



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

ComReg reports An Post's performance for next-day delivery of mail in 2021

Universal Postal Service Quality of Service

Information Notice

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Additional Information

2021 Quality of Service Annual Report	
Document No:	22/69
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Regulation of An Post's quality for universal postal services

The Commission for Communications Regulation (“ComReg”) regulates postal services in the State. This statutory function includes setting quality of service standards for the universal postal service and the monitoring of An Post’s performance against those standards. An Post is currently the sole designated universal postal service provider for the State until August 2023.

ComReg has set quality of service standards requiring An Post to deliver 94% of single piece priority mail posted in the State for delivery in the State on the next working day (“D+1”) and to deliver 99.5% of such mail within three working days (“D+3”).¹

ComReg has today published the report by Ipsos MRBI on its monitoring of the quality of the universal postal service, as provided by An Post, for the calendar year 2021. The key findings are detailed below:

Impact of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) on universal postal service in 2021

ComReg’s Information Notice for the calendar year 2020 noted that the Irish Government issued instructions on COVID-19 to the public², initiating the shut-down of all non-essential workplaces and services in March 2020 and for other periods and locations thereafter that year, but that postal services were deemed to be an essential service and utility. As such the provision of the universal postal service continued throughout the year in 2020. Service provision also continued throughout the year in 2021. The pandemic had less of an impact on Irish public life in 2021 than in 2020, nevertheless it did continue to pose some challenges for An Post in continuing to provide the universal postal service for the first five months of 2021 and the results must be taken in this context.

Performance against Regulatory Standards for full 2021 calendar year

Over the full 2021 calendar year;

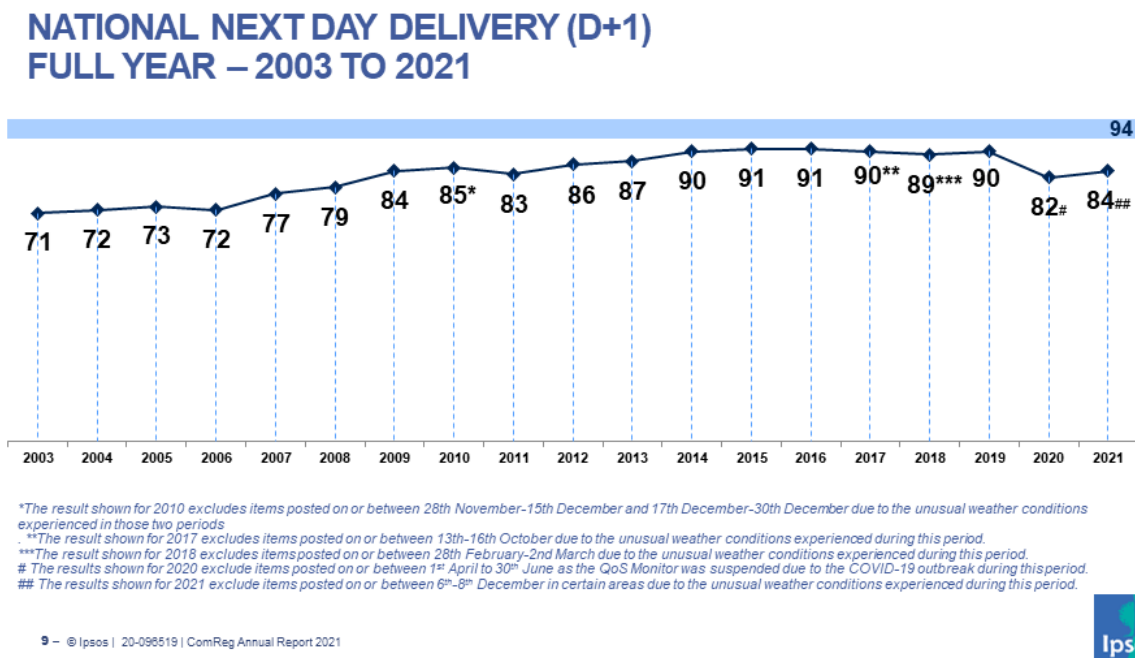
- An Post delivered **84%** of single piece priority mail throughout the State on the next working day following the day of posting. The 2021 result is a marginal 2% increase on the 2020 result. However, performance is 10% below the 94% regulatory standard.
- An Post delivered **98.2%** of single piece priority mail within three working days following the day of posting, again marginally above the 2020 result (97.4%) but still below the 99.5% regulatory standard.

