



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

## Information Notice

### **An Post's Quality of Service Domestic single piece mail.**

**Qtr 3, July to September 2006 & YTD, January-  
September 2006**

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## 1 Foreword

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) is the sole organisation with statutory responsibility for monitoring An Post's quality of service performance. ComReg is also responsible for setting and publishing quality of service standards. ComReg has appointed TNS mrbi to measure<sup>1</sup> the quality of service afforded by An Post to single piece mail<sup>2</sup> items posted and delivered within the Republic of Ireland.

ComReg is now publishing TNS mrbi's report of the third quarter performance from July to September 2006 inclusive, together with an aggregated report for the year to date, January to September 2006. Performance results show that **74%** of nationwide single piece mail items were delivered the next working day after posting between July and September 2006. This represents a 1% increase over Quarter 2 results and is on a par with the same period in 2005. However this falls considerably short of the quality of service target set by ComReg of 94%.

The report highlights some variation in results between the different mail flows<sup>3</sup>. Mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery to addresses in Dublin County received a poorer level of service than mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery within the county of posting – 73% compared with 76%. Mail posted in Dublin County for nationwide delivery received 72% next day delivery (representing a drop of 3% over the same period in 2005) while mail posted outside Dublin County for nationwide delivery received a 76% success rate. It is also of concern that next day delivery of Local mail is experiencing a downward trend since the beginning of the year and has declined 4% nationally over the same period in 2005.

The report does, highlight performance improvement (98%) over the first two quarters of 2006 for mail posted nationwide for delivery anywhere in the country within three days of posting. However, this improvement continues to fall short of the quality of service target set by ComReg of 99.5%. Again the poor trend in Dublin continued with mail posted in Dublin County for Local and Nationwide delivery within three days of posting yielded a lower performance result than mail posted outside of Dublin for local and Nationwide delivery within three days of posting.

This is the third successive quarter where there has been no discernible improvement in quality of service. ComReg is particularly concerned with the poor performance of mail originating in Dublin for delivery nationwide or indeed locally.

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<sup>1</sup> Measurement is in accordance with the principles set out in the European and Irish Standard I.S. EN 13850:2002, 'Postal Services – Quality of Service – Measurement of transit time of end-to-end services for single piece priority mail and first class mail'. CEN (European Standards Institute) Technical Committee 331 is responsible for postal services standardisation. It receives its mandate from the European Commission. EN 13850 has mandatory application throughout the EU.

<sup>2</sup> Single piece mail is the ordinary day to day correspondence posted by individuals and businesses, big and small.

<sup>3</sup> Mail flows measured include (1) mail posted in Dublin (City and County) for delivery nationwide and in Dublin County and (2) mail posted outside Dublin County for delivery nationwide, locally (ie within the same County of posting) and in Dublin County.

An Post has recently conducted a review of its Quality of Service Improvement Programme. An Post has advised that it is currently developing a revised plan for 2007/2008 with reports of progress to be provided to ComReg on a quarterly basis. An Post intends to place greater management focus on quality performance and to make quality the 'backbone' of its business. An Post claims that its weekly operational reviews, chaired by the its Chief Executive and in tandem with the filling of staff vacancies where needed, will underpin this programme. ComReg welcomes this commitment.

**Mike Byrne**  
**Chairperson**

## 2 Commentary on Results

ComReg is charged with responsibility for the regulation of Universal Postal Services in Ireland. It is the sole organisation with statutory responsibility to set and publish quality of service standards in relation to the universal service, paying attention in particular to routing times and to the regularity and reliability of services. It is also required to monitor the performance levels achieved against the targets set. ComReg has commissioned TNS mrbi to measure performance, in accordance with the European and Irish Standard, I.S. EN 13850: 2002<sup>4</sup> on its behalf. In line with the Standard, ComReg's monitor focuses exclusively on single piece priority mail<sup>5</sup>.

