



Commission for  
**Communications Regulation**

## Information Notice

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

**Qtr 2, April-June 2005 & H1, January-June 2005**

<b>Document No:</b>	<b>05/75</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>22 September 2005</b>

## Contents

1	Foreword.....	2
2	Commentary on Results .....	3
2.1	NATIONAL MAIL FOR DELIVERY NEXT DAY NATIONWIDE (D+1) .....	3
2.2	LOCAL MAIL FOR DELIVERY NEXT WORKING DAY IN COUNTY OF POSTING (D+1) .....	4
2.3	NEXT WORKING DAY DELIVERY OF MAIL POSTED TO DUBLIN (D+1) .....	5
2.4	NATIONAL MAIL DELIVERED WITHIN THREE DAYS (D+3).....	5
2.5	ACTION UNDERWAY .....	7
3	TNS mrbi Report .....	8

## 1 Foreword

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) is responsible for monitoring An Post's quality of service performance. ComReg is also responsible for setting quality of service targets. ComReg appointed TNS mrbi in 2002 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 on the second quarter's performance from April 2005 to June 2005 inclusive and an aggregated report for the year to date (January to June 2005).

According to this report **78%** of nationwide single piece mail items were delivered the next working day after posting between April and June 2005. Although an improvement is evident over Quarter 1 of 2005 (76%), the result overall continues to fall short of the target set by ComReg of 94%. ComReg will continue to monitor quality of service results for the remaining quarters of 2005.

The report highlights the decline in the quality of service for mail originating outside of Dublin to be delivered by the third working day either for local delivery or delivery in Dublin. It also shows that mail posted outside of Dublin for next working day delivery in Dublin is only experiencing a 77% success rate.

ComReg has previously highlighted concerns about the quality of service for mail originating in Dublin, where so much of the nation's mail originates. Whilst there has been a slight improvement over last quarter, results from Quarter 2 show single piece priority mail posted in Dublin for next day delivery within Dublin is only achieving a 79% success rate, while mail for next day delivery outside Dublin is only achieving a 76% success rate.

An Post is now approaching an important crossroads with the next stage of liberalisation of the postal service scheduled for January 2006 (with full market opening planned for 2009). While further liberalisation of the postal market will offer both new challenges and opportunities for An Post, quality of service will remain a key issue for consumers. The targets set for An Post are reflective of the levels enjoyed by other comparable consumers across Europe and their achievement is important in the context of a modern competitive economy like Ireland's."

**Mike Byrne,  
Commissioner**

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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

## 2 Commentary on Results

ComReg is designated with responsibility for the regulation of Universal Postal Services in Ireland. It is the sole organisation statutorily required 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 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<sup>3</sup> on its behalf. In line with the Standard, ComReg's monitor focuses exclusively on single piece priority mail<sup>4</sup>

This is the second interim report of 2005 reporting on An Post's quality of service for single piece priority mail. It also reports on the half year results (covering January to June 2005 inclusive).

As detailed previously by ComReg<sup>5</sup> the measurement system employed does not include Bulk mail.

### 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 1 and Quarter 2 of 2005 as well as results for year to date (January to June inclusive) 2005 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**

National Mail (D+1)	Target Set	Actual Q1 Jan - Mar	Actual Q2 Apr - Jun	Actual Q3 Jul - Sep	Actual Q4 Oct - Dec	H1	Actual Full year Jan - Dec
<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>na</b>
2004	94%	70%	70%	78%	67%	70%	72%

The overall independent measurement system reported that An Post delivered 78% of all single piece mail within one working day of posting between April and June 2005. Although some improvement is evident over Quarter 1 of 2005 it is clear from Figure 1 below that this result falls well short of the target set by ComReg of 94%. The performance represents an 8% improvement over the same period for 2004 (70%), however this must be viewed against the backdrop of the severe service disruption experienced by customers of An Post in March/April 2004.

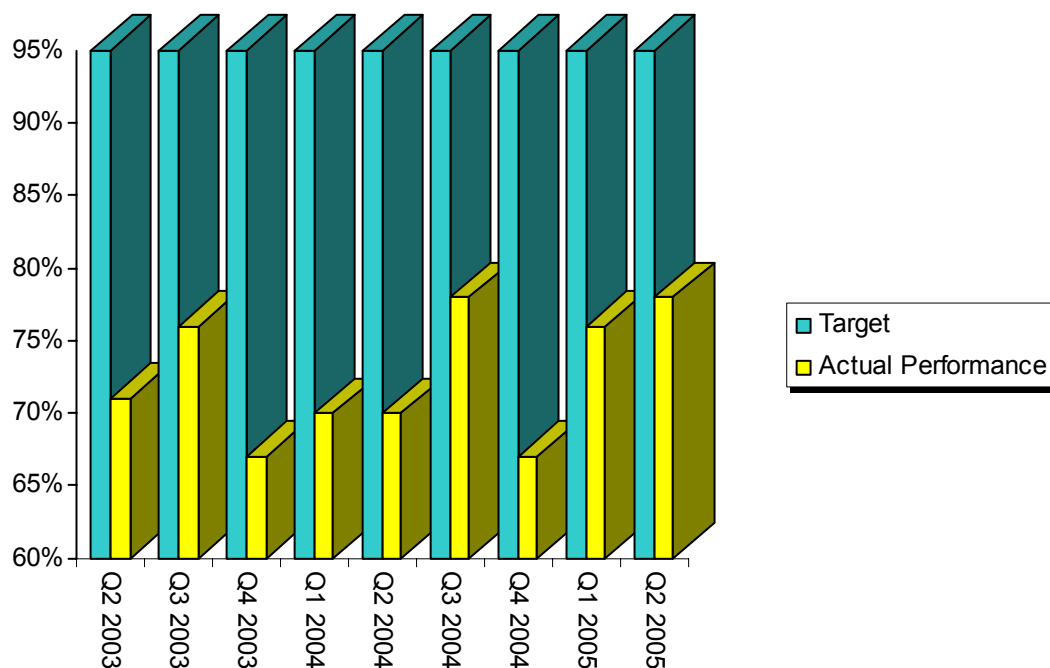
<sup>3</sup> 'Postal Services – Quality of Service – Measurement of transit time of end-to-end services for single piece priority mail and first class mail'

