

ADR Annual Report 2023-24

Comparative Annual Statistical Reporting 2022/23 and 2023/24

Reporting Periods: 1 October 2022 – 30 September 2023 vs. 1 October 2023 – 30 September 2024

Independent Betting Adjudication Service (IBAS)

a. Dispute Volumes

Dispute Source	2022-23	2023-24
Domestic Consumers to Domestic Operators	3,890	3,223
Domestic Consumers to Overseas Operators	0	0
<i>Overseas Consumers to Domestic Operators: NB - legislation requires that statistical data below relates to domestic disputes</i>	616	402

Any company licensed in the UK is classified as a 'domestic operator' for this purpose.

Dispute Status	2022-23	2023-24
Completed	1,906 (49%)	1,518 (47%)
Rejected/Discontinued Without Conclusion	1,984 (51%)	1,705 (53%)

b. Types of Complaint

Dispute Type	2022-23	2023-24
Disputed Settlement Criteria/Bet Instructions	1,043	756
Price Dispute	252	154
Late Bets	137	85
Customer Identity	958	932
Bonus or Promotional Offer Terms	411	251
Cash Out Mechanism	76	91
Game/Machine Malfunction	115	91
Alleged Cheating/Match-Fixing/Crime	106	85
Social Responsibility/Self-Exclusion	457	413
Banking/Financial Transactions	180	180
Customer Service Complaints	80	129
Others	75	56

c. Disputes Rejected by IBAS

Grounds for Rejection	2022-23	2023-24
Operator's Complaints Process Not Exhausted	956	861
Vexatious/Frivolous Dispute	125	76
Monetary Value Too Low/High	0	0
Dispute Outside 12 Month Time Limit	7	40
Too Complex/Requires Legal/Police Investigation	44	27
Regulatory Matter (e.g. self-exclusion)	429	345
Operator Not Registered with IBAS	142	157
Customer Communication Ceased	323	199
Operator Licence Revoked/Surrendered	21	0

d. Dispute Process Discontinuation

Grounds for Discontinuation (with or without conclusion)	2022-23	2023-24
Technical/Procedural Discontinuation	0	0
Customer/Operator Communication Ceased	323	199
Operator Concession or Compromise Agreed (Known)	815	645

e. Average Dispute Completion Times

Dispute Completion Time (days)**	2022-23	2023-24
Domestic Disputes	22 days	19 days
Cross-Border Disputes (UK citizen to non-UK operator)	N/A	N/A

** In accordance with ADR legislation, this is recorded as the time taken from the point at which the dispute file was completed to the point of an adjudication being published. It does not include time taken to gather evidence from both disputing parties.

f. Average Length of Time to Receive Complete Information from Gambling Businesses

Average Length of Time to Receive Complete Information***	2022-23	2023-24
	14 days	10 days

*** This measures the number of days from when the first question or questions were asked of the gambling business in relation to a complaint we had received, to the time when the case file was deemed to be complete (and ready to be passed to our adjudication panel).

g. Rate of Compliance with ADR Decisions in Consumer's Favour

Rate of Compliance	2022-23	2023-24
	99%	100%

Where rulings have been issued within the past 40 days we have assumed compliance.

h. Professional Cooperation with Other ADR Entities (None at Present)

There are no current cooperating arrangements in place with non-UK EU-based ADR entities

i. Dispute Outcome Statistics

Dispute Conclusions	2022-23	2023-24
Consumer Complaint Not Upheld	911	779
Consumer-Satisfactory Pre-Ruling Outcome, e.g. by agreed settlement or operator concession	815	645
Consumer Complaint Upheld By Written Decision	239	94
% Consumers Receiving ADR Outcome to Satisfaction	54%	49%

Observations on Dispute Trends to Report to the Competent Authority

Summary

No substantially new themes have arisen during the course of ADR reporting year. However, the issues of greatest concern reported in 2022/23 largely remain unaddressed.

There has been a notable reduction in the volume of disputes being recorded on our systems in the past 12 months. We would jointly attribute this to:

- IBAS-registered operators managing their customer disputes more effectively and making greater effort than ever before to resolve them amicably before ADR becomes involved.
- IBAS increasing its resources in frontline consumer communications – helping to redirect people who are seeking advice to the agency most suitable to help them (including, sometimes, the company with whom they are in dispute). We are keen to avoid wasting anyone's time by completing and submitting ADR forms for a dispute where we are extremely unlikely to be able to help – or where we believe that taking a different approach is more likely to achieve the individual's desired outcome.

Identity Checks at the Point of Withdrawal

In July 2024 the Gambling Commission published a blog reminding operators of their obligations to avoid unnecessary checks at the point of withdrawal.

The fourth quarter of the reporting year (July-September) saw the lowest volume of consumer complaints in this category throughout the year, indicating a positive impact from the Commission's bulletin.

Nevertheless, we still note inconsistencies in the approaches taken by businesses as to when it is reasonable and appropriate to request particular documents from a customer before authorising a withdrawal request.

We remain of the view that regulatory advice could be more prescriptive – and explore more case studies in the course of providing guidance to licence holders.

Third Party Accounts

Similar comments apply to the section immediately above.

We recognise there are good reasons for operators prohibiting accounts being opened or operated by third parties, but we still believe there should be clearer guidance for what businesses should do if they detect third party or potential third-party account operation.

Again, there is a wide range of scenarios concerning third party account control. They vary from allegations of mass account control by organised crime gangs, to allegations of multiple account control by customers restricted on commercial or safer gambling grounds – and then what seem to us *sometimes* relatively minor issues involving the shared use of a payment card e.g. by a married couple.

We hope to be able to provide real-life examples of various types of complaint to the Gambling Commission with the hope that these can be used to help generate more helpful advice or instruction for how different scenarios should be fairly treated.

We do not expect the Gambling Commission to become involved in adjudicating on individual disputes, but we do believe that the use of real-life case studies considered by ADR providers can be the most effective route to setting regulatory standards that businesses can strive to meet and ADR providers can use to inform their dispute resolution processes.

Independence and Accuracy of Sporting Data used to Settle Bets

We are pleased to read that the Gambling Commission is taking an active interest in this issue.

Betting on markets driven and settled by live sporting data remains extremely popular but there remain some concerns among our Adjudication Panel about the accessibility, transparency and consistency of data used to determine the outcome of bets.