This is the third interim report of 2006 on An Post's quality of service for single piece priority mail. Year to date results covering the period January to September 2006 are also reported. ComReg will continue to monitor and publish interim reports for each quarter of 2006, together with aggregated year to date reports, culminating with the publication of an annual report for 2006 early next year.

### 2.1 National Mail for Delivery Next Day Nationwide (D<sup>6</sup>+1)

National Mail refers to all mail posted and delivered within the Republic of Ireland regardless of its origination or destination address. The following table shows results for Quarter 3 of 2006 (July to September inclusive) and year to date results for next working day delivery (D+1) of single piece priority national mail as reported by TNS mrbi:

**Table 1: Results for National Mail Next Day (D+1) delivery against ComReg Target 94%**

National Mail (D+1)	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	YTD	Actual Full year Jan - Dec
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec		
<b>2006</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>na</b>
2005	76%	78%	74%	63%	na	73%
2004	70%	70%	78%	67%	na	72%
2003	73%	71%	76%	67%	na	71%

The independent measurement system reported that An Post delivered **74%** of all single piece mail within one working day of posting between July and September 2006. This represents a modest improvement over the second Quarter 2006 results.

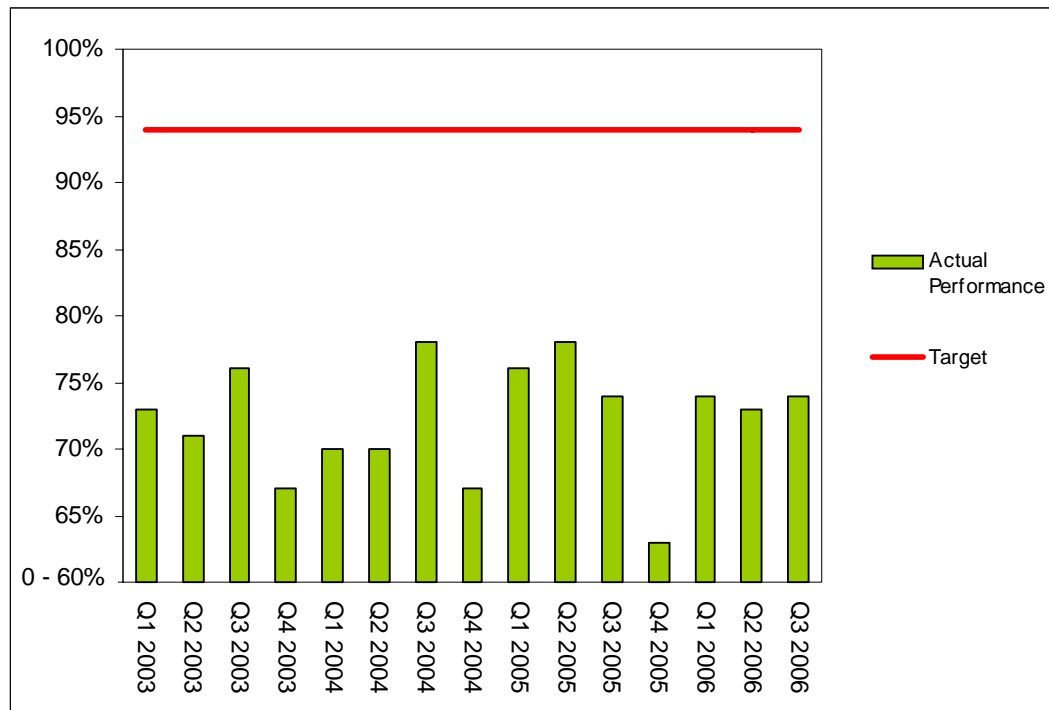
Figure 1 below shows that An Post's performance continues to fall short of the target set by ComReg of **94%** for the period July to September 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Postal Services – Quality of Service – Measurement of transit time of end-to-end services for single piece priority mail and first class mail

<sup>5</sup> Single piece mail is the ordinary day to day correspondence posted by individuals and businesses, big and small

<sup>6</sup> D represents the date of deposit (i.e. posting)

**Figure 1: National Mail Next Day (D+1) Delivery Performance**



Performance reported is showing a 20% gap between the target set by ComReg and the performance achieved by An Post and indeed performance for next day delivery has not exceeded 74% over the past 12 months.