<sup>4</sup> Single piece mail is the ordinary day to day correspondence posted by individuals and businesses, big and small

<sup>5</sup> See ComReg 05/48 – An Post's Quality of Service Domestic single piece mail - Quarter 1, January to March 2005

<sup>6</sup> D represents the date of deposit

**Figure 1: National Mail Next Day (D+1) delivery performance**



**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 2 of 2005 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**

	Year	Target Set	Actual Q1 Jan - Mar	Actual Q2 Apr - Jun	Actual Q3 Jul - Sep	Actual Q4 Oct - Dec	H1	Actual Full year Jan - Dec
<b>All local mail (D+1)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2004	94%	75%	75%	81%	71%	75%	75%
<b>Local Mail Posted in Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2004	94%	71%	75%	82%	72%	73%	75%
<b>Local Mail Posted outside Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2004	94%	78%	76%	80%	69%	77%	76%

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 2 of 2005 show

that mail for local delivery continues to receive a better service than other mail (81% as compared with an average of 78% for all mail).

Mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery within the county of posting receives a better quality of service than mail posted in Dublin for delivery within Dublin – 84% compared with 79%.

### 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

**Table 3: Results for Mail Delivered to Dublin for Next Working Day (D+1)**

	Year	Target Set	Actual Q1 Jan - Mar	Actual Q2 Apr - Jun	Actual Q3 Jul - Sep	Actual Q4 Oct - Dec	H1	Actual Full year Jan - Dec
<b>National mail (D+1)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2004	94%	71%	73%	80%	69%	72%	73%
<b>Mail Posted in Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2004	94%	71%	75%	82%	72%	73%	75%
<b>Mail Posted outside Dublin (D+1)</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>na</b>
	2004	94%	70%	69%	77%	64%	69%	70%

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

Mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery in Dublin continues to lag with 77% next working day delivery compared with 79% delivery for mail posted in Dublin for delivery in Dublin.

Comparing the result for mail posted outside of Dublin for delivery in Dublin (77%) with the result for mail posted outside of Dublin for local delivery within county of posting (84%), see Table 2 above, it is evident that mail posted in provincial locations for delivery in Dublin receives a poorer quality of service than mail posted outside of Dublin for local delivery.

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

The results for Quarter 2 2005 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)**

All national mail (D+3)	Target Set	Actual Q1 Jan -Mar	Actual Q2 Apr - Jun	Actual Q3 Jul - Sep	Actual Q4 Oct - Dec	H1	Actual 2004 Jan - Dec
<b>2005</b>	<b>99.5%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>na</b>
2004	99.5%	94%	97%	99%	96%	95.5%	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 of posting.

TNS mrbi's report shows that 98% of all mail was delivered within three working days of posting for Quarter 2 2005. As in Quarter 1 2005, this reflects an improvement over the corresponding period of 2004 but it still falls short of the 99.5% target. Again, this improvement must be considered against the backdrop of the An Post dispute in March / April of last year.

Whilst there has been a balancing out in the quality experienced for the D+3 service with 98% of all mail being delivered to all areas within three days of posting, closer examination of the attached TNS mrbi Report (see Section 3<sup>7</sup>) shows that mail originating outside of Dublin has declined both in its delivery to Dublin (99% in Q1)<sup>8</sup> and local destinations (100% in Q1)<sup>9</sup>.

