



Annual Report & Accounts For 2015

Contents

Foreward from the Chair – Sir Eric Peacock

Chief Ombudsman overview – Dean Dunham LLB (hons)

About Us

Our funding model

Consumers

Retailers

Statistics

Financial report



Foreward from the Chair

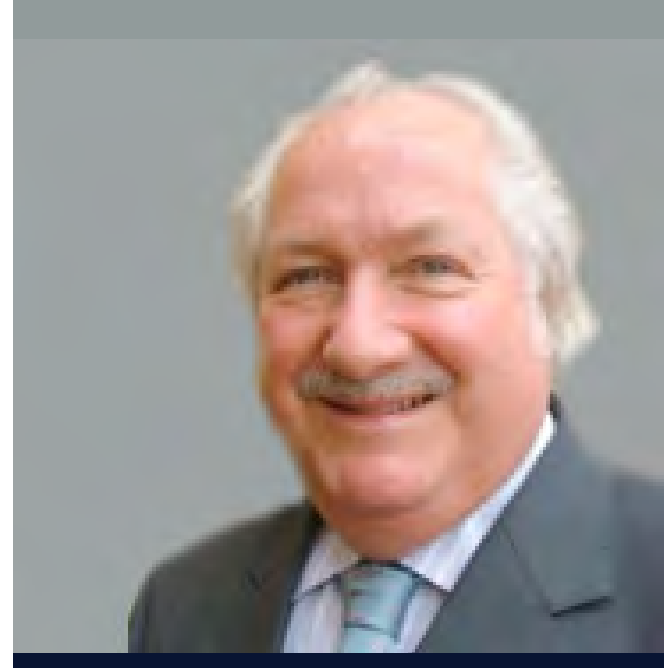
- *Sir Eric Peacock*

This has been an exciting year at The Retail Ombudsman ("TRO") and I feel privileged to have played a part in such a wonderful success story so far.

Prior to The Retail Ombudsman ADR was almost non-existent in the retail sector, with the exception of a small proportion of the 'furniture' market where a number of furniture retailers would engage with our colleagues at the Furniture Ombudsman therefore affording their customers the right to free redress.

TRO has therefore single handedly changed the ADR landscape in the retail sector by raising awareness of ADR and indeed facilitating thousands of retailers to engage. To this end thousands of independent retailers have joined TRO and therefore given their customers access to free ADR, along with many of the major brands on the High Street and online.

When I look at what TRO has achieved in such a short period of time it makes me excited about what will be achieved in the future. 2016 is already set to be a significant year for TRO as plans are already in place to expand the ADR offering, increase the TRO team and strengthen the Independent Standards Board and Governance, to take account of the rapid growth of TRO scheme.





Chief Ombudsman overview

Dean Dunham LLB (hons)

2015 was the inception of The Retail Ombudsman (“TRO”) and I am incredibly proud of what the scheme and all of its staff has achieved.

The Retail sector is large and varied and ranges from independent retailers with one store or internet site only to National and Multi-National brands on the High Street and online. Establishing a new ombudsman scheme in this vast market was always going to be a challenge as retailers were not used to submitting to and paying for alternative dispute resolution and consumers would need to be educated on the existence of TRO.

With the above in mind, we adopted a strategy in 2015 to raise awareness of TRO via the National media and to demonstrate the advantages to retailers of engaging with an ADR scheme, specifically TRO. To this end, we adopted a two tier strategy;

- 1 We would accept complaints in relation to members and non-members to widen our jurisdiction and therefore the complaints we could accept; and consumers would need to be educated on the existence of TRO.
- 2 We would not charge retailers complaint fees during 2015.

This strategy has been an overwhelming success as can be seen from the number of retailers that have engaged with TRO, and indeed the number of complaints processed. As a consequence of this, TRO is now a familiar name amongst both retailers and consumers and, as such, we have built solid foundations from which we can continue to build and expand the scheme retailers of engaging with an ADR scheme.



About us

We are an independent 'not for profit' and impartial organisation which specialises in resolving disputes between consumers and:

- retailers (in-store and online);
- supermarkets;
- garden centres;
- restaurants and takeaways;
- hotels and leisure providers; and
- boiler installation and repair providers.

We are authorised by:

- The Secretary of State for Business Innovation & Skills Government to operate as an 'ombudsman'; and
- Chartered Trading Standards Institute – in relation to complaints about retailers and traders, under The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

We have also made an application to be authorised by both the Civil Aviation Authority and Ofcom as part of our 2016 and beyond strategy.

Our funding model

TRO obtained an interest free loan from DDRT Ltd, a company connected to Dean Dunham and Robin Tucker. The loan was used to facilitate the set up and launch of TRO as no other sources of funding were available. Ongoing the scheme is funded by the businesses that we engage with, via annual membership and complaint handling fees.

We are
FREE to the
consumer

Consumers

A small selection of consumer feedback about their experience of TRO



I am very pleased to tell you that Dune refunded all the money due. It ended up being about STG600 that had been owed and even then it took two efforts to receive the correct amount!

I am 100% sure that the ONLY reason that they remedied the issue (it went on for many months) was because I told them that I had contacted your organisation. Thanks for being there for consumers!

Complaint ID: 1714 – Marcus Barnard



Good day, Just to inform you that I have received the refund in my account today. Thanks very much for the support and you can go ahead and close the file.

