



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Quality of Service Domestic single piece mail

Performance of An Post

**Qtr 3, July-September 2004 &
January-September YTD 2004**

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Foreword

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) is responsible for monitoring An Post's quality of service performance. We are also responsible for setting quality of service targets. ComReg appointed TNS mrbi in 2002 to measure¹ the quality of service afforded by An Post to single piece mail² items posted and delivered within the Republic of Ireland.

We are now publishing TNS mrbi's report on performance for the third quarter (July to September 2004) and an aggregated report for the year to date (January to September 2004).

The aggregated results for the year to date show that, for mail posted throughout the state for delivery in the state, 73% was delivered on the next working day (i.e., excluding weekends and public holidays) and 96% was delivered within three working days. There is a variation in the results for the different mail flows³.

However, the results for Quarter 3 2004 show an improvement on the results for the first six months – 78% compared with 70%. Seasonal factors are a likely contributor for this improvement. Quarter 3 of 2003 also yielded a higher performance in comparison to the other quarters last year. Improvement is notable in Dublin where the percentage of local mail delivered the next day was 82%, compared with 80% for mail posted outside Dublin for local delivery. Hitherto the performance in respect of local mail posted in Dublin has been below that posted elsewhere in the country.

An Post has confirmed that a contract is now in place with Consultants who have been commissioned to advise An Post as to where operational processes and performance nationwide are inhibiting the Company's ability to achieve the next day delivery target of 94% set by ComReg.

Isolde Goggin
Chairperson

¹ 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'.

² Single piece mail is the ordinary day to day correspondence posted by individuals and businesses, big and small

³ Mail flows measured include mail posted in Dublin (City and County) for delivery nationwide, in Dublin and in areas outside Dublin and mail posted outside Dublin for delivery nationwide, locally (i.e. in the same County) and in Dublin.

1 First nine months of year Report 2004 and results for Q3 2004

ComReg is designated with responsibility for the regulation of Universal Postal Services in Ireland⁴. It is required to set and publish quality of service standards in relation to the universal service, paying particular attention to routing times and to the regularity and reliability of services. It is also required to monitor the performance levels achieved against the targets which have been set. It has commissioned TNS mrbi to carry out this, in accordance with the European and Irish Standard, I.S. EN 13850: 2002, in parallel with the Guide for the implementation of EN 13850, TR 14709, on its behalf.

The reports cover the first nine months of the year (January to September 2004) and the third quarter (July to September 2004) performances.

1.1 National Mail for Delivery Next Day Nationwide (D+1)

National Mail refers to all single piece priority mail that is posted and delivered within the Republic of Ireland regardless of the origin or destination address. The results for the first nine months of 2004 and for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2004 for next day delivery (D + 1) of priority single piece national mail are reported by TNS mrbi as follows:

Table 1 Result for National Mail Next Day (D+1) Delivery

Results published by TNS mrbi	Target Set	Q1 Jan-Mar	Q2 Apr-Jun	Q3 July-Sep	YTD2004 Jan-Sep
ComReg Doc. Ref	04/56	04/89	04/89	04/XX	04/XX
All Mail posted in Ireland for delivery in Ireland i.e. National Mail (D+1)	94%	70%	70%	78%	73%

Overall the independent measurement system reported that An Post delivered 73% of all single piece mail the day after posting during the first nine months of 2004. This performance result falls short of the target of 94% set by ComReg.

There is a variation in the results for the different mail flows. In the period from 1st January to 30th September 2004 mail posted in Dublin receives poorer levels of service than mail posted elsewhere – 70% compared with 75%.

However, the results for Q3 show an improvement on the results for the first six months – 78% compared with 70%.

