0.0%	19.6%	6.5%	2.2%	19.6%	0.0%
All years	0.6%	42.1%	17.4%	9.3%	5.3%	5.7%	6.4%	0.1%

2. Full year breaches by Wholesaler / Association

	Association	Standard										
		Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	Total
2025	InPost	1	15	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	21
	News UK/DTR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Smiths News	1	4	0	7	3	0	8	0	2	0	25
	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	2	19	0	9	3	1	9	0	3	0	46
2024	InPost	0	19	8	3	0	2	4	0	4	0	40
	News UK/DTR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Smiths News	1	9	2	17	8	0	5	0	0	0	42
	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	28	10	20	8	2	9	0	4	0	82

3. Timeliness of completion of Stage 1 complaints

2025

Wholesaler/Publisher	Number of Complaints	Not completed in 28 days	Average time for completion (days)
InPost	21	1	8.4
Smiths News	25	1	13.5

2024

Wholesaler/Publisher	Number of Complaints	Not completed in 28 days	Average time for completion (days)
InPost	40	5	13.1
Smiths News	42	2	18.3

Appendix 1: 2025 Breaches by wholesale location

Wholesale Location	Standard										Total
	Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	
Birmingham		1		1	1				1		4
Chester		1		1		1			1		4
Crawley		1		1							2
Crawley				1	1		1				3
Crawley				1							1
Edinburgh		1									1
Glasgow		1									1
Greenock		1									1
Hammersmith				1			1				2
Hammersmith							1				1
Hemel Hempstead	1	1					1				3
Hornsey				1	1		1				3
Kilmarnock		1									1
Linwood		2									2
Maidstone		1									1
Middlesbrough		1									1
Milton Keynes							1				1
Newbridge	1	2									3
Newbridge		3		1							4
Nottingham		1					1		1		3
Stockport				1			1				2
Stockton		1									1
Swansea							1				1
Total	2	19	0	9	3	1	9	0	3	0	46

2024 Breaches by wholesale location

Wholesale Location	Terms & Conditions	Delivery Timeliness	Delivery Quality	Order & Supply	Returns Management	Invoicing	Voucher Processing	Sub-retailing	Customer Service	Carriage Charges	Total
Barnstaple				1	1						2
Birmingham					1		1				2
Bow		2									2
Chester		1							1		2
Crawley				1							1
Croydon		2		1	1						4
Edinburgh		1									1
Fareham			1								1
Hammersmith				2							2
Hemel	1	1		2			1				5
Hornsey		2			1						3
Hull			1	1							2
Linwood		1									1
Newbridge		2									2
Newcastle				2			1				3
Newport		1		1	1						3
Nottingham				1	1						2
Oxford		1									1
Ryde							3				3
SEL		4	4	1					2		11
Sheffield		1	1				1				3
Shotts		1									1
Shrewsbury		1	1	1							3
Stockport		1		5	1		1				8
Stockton		1									1
Stockton			2	1					1		4
Wakefield		5									5
Wednesbury					1						1
Yeovil							1				1
York						2					2
Total	1	28	10	20	8	2	9	0	4	0	82

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 2025

The PDRP members for the year under review were:

Graham Read (Independent Retailer)
Paresh Vyas (Independent Retailer)
Brian Murphy/Andrew Williamson (NFRN/ Independent Retailer)
Fiona Campbell, Ryan Waterhouse (Menziess Distribution (InPost Newstrade))
Diane Sampson (NMA)
Trevor Hudson (PPA)
Paul Smith, Laura Duerden (Smiths News)
Steve Cripwell (Independent Chair)

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

Independent Arbitrator

Neil Robinson