



Commission for
Communications Regulation

Information Notice

Quality of Service Domestic single piece priority mail Performance of An Post

Half 1, January – June 2004

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1 Foreword

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

We are now publishing TNS mrbi's report on the performance in the half year from January to June 2004 inclusive. We are also publishing the reports on the first quarter (January to March 2004 inclusive) and second quarter (April to June 2004 inclusive) performances. The publication of the Q1 2004 report was delayed due to the service disruptions at An Post during March/April 2004.

The results for the first six months of 2004 show that, for mail posted throughout the state for delivery in the state, 70% was delivered on the next working day (excluding weekends and bank holidays) and 95% was delivered within three working days. There is a variation in the results for the different mail flows³. Mail posted in Dublin received substantially poorer levels of service than mail posted elsewhere - 66% compared to 74%. However only 69% of mail posted outside Dublin county for delivery in Dublin was delivered the following day. This reflects the fact that the disruptions predominantly affected sorting at the Dublin Mails Centre. It is important to note that regardless of the period of disruption, the service throughout the period measured falls significantly short of both the required standard of service set by ComReg and international best practice.

Following a recent consultation⁴, ComReg set quality targets for single piece priority mail posted and delivered within the state. These are 94% for next day delivery and 99.5% for delivery within three working days. ComReg issued a formal direction to An Post under Regulation 4(1)(b) of SI No 616 of 2002 setting these targets and requiring An Post to submit, within 60 days, a copy of its timetabled implementation plan showing the date at which it expects to achieve its target. ComReg is currently assessing the plan which it has received. However, it is clear that An Post is some distance from meeting this target, and that it will not be met in 2004.

John Doherty
Chairperson
Commission for Communications Regulation

¹ Measurement is in accordance with the principles set out in the European and Irish Standard I.S. EN 13850:2002.

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.

⁴ Consultation Paper "Quality of Service Target 2004-Single Piece Priority Mail" Document 04/08, 3 February 2004. Response to Consultation "Quality of Service Target 2004-Single Piece Priority Mail" Document No 04/56, 1 June 2004.

2 First half year Report 2004 and results for Q1 and Q2 2004

ComReg is designated with responsibility for the regulation of Universal Postal Services in Ireland⁵. 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 do this, in accordance with the European and Irish Standard, I.S. EN 13850: 2002, on its behalf.

The reports cover the half year (January to June 2004 inclusive), the first quarter (January to March 2004 inclusive) and the second quarter (April to June 2004 inclusive) performances. The publication of the Q1 2004 report was delayed due to the disruptions to services at An Post in March-April 2004.

During the service disruptions all panel senders and receivers were instructed by TNS mrbi to follow procedures as normal except where access to a post box was blocked. TNS mrbi in their report state that *'If access was blocked, senders were instructed to wait until access was unblocked and then send the items, adjusting the date of induction accordingly'*. This approach is required by the mandatory European Standard on performance measurement EN13850:2002 which requires that *'Non functioning of the postal operator and days of strikes or industrial disputes shall not be discounted'*⁶ and by the requirement in Regulation 5(d) of S.I. No. 616 of 2002, that *'the service shall not be interrupted or stopped except in cases of force majeure'*.

The impact of this period of disruption on the results for the half year is not considered to be material in that it did not by itself prevent An Post from meeting ComReg targets for next day delivery.

2.1 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 six months of 2004 and for Q1 2004 and Q2 2004 for next day delivery (D + 1) of single piece priority national mail are reported by TNS mrbi as follows:

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

Results published by TNS mrbi	Target Set	Q1 2004 Jan-Mar	Q2 2004 Apr-Jun	H1 2004 Jan-Jun
Doc Ref ComReg	04/56	04/89	04/89	04/89
All Mail posted in Ireland for delivery in Ireland ie. National Mail (D+1)	94%	70%	70%	70%

⁵ Regulation 3(1) S.I. No 616 of 2002

⁶ EN13850:2002, 4.2.2

Overall the independent measurement system reported that An Post delivered 70% of all single piece priority mail the day after posting during the first six months of 2004. This result falls short of the target set by ComReg of 94%.

There is a variation in the results for the different mail flows. In the period from 1st January to 30th June 2004 mail posted in Dublin received poorer levels of service than mail posted elsewhere – 66% compared with 74%. On the other hand, in the same period, 69% of mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery in Dublin was delivered the next working day. This reflects the fact that the service disruptions predominantly affected the sorting at the Dublin Mails Centre.

2.2 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 the same county of posting. The result for the first six months of 2004 and for Q1 2004 and Q2 2004 for next day delivery (D + 1) of single piece priority 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 2004 Jan-Mar	Q2 2004 Apr-Jun	H1 2004 Jan-Jun
Doc Ref ComReg	04/56	04/89	04/89	04/89
All Mail posted for delivery in county of posting i.e. Local Mail (D+1)	94%	75%	75%	75%
Posted in Dublin (City and County)	94%	71%	75%	73%
Posted outside Dublin	94%	78%	76%	77%

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 total result for the first six months of 2004 recorded for posting mail in any county for delivery within that same county was 75%, representing a 5% better level of service than that for national mail.

