



An Coimisiún um
Rialáil Cumarsáide
Commission for
Communications Regulation

ComReg reports An Post's performance for next-day delivery of mail in 2020

Universal Postal Service Quality of Service

Information Notice

Reference: ComReg 21/144a
Date: 30/12/2021

Additional Information

2020 Quality of Service Annual Report	
Document No:	21/144
Date:	30 December 2021

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.

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 for the calendar year 2020. The key findings, and the impact of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) on the universal postal service, are detailed below:

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

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic ("the Pandemic") reached Ireland and the Irish Government issued instructions on COVID-19 to the public², initiating the shut-down of all non-essential workplaces and services. Postal Services were deemed to be an essential service and utility, and as such the provision of the universal postal service by An Post, the designated universal postal service provider for the State, continued throughout the year. The Pandemic had a significant impact on Irish public life for the last 9 months of 2020. In this period An Post, despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented, continued to provide the universal postal service in Ireland throughout this period, which was commendable.

While the provision of postal services was deemed essential and the universal postal service continued uninterrupted throughout 2020, the 2020 Quality of Service Monitor was suspended from 1st April to 30th June inclusive due to matters related to the Pandemic, therefore the 2020 Annual Report presents the performance results for items posted over 9 months in 2020 as follows; January, February, March, July, August, September, October, November and December.

¹ ComReg Document No,15/126

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

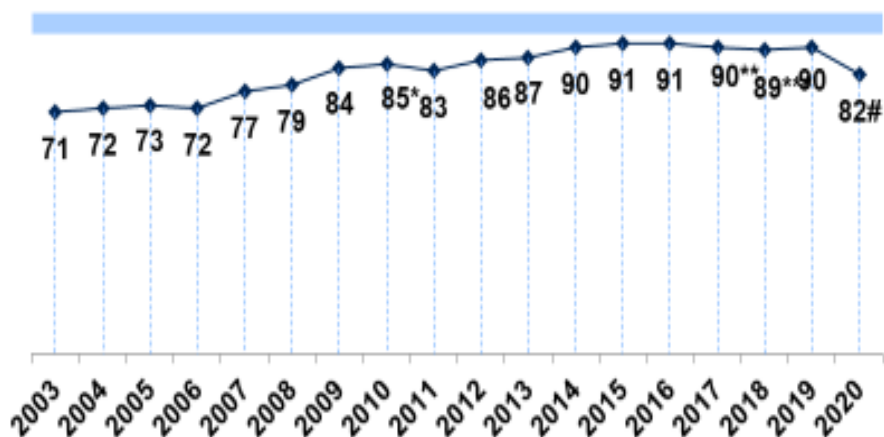
Performance against Regulatory Standards for the 2020 calendar year

The following are the results for the calendar year 2020. The results for 2020 cover the 9 month period January to March and July to December 2020 but excludes the 3 month period from 1 April to 30 June as operation of the QoS monitor was temporarily suspended due to the Pandemic;

- An Post delivered **82%** of single piece priority mail throughout the State on the next working day following the day of posting (D+1). The 2020 result is an 8% decline on the 2019 result and is 12% below the 94% regulatory standard though this decline in performance in 2020 must be taken in the context of the impact of the Pandemic in the last 9 months of the year.
- An Post delivered **97.4%** of single piece priority mail within three working days following the day of posting, below the 2019 result (99.1%) and below the 99.5% regulatory standard.

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%. However, the decline in performance in 2020 is taken in the context of the impact of the Pandemic in the last 9 months of the year. The accuracy variance on the overall 2020 annual result is at +/-1.3%, exceeding the +-1%.

NATIONAL NEXT DAY DELIVERY (D+1) FULL YEAR – 2003 TO 2020



*The result shown for 2010 excludes items posted on or between 28th November-15th December and 17th December-30th December due to the unusual weather conditions experienced in those two periods.

**The result shown for 2017 excludes items posted on or between 13th-16th October due to the unusual weather conditions experienced during this period.

***The result shown for 2018 excludes items posted on or between 28th February-2nd March due to the unusual weather conditions experienced during this period.

#For details regarding the impact of COVID-19 on postal quality of service monitoring in 2020, please see page 2 "Statement Regarding the Impact of COVID-19 in 2020" of this report.

ComReg 21/144 contains the full set of published 2020 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 2020 annual report. Similar to the decline in the annual performance against the regulatory standards, the decline in the January to November 2020 and the December 2020 monthly performance must be taken in the context of the impact of Covid-19 in the last 9 months of 2020.

- **January to November 2020 (monitoring was conducted over an 8 Month period excluding the 3 Months April to June)**
- In the 8 months period January 2020 to November 2020 (which excludes the 3 months April to June) An Post delivered **87%** of single piece priority mail on the next working day which was a 5% decline over the same period in 2019.

- **December 2020**
- There was a decline in Performance for delivery on the next working day following the day of posting (D+1) achieved in the month of December 2020. Performance fell to **42%**, a decline of 33% from the performance achieved in 2019.
- **Declines recorded across all Regional Mail Flows (9 Month period excluding 3 Months April to June)**
- Mail from Anywhere to Dublin County was down by 10% to 80% and mail from outside Dublin County to Dublin County was down by 12% to 77%, compared to the same period 2019;
- Overall mail originating in Dublin also declined, with mail from Dublin County to Anywhere down 9% to 81%, and Dublin County to Dublin County down 8% to 82% compared to the same period 2019.

Background

Under the Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Act 2011 (“ the Act”), 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. Under Section 17 of the Act, An Post is the designated sole “universal postal service provider” for the State.

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, in accordance 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 2020 was 19,948 valid test mail items and the accuracy variance on the overall annual 82% result was +/- 1.3%.

KPMG's audit (which included a six month interim audit and a final annual audit) confirmed that the monitor was in material compliance with the applicable CEN standard EN13850:2012 and that the 2020 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 regarding the monitor.