¹ ComReg Document No.15/126

² Ireland’s National Action Plan in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

ComReg first introduced independent monitoring of the quality of the universal postal service in 2003. At that time just 71% of single piece priority mail was being delivered on the next working day. In 2015 and 2016 the rate of next-day delivery climbed to 91%, the highest annual performance to date. From 2017 to 2019 annual performance ranged between 89% to 90%. The accuracy variance on the overall 2021 annual result is at +1.4%, exceeding the target of +1%.

The graphic hereunder shows the performance trend from 2003 to 2021;



ComReg 22/69 contains the full set of published 2021 results and is available in the publications section at www.comreg.ie.

Other performance information

In addition to the annual performance against the regulatory standards as set out above, the following key findings are contained in the 2021 annual report.

- **January to November 2021**

In the period January 2021 to November 2021 (excluding the month of December), An Post delivered **87%** of single piece priority mail on the next working day which represented no change from the 2020 result for this period. The result for the same period in 2019 pre-Covid-19 pandemic was 92%.

- **December 2021**

For the month of December 2021, the overall next-day delivery performance stood at **59%**, which was a 17% increase on the 42% performance of December 2020. The result for pre-pandemic December 2019 was 75%.

Background

Under the Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Act 2011, ComReg is the designated national regulatory authority for the postal sector with the overarching function to ensure the provision, throughout the State, of a universal postal service that meets the reasonable needs of postal service users. The same Act designates An Post as the sole “universal postal service provider”.

ComReg’s statutory functions include setting quality of service standards for the universal postal service, which is provided exclusively by An Post, and monitoring An Post’s compliance with those standards. In 2004, and following a public consultation, ComReg issued a direction to An Post which set quality of service standards for the universal postal service. The direction set a next working day delivery standard of 94% for single piece priority mail posted in the State for delivery in the State and a 99.5% standard for delivery of such mail within three working days. ComReg re-consulted on these standards in 2015 and following that public consultation the same 94% and 99.5% standards were retained.

ComReg is also statutorily required to monitor compliance by An Post with the quality of service standards and to publish an annual report on the results of its monitoring. EU legislation requires that, in any Member State, the quality of the universal postal service shall be measured by a body that is independent of the provider of that service. The quality of the universal postal service must also be measured using statistical methods set out by the European Standards Institute (CEN) and mandated by the European Commission.

ComReg appointed Ipsos MRBI to independently monitor An Post’s compliance with the above quality of service standards and An Post appointed KPMG to independently audit that Ipsos MRBI’s monitoring process is in accordance with the CEN requirements.

The monitor measures the rate of delivery of domestic single piece priority mail which includes standard envelopes, large envelopes and packets, posted within the State for delivery within the State. The monitor excludes “bulk mail” which often involves a deferred delivery in return for a price discount.

The total number of effective observations in the monitor in 2021 was 28,221 valid test mail items and the accuracy variance on the overall annual 84% result was +/- 1.4 %.

KPMG’s audit (which included a six month interim audit and a final annual audit at the end of the year) of the 2021 Ipsos MRBI monitor covered the monitor’s documentation, processes, controls and statistical results. The KPMG audit confirmed that the monitor was in material compliance with the applicable CEN standard EN13850:2020 and that the 2021 results are materially reliable and robust. KPMG noted in its report that the Ipsos MRBI team continue to have a high level of expertise and knowledge in all components of the Mail Monitor operation processes.