Looking more closely at TNS mrbi's report for Quarter 3 2006 (see Annex for Third Quarter 2006 and aggregated year to date results) it is worth noting that only 72% of mail posted in Dublin for nationwide delivery receives a next day delivery service while 76% of mail posted outside Dublin County for nationwide delivery can expect to be delivered the day after posting. The aggregated year to date reports shows that mail posted in Dublin for delivery anywhere in the country only achieves 71% next day delivery while mail posted outside of Dublin for national delivery records a success rate of 76% next day delivery. This would clearly suggest that at least parts of the difficulties are being experienced at the Dublin Mail Centre, through which all Dublin mail transits and possibly also at Dublin Delivery Offices where the Labour Court negotiated work practice changes have yet to be implemented.

## 2.2 Local Mail for Delivery next working day in County of Posting (D+1)

Local Mail refers to mail that is delivered within the same County of posting. The results for Quarter 3 2006 and year to date results for next working day delivery (D+1) of priority single piece local mail are reported by TNS mrbi as follows:

**Table 2: Results for Local Mail Next Working Day (D+1) Delivery against ComReg Target 94%**

	Year	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	YTD	Actual Full year
		Jan -Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec		Jan - Dec
<b>All local mail (D+1)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2005	79%	81%	78%	67%	na	76%
	2004	75%	75%	81%	71%	na	75%
	2003	76%	75%	79%	72%	na	75%
<b>Local Mail Posted in Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2005	78%	79%	77%	70%	na	76%
	2004	71%	75%	82%	72%	na	75%
	2003	72%	71%	78%	69%	na	72%
<b>Local Mail Posted outside Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2005	80%	84%	79%	64%	na	76%
	2004	78%	76%	80%	69%	na	76%
	2003	79%	78%	80%	75%	na	78%

The target for local mail to be processed and delivered on the next working day is 94% (the same target as for National Mail). The results for Quarter 3 2006 shows a deteriorating trend in the performance of local mail delivery since the beginning of this year.

The report also highlights some variation in results between the various mail flows<sup>7</sup>. Local mail posted outside of Dublin continues to receive a higher service standard (76%) compared to other flows. The aggregated year to date report also highlights that mail posted outside of Dublin County for delivery locally records a rate of 78% next day delivery while mail posted outside Dublin County for delivery to Dublin County records a much lower performance (72%).

## 2.3 Next Working Day Delivery of Mail Posted to Dublin (D+1)

The following table shows the quality of service afforded to mail posted anywhere in the Republic of Ireland for delivery within Dublin, mail posted in Dublin for local delivery, and mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery in Dublin.

<sup>7</sup> Mail flows measured include (1) mail posted in Dublin (City and County) for delivery nationwide and in Dublin County and (2) mail posted outside Dublin County for delivery nationwide, locally (ie within the same County of posting) and in Dublin County.

**Table 3: Results for Mail Delivered to Dublin for Next Working Day (D+1)  
against ComReg Target 94%**

	Year	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	YTD	Actual Full year Jan- Dec
		Jan -Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec		
<b>National mail (D+1)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2005	76%	78%	74%	66%	na	73%
	2004	75%	75%	80%	69%	na	73%
	2003	71%	69%	76%	68%	na	71%
<b>Mail Posted in Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2005	78%	79%	77%	70%	na	76%
	2004	71%	75%	82%	72%	na	75%
	2003	72%	71%	78%	69%	na	72%
<b>Mail Posted outside Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2005	72%	77%	69%	57%	na	68%
	2004	70%	69%	77%	64%	na	70%
	2003	69%	64%	73%	65%	na	68%