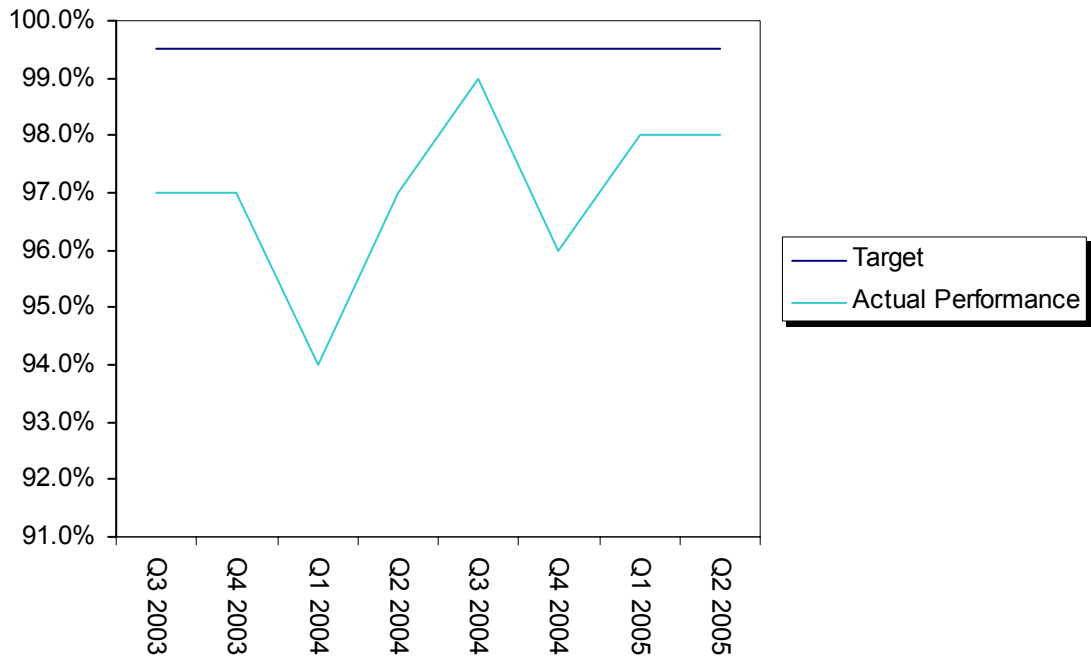
The overall trend for National Mail Delivery within three working days (D +3) is illustrated in figure 2:

<sup>7</sup> Delivery within three days (D+3): Items posted on or between 1<sup>st</sup> April & 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2005

<sup>8</sup> ComReg Document No 05/48 – An Post's Quality of Service Domestic single piece mail, Q1

<sup>9</sup> ComReg Document No 05/48– An Post's Quality of Service Domestic single piece mail, Q1

**Figure 2: National Mail Delivery within Three working days (D +3) delivery performance**



## 2.5 Action Underway

Quality and meeting the needs of consumers is key to any business success. ComReg will continue to actively pursue the issue of quality improvements with An Post, who in recognising the importance of this issue to the postal consumer has commissioned an independent audit of the quality of service of domestic letters. ComReg is currently considering the confidential copy of the resulting report it has received.

The quarterly and half yearly Reports submitted by TNS mrbi are published in full in section 3 of this document.



### **3 TNS mrbi Report**

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

**Interim Report  
Items Posted On Or Between  
1<sup>st</sup> April & 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2005**

**ComReg**



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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>REF.</u></b>	<b><u>TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	NEXT DAY DELIVERY (D +1): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN 1 <sup>ST</sup> APRIL & 30 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005	2
3.	DELIVERY WITHIN THREE DAYS (D +3): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN 1 <sup>ST</sup> APRIL & 30 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2005	3
4.	METHODOLOGY	4
4.1.	Calculation Of Transit Time	4
4.2.	Sample Design	4
4.3.	Geographical Distribution	5
4.4.	Calculation Of Results	5
5.	PROJECT TEAM	6

**TNS mrbi/102307/05**

## **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 on or between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2005.

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  
1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL & 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005**

		<b>DELIVERY</b>		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
<b>POSTING</b>	Anywhere	<b>78%</b> (+/-1.3%)	<b>81%</b> (+/-1.9%)	<b>78%</b> (+/-1.7%)
	Dublin county	<b>76%</b> (+/-2.1%)	<b>79%</b> (+/-2.5%)	<b>79%</b> (+/-2.5%)
	Outside Dublin county	<b>80%</b> (+/-1.7%)	<b>84%</b> (+/-2.9%)	<b>77%</b> (+/-2.5%)

1. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
2. *Total number of effective observations – 5425*
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 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL & 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2005**

		<b>DELIVERY</b>		
		Anywhere	Local (delivery within county of posting)	Dublin County
<b>POSTING</b>	Anywhere	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.4%)	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.7%)	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.6%)
	Dublin county	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.7%)	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.9%)	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.9%)
	Outside Dublin county	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.6%)	<b>98%</b> (+/-1.1%)	<b>98%</b> (+/-0.8%)

4. *() figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence*
5. *Total number of effective observations – 5425*
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



**Republic Of Ireland Quality Of  
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**Interim Report  
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1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	NEXT DAY DELIVERY (D +1): ITEMS POSTED ON OR BETWEEN 1 <sup>ST</sup> JANUARY & 30 <sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005	2
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4.	METHODOLOGY	4
	4.1. Calculation Of Transit Time	4
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1. () figures in brackets relate to accuracy levels at 95% confidence
2. Total number of effective observations – 10590
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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- number of points of induction and receiving
- correlation of test items

## **5. PROJECT TEAM**

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