Complaint ID 1133 – Pevy Scarlett-Hepburn



Hi, Yes they did send me a replacement and all is good. Thanks very much for sorting this out for me, it is much appreciated. Thanks Craig

Complaint ID 8307 – Craig Porter





We have now had the telephone conversation with Sainsbury's online customer service team and have received the e-voucher as agreed. You can mark this case as resolved. Thank you for your assistance. regards David & Janet Rose

Complaint ID: 7211 – Janet Rose



Hi, thank you for following this up. I also complained through Paypal and Paypal have upheld my complaint and I received a refund through Paypal this week. This matter is now resolved. Thanks for your help Best wishes Laura

Complaint ID 2066 – Laura Matthews



Many thanks for this. Yes, The Glamour Shop issued a refund notice the same day that you messaged them. Thank you so much for following this up with them. I had all but assumed the money was gone and that I would never see it

Complaint ID 2006 – Louis Wotton



Hello i just came back from holiday and i would like to thank you for helping i will contact the citizens advice again and let them know that they refused to mediate and take them to court!! Once again thank you !

Complaint ID 4209- Ionut Baciu



Thank you so much for your help. I have to day received an e-mail from Apple Southampton to say they will be refunding the £229! Many, many thanks for all your help and assistance in helping to achieve this result. Davidson

Complaint ID 9288 – Stephen Davidson



Retailers

TRO deals with complaints for 'members' who engage with TRO on all complaints that are in scope and 'non-members', who engage with TRO on a complaint by complaint basis.

TRO members are divided into two sections, 'independent retailers' and 'corporate'. In addition to the corporate members thousands of Independent Retailers have joined TRO.

TRO corporate members:



Non-members who engage with TRO from time to time

Amazon
Ann Summers
Apple
Appliances Direct
ASDA
BedWorld
Carphone Warehouse
Certas Energy
Charles Tyrwhitt
eDecks.co.uk
Fabletics
H&M
H.Samuel
Halfords
lwoot.com

JD Sports
John Lewis
Justfab
Kurt Geiger
Laithwaite's
Littlewoods
Marks & Spencer
Morrisons
Natuzzi
Ocado
Poundland
Sainsbury's
Sports Direct
Tesco
The Watch Hut

Statistics

Between January – May 2015 statistics were recorded under the following headings:



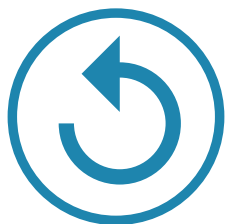
Delivery Issues:
814 complaints



Faulty Goods:
412 complaints



Other:
1771 complaints



Returns:
1928 complaints



Service Issues:
77 complaints

In accordance with CTSI annual report requirements the statistics breakdown was changed as follows:

<u>Dispute type</u>	<u>Number of complaints (Domestic)</u>			<u>Number of complaints (Cross-border)</u>			<u>Totals</u>
	rec'd	rejected	Accepted	rec'd	rejected	Accepted	
<i>Not of satisfactory quality</i>							
Electrical goods	875	500	375	0	0	0	375
Clothing	2966	210	2756	892	0	892	3648
Food	1209	88	1121	0	0	0	1121
Other	4077	1096	2981	4233	1792	2441	5422
Total	9127	1894	7233	5125	1792	3333	10566

Not as described

Electrical goods	323	304	19	0	0	0	19
Clothing	139	0	139	8	8	0	139
Food	629	0	629	4	4	0	629
Other	3022	0	3022	3929	3014	915	3937
Total	4113	304	3809	3941	3026	915	4724

Late delivery

Electrical goods	2364	0	2364	0	0	0	2364
Clothing	298	0	298	392	380	12	310
Food	211	211	0	0	0	0	0
Other	5930	2537	3393	10	4	6	3399
Total	8803	2748	6055	402	384	18	6073

Cancelled/no delivery

Electrical goods	91	74	17	0	0	0	17
Clothing	6392	5981	411	23	5	18	429
Food	209	173	36	0	3	-3	33
Other	5286	5286	0	205	188	17	17
Total	11978	11514	464	228	196	32	496

Out of stock

Electrical goods	52	52	0	0	0	0	0
Clothing	92	11	81	22	3	19	100
Food	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Other	7209	6585	624	2	2	0	624
Total	7355	6650	705	24	5	19	724

Other								
Electrical goods	49	49	0	3	3	0	0	
Clothing	13	13	0	17	10	7	7	
Food	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	182	182	0	426	426	0	0	
Total	256	256	0	446	439	7	7	
/								
Service issues								
Electrical goods	839	839	0	0	0	0	0	
Clothing	306	306	0	0	0	0	0	
Food	447	447	0	0	0	0	0	
Trade	4724	4155	569	0	0	0	569	
Other	2195	2195	0	4	4	0	0	
Total	8511	7942	569	4	4	0	569	
TOTALS	50143	31308	18835	Cross B	10170	5846	4324	
							23159	

*The figures are correct as of 20 March 2018, following an amendment to our report

Totals



*the above figures demonstrate a total of the complaints received, not accepted during the period that the report covers, note the total complaints accepted to be within scope or jurisdiction.

Addendum To 2015 Annual Report

This addendum to the 2015 Annual Report has been produced to provide

- Clarification on the 'total' number of complaints recorded in the annual review; and
- A detailed breakdown of the statistics provided.

Total Initial Complaints Received

60,313

Of Which...

38%

were in
jurisdiction
(23,159)

62%

were out
of jurisdiction
(37,154)

81%

related to
non-members
(48,562)

19%

related to
members
(11,751)

Of the...

23,159

complaints in jurisdiction:

71%

were
processed
(16,443)

Of the...

23,159

complaints in jurisdiction:

57%

were upheld in
favour of the
Retailer

43%

were upheld
in favour of the
Consumer

Accounts

[Click here to view accounts for year end 31 December 2015](#)