The results show that residents of counties outside Dublin receive a better local mail service (77%) than those residing within County Dublin (73%). It must be noted that both fall significantly short of both the required standard of service set by ComReg and international best practice.

It is interesting to note the discrepancy between local mail results in Dublin between the two quarters, Q1 2004 – 71% rising to 75% in Q2 2004. This can be compared to the results for the corresponding periods in 2003, 72% and 71% respectively. Outside Dublin the trend in the results is reversed, 78% next day local mail delivery in Q1 2004 falling to 76% in Q2 2004.

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

The results for the first six months of 2004 and for Q1 2004 and Q2 2004 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 3 Results for National Mail Delivery In Three Working Days (D+3)

Results published by TNS mrbi	Target Set	Q1 2004 Jan-Mar	Q2 2004 Apr-Jun	H1 2004 Jan-Jun
Doc Ref ComReg	04/56	04/89	04/89	04/89
All Mail posted in Ireland for delivery in Ireland (D+3)	99.5%	94%	97%	95%

The purpose of this measure is to ensure that if there a failure to provide the desired level of next day delivery 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 six months of 2004 An Post only delivered 95% of mail within this time frame. This can be compared with a 96% rate of D+3 delivery for the full year in 2003. As a rise is evident from Q1 2004 (94%) to Q2 2004 (97%), the results seem to be improving and are back on track following the service disruptions in March/April.

Mail posted outside Dublin achieved consistently higher rates than that posted within Dublin. In Q1 2004 90% of mail posted in Dublin was delivered within D+3, this rises to 96% in Q2 2004 and in the first six months of 2004, 93% of such mail was delivered within three days of posting. In contrast, mail posted outside Dublin county has a higher delivery rate within D+3, with 98% of mail delivered within three days of posting in the six months to the end of June 2004. As is to be expected there is a better result for mail posted outside Dublin county and delivered locally (99%), than for that category of mail delivered in Dublin (96%).

2.4 Action Underway

Following a recent consultation⁷, ComReg set quality targets for single piece priority mail posted and delivered within the state. These are 94% for next day delivery and 99.5% for delivery within three working days. ComReg issued a formal direction to An Post under Regulation 4(1)(b) of SI No 616 of 2002 setting these targets and requiring An Post to submit, within 60 days, a copy of its timetabled implementation plan showing the date at which it expects to achieve its target. ComReg is currently assessing the plan which it has received. However, it is clear that An Post is some distance from meeting this target, and that it will not be met in 2004.

⁷ Consultation Paper "Quality of Service Target 2004-Single Piece Priority Mail" Document 04/08, 3 February 2004. Response to Consultation "Quality of Service Target 2004-Single Piece Priority Mail" Document No 04/56, 1 June 2004

3. TNS mrbi Reports

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

**Interim Report
Items Posted On Or Between
1st January & 30th June, 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'. 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 more than 400 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 June, 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 a post box 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.

This is the sixth quality of service report to be issued by TNS mrbi. Reports will be 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 JUNE, 2004**

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	70% (+/-1.1%)	75% (+/-1.5%)	72% (+/-1.4%)
	Dublin county	66% (+/-1.9%)	73% (+/-2.1%)	73% (+/-2.1%)
	Outside Dublin county	74% (+/-1.5%)	77% (+/-2.5%)	69% (+/-1.9%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 11660*
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 JUNE, 2004

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	95% (+/-0.5%)	96% (+/-0.7%)	94% (+/-0.7%)
	Dublin county	93% (+/-1.0%)	93% (+/-1.2%)	93% (+/-1.2%)
	Outside Dublin county	98% (+/-0.5%)	99% (+/-0.6%)	96% (+/-0.8%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 11660*
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.*

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 calculation rule; whereby Saturday's, Sunday's and public holidays are subtracted.

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

Michael Brennan, Research Consultant, TNS mrbi

**Republic Of Ireland Quality Of
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**Interim Report
Items Posted On Or Between
1st January & 31st March, 2004**

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This is the fifth quality of service report to be issued by TNS mrbi. Reports will be issued on a quarterly and annual basis.

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**2. NEXT DAY DELIVERY (D +1): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN
1ST JANUARY & 31ST MARCH, 2004**

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	70% (+/-1.5%)	75% (+/-2.1%)	71% (+/-1.9%)
	Dublin county	66% (+/-2.6%)	71% (+/-2.9%)	71% (+/-2.9%)
	Outside Dublin county	74% (+/-2.0%)	78% (+/-3.5%)	70% (+/-2.7%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 5734*
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 & 31ST MARCH, 2004

		DELIVERY		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
POSTING	Anywhere	94% (+/-0.8%)	94% (+/-1.2%)	91% (+/-1.2%)
	Dublin county	90% (+/-1.6%)	90% (+/-1.9%)	90% (+/-1.9%)
	Outside Dublin county	97% (+/-0.8%)	99% (+/-0.8%)	94% (+/-1.4%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 5734*
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.*

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1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 5932*
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.*

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POSTING	Anywhere	97% (+/-0.5%)	97% (+/-0.8%)	96% (+/-0.8%)
	Dublin county	96% (+/-0.9%)	96% (+/-1.2%)	96% (+/-1.2%)
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