⁴ Regulation 3(1) S.I. No 616 of 2002

1.2 Local Mail for Delivery Next Day in County of Posting (D+1)

Local Mail refers to single piece priority mail that is posted and delivered within a county. The result for the first nine months of 2004 and for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2004 for next day delivery (D + 1) of priority single piece local mail are reported by TNS mrbi as follows:

Table 2 Results for Local Mail Next Day (D+1) Delivery

Results published by TNS mrbi	Target Set	Q1 Jan – Mar	Q2 Apr – June	Q3 July– Sep	YTD2004 Jan-Sep
ComReg Doc Ref	04/56	04/89	04/89	04/xx	04/xx
All Mail posted for delivery in county of posting i.e. Local Mail (D+1)	94%	75%	75%	81%	77%
Posted in Dublin (City and County)	94%	71%	75%	82%	76%
Posted outside Dublin	94%	78%	76%	80%	78%

The target for local mail to be processed and delivered on the next working day is 94% (the same as the target for National Mail). The results for the first nine months of 2004 shows that mail for local delivery receives a better service than other mail (77% compared with an average of 73% for all mail).

The results also show that residents of counties outside Dublin receive a better local mail service (78%) than those residing within County Dublin (76%).

In Q3 improvement is notable in Dublin where the percentage of local mail delivered the next day was 82%, compared with 80% for mail posted outside Dublin for local delivery during this period.

It is interesting to note the improvement between local mail results for Dublin between the three quarters, Q1 2004 – 71% rising in Q2 2004 to 75% and rising in Q3 2004 to 82%. This can be compared to the results for the corresponding periods in 2003, 72% and 71% and 73% respectively. On that basis alone there appears to be an incremental improvement over the three quarters of this year in direct comparison with the respective quarters for 2003.

1.3 National Mail delivered within three days (D+3)

The results for the first nine months of 2004 and for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2004 for delivery of priority single piece mail posted nationwide for delivery nationwide within three working days (D + 3) are reported by TNS mrbi as follows:

Table 3 Results for National Mail Delivery in Three Working Days

Results published by TNS mrbi	Target Set	Q1 Jan-Mar	Q2 Apr-Jun	Q3 July - Sep	YTD2004 Jan-Sep
ComReg Doc Ref	04/56	04/89	04/89	04/	04/xx
All Mail posted in Ireland for delivery in Ireland (D+3)	99.5%	94%	97%	99%	96%

The purpose of this measure is to ensure that if there is a failure to provide the desired level of next day delivery then it is corrected as quickly as possible thereafter. The target is that 99.5% of all mail should be processed and delivered within three working days. In the first nine months of 2004 An Post only delivered 96% of mail within this time frame. On a more positive note, an improvement is evident from Q1 2004 (94%) to Q2 2004 (97%) and to Q3 2004 (99%). An Post almost reached the target for D+3 in Q3. It is hoped that this performance will continue to be achieved if not improved upon for the future.

As with the improved D+1 next day delivery, the most interesting fact from the results for the third quarter, July to September, for delivery within three days, (D+3), is the finding that for the first time mail posted in Dublin County for delivery anywhere or local delivery within county of posting outperformed mail posted outside Dublin County for delivery within the same flows, 99% as opposed to 98%.

1.4 Action Underway

At the request of ComReg, (ComReg Document No: 04/56), An Post submitted a timetabled plan for achieving the quality of service targets set by ComReg earlier this year⁵. An Post also proposed to engage Consultants to advise An Post where operational processes and performance nationwide are inhibiting the Company's ability to achieve the quality of service targets set by ComReg.

An Post has confirmed that a contract is now in place with these Consultants. A Report from the Consultants is due to be submitted to ComReg by the end of March 2005.

The Reports submitted by TNS mrbi are published in full in the following section.

⁵ The targets to be met are: 94% for next day delivery and 99.5% for delivery within three working days.

**Republic Of Ireland Quality Of
Postal Service Monitor**

**Interim Report
Items Posted On Or Between
1st January & 30th September, 2004**

ComReg



TNS mrbi
Temple House
Temple Road
Blackrock
Co. Dublin
www.tnsmrbi.ie

REF: TNS mrbi/102307/04

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TNS mrbi/102307/04

1. INTRODUCTION

TNS mrbi has been commissioned by ComReg to monitor the quality of postal service in the Republic of Ireland, according to 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' in parallel with the Guide for the implementation of EN 13850, TR 14709. For monitoring purposes, the universe of post is defined as all single piece priority mail and first class mail posted and delivered in the Republic of Ireland. Monitoring is conducted via a nationwide panel of homes and business premises posting and receiving mail on a continuous basis.