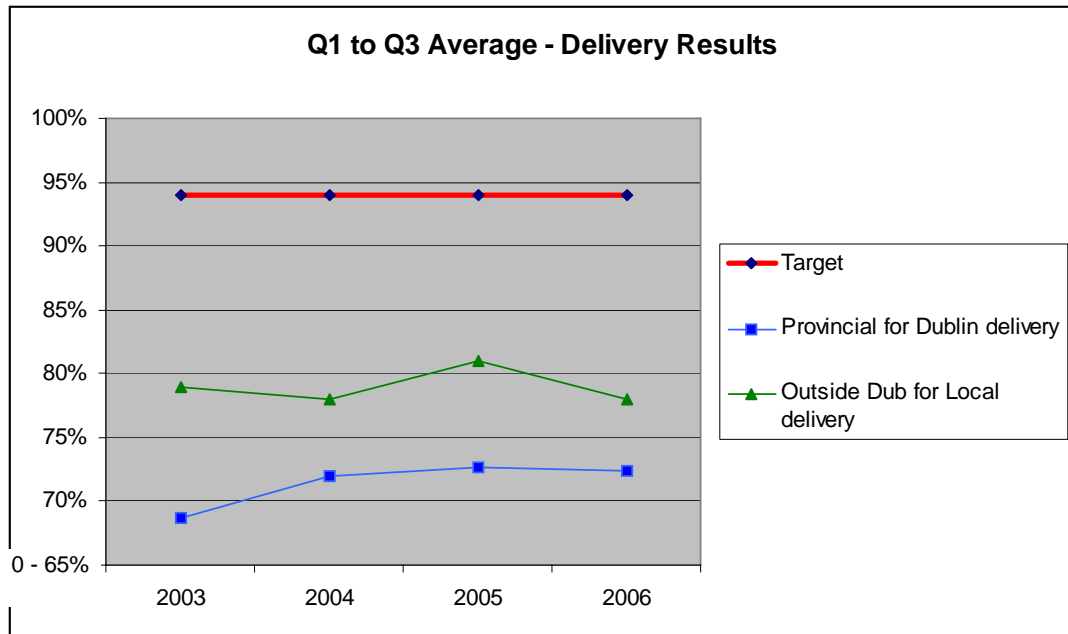
The target for this reporting stream is 94% (the same target as for National Mail).

It is worth noting that performance of mail posted outside of Dublin for Dublin delivery has improved by 4% over the same period in 2005 while performance of mail posted in Dublin for Dublin delivery has declined by 4% over the same period in 2005. Looking at the aggregated year to date performance, mail posted outside of Dublin County for delivery in Dublin County (72%) generally receives a very poor service.

Figure 2 below shows An Post's performance of Provincial Mail for delivery to Dublin compared with Local Mail performance posted outside Dublin, calculated as an average result for the first three quarters of 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.



**Figure 2: National Mail Next Day (D+1) Delivery Performance**



#### 2.4 National Mail delivered within three days (D+3)

The results for Quarter 3 2006 for delivery of single piece priority mail posted nationwide for delivery nationwide within three working days (D+3) are reported by TNS mrbi as follows:

Table 4: Results for National Mail Delivery within Three working days (D +3) against ComReg Target 99.5%

All national mail (D+3)	Actual Q1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Actual Q4	YTD	Annual Jan - Dec
	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec		
<b>2006</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>na</b>
2005	98%	98%	96%	96%	na	97%
2004	94%	97%	99%	96%	na	96%
2003	na	na	97%	97%	na	96%

The purpose of this measure is to ensure that when there is a failure to provide the desired level of next day delivery that it is corrected as quickly as possible thereafter. The target set requires that 99.5% of all mail posted should be processed and delivered within three working days of posting.

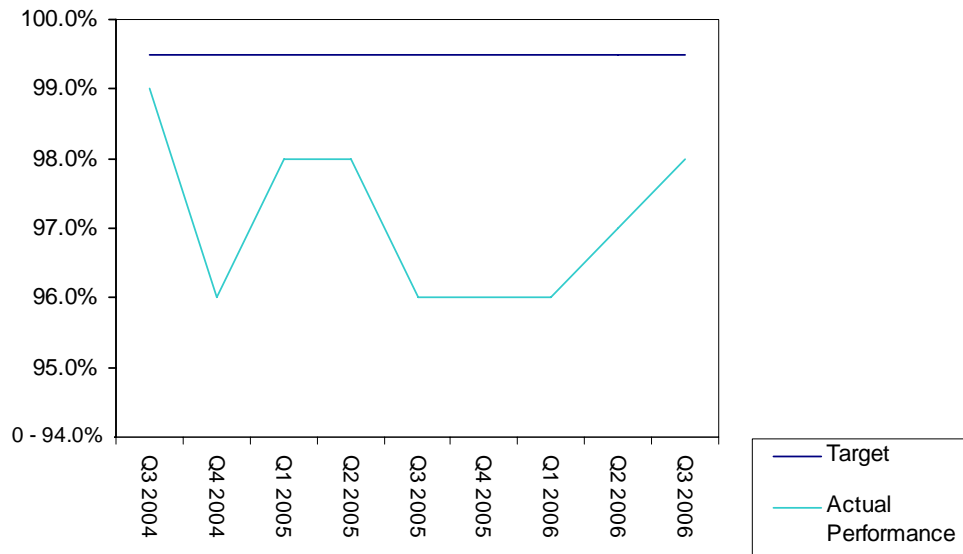
TNS mrbi's report shows that 98% of all mail was delivered within three working days of posting for Quarter 3 2006. While this result reflects a 1% improvement over the second Quarter of 2006 and is to be welcomed it nevertheless continues to fall short of the 99.5% target set for delivery of mail within 3 days of posting.

The only mail flows that performed less well than 98% delivery within three days of posting in Quarter 3 2006 was mail inducted in Dublin for local or nationwide delivery and all mail with Dublin delivery addresses (97%). Again this would

suggest that at least parts of the difficulties are being experienced at the Dublin Mail Processing Centre and possibly in Dublin deliveries.

The overall trend for National Mail Delivery within three working days (D +3) is illustrated in figure 3:

**Figure 3: National Mail Delivery within Three working days (D +3) delivery performance**



## 2.5 Action Underway

While the overall next day delivery results for Quarter 3 2006 remain stable (1% improvement observed over Quarter 2 results) there is little discernible improvement in the quality of service being afforded to postal consumers.

An Post has committed to achieving the 94% quality of service target for next day delivery through the implementation of its *Quality of Service Improvement Programme* which An Post has stated is specifically geared towards the achievement of the Quality of Service targets set by ComReg.

An Post has recently conducted a review of its *Quality of Service Improvement Programme*. An Post is currently developing a revised plan for 2007/2008 and updates will be provided to ComReg on a quarterly basis. As part of its revised plan An Post intends to have an increased management focus on quality performance and it aims to make quality the 'backbone' of its business. This is to be welcomed.

ComReg is anxious to engage with An Post to establish the cause of the poor performance of Dublin mail. ComReg will also be anxious to understand the declining trend in local mail performance generally over the past year.

An improvement in quality of service is fundamental to An Posts well-being. It is paramount that the successful implementation of its revised *Quality of Service Improvement Programme* benefits both business and residential consumers who require a high quality and dependable postal service.

ComReg will also monitor the effects on quality, if any, as An Post implements its redesigned Collection & Delivery (C&D) working arrangements. ComReg understands that the implementation of these C&D changes has been delayed until early 2007 with the changeover at the Ballyfermot Delivery Service Unit (DSU) scheduled for mid January 2007.

The third quarter report 2006 and the aggregated report for the year to date as submitted by TNS mrbi are published in full as annexes to this document.

**Annex A TNS mrbi Report – Third Quarter 2006 –  
06/70a**

**Annex B TNS mrbi Report – First to Third Quarter  
2006 – 06/70b**