This report presents the findings for items posted between 1st January and 30th of September, 2004.

In late March/April 2004 strike action at An Post disrupted mail deliveries and prevented mail induction at some locations. All panel senders and receivers were contacted by TNS mrbi and instructed to follow procedures as normal except where access to post boxes was blocked. If access was blocked, senders were instructed to wait until access was unblocked and then send the items, adjusting the date of induction accordingly.

Reports are issued on a quarterly and year-to-date basis.

TNS mrbi is an independent provider of business information. TNS mrbi is a fully owned subsidiary of TNS plc.

**2. NEXT DAY DELIVERY (D +1): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN
1ST JANUARY & 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2004**

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	73% (+/-1.0%)	77% (+/-1.3%)	74% (+/-1.2%)
	Dublin county	70% (+/-1.7%)	76% (+/-1.8%)	76% (+/-1.8%)
	Outside Dublin county	75% (+/-1.3%)	78% (+/-2.1%)	72% (+/-1.7%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 16866*
3. *Dublin County consists of the administrative areas of the Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council and Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council.*

3. DELIVERY WITHIN THREE DAYS (D +3): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN 1ST JANUARY & 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	96% (+/-0.5%)	97% (+/-0.5%)	95% (+/-0.6%)
	Dublin county	95% (+/-0.8%)	95% (+/-1.0%)	95% (+/-1.0%)
	Outside Dublin county	98% (+/-0.4%)	99% (+/-0.5%)	97% (+/-0.7%)

4. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
5. *Total number of effective observations – 16866*
6. *Dublin County consists of the administrative areas of the Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council and Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council.*

4. METHODOLOGY

The method of monitoring is in full accordance with 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'.

4.1. Calculation Of Transit Time

Transit times are calculated according to a five-day working week calculation rule; whereby Saturday's, Sunday's and public holidays are excluded for delivery calculation purposes.

This rule is applied on the basis that mail is posted seven days a week. Where mail is inducted on Saturday's, Sunday's and public holidays to meet advertised collections on these days Monday is regarded as the next working day for the calculation of transit time for this mail. Where there is no advertised collection on these days mail inducted over the weekend/public holiday will be regarded as having been inducted on the following Monday for the calculation of transit time.

4.2. Sample Design

The sample design corresponds with the most accurate and up-to-date estimates of real mail flow and discriminant characteristics provided by An Post. The sample employs strict proportionality across all key characteristics. Discriminant characteristics are defined as:

- Method of posting
- Method of addressing
- Envelope colour
- Envelope size
- Method of payment
- Day of week of posting

Regional mail flows are quota controlled with weighting used to restore proportionality.

4.3. *Geographical Distribution*

Stratified random sampling is employed to achieve the required panel geographical distribution. All addresses are verified with panellists for accuracy and completeness.

4.4. *Calculation Of Results*

Accuracy of the transit time is assessed by calculating the variance of the estimator and the design factor, taking into account:

- number of points of induction and receiving
- correlation of test items

5. PROJECT TEAM

Ian McShane, Managing Director, TNS mrbi

Damian Loscher, Deputy Managing Director, TNS mrbi

Maura Murphy, Associate Director, TNS mrbi

Cathal Carroll, Research Consultant, TNS mrbi

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		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	78% (+/-1.5%)	81% (+/-2.1%)	80% (+/-1.8%)
	Dublin county	78% (+/-2.5%)	82% (+/-2.7%)	82% (+/-2.7%)
	Outside Dublin county	79% (+/-2%)	80% (+/-3.5%)	77% (+/-2.6%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 5206*
3. *Dublin County consists of the administrative areas of the Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council and Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council.*

3. DELIVERY WITHIN THREE DAYS (D +3): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN 1ST JULY & 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2004

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	99% (+/-0.4%)	99% (+/-0.5%)	99% (+/-0.5%)
	Dublin county	99% (+/-0.6%)	99% (+/-0.7%)	99% (+/-0.7%)
	Outside Dublin county	98% (+/-0.7%)	98% (+/-1.2%)	99% (+/-0.6%)

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