

## The Dispute Resolution Commitment

The Dispute Resolution Commitment (DRC) is aimed at encouraging the increased use of flexible, creative and constructive approaches to dispute resolution. It offers an opportunity to demonstrate a best practice approach to business and in particular to how disputes are managed and resolved. It allows government departments and their agencies to demonstrate their commitment to resolving disputes quickly and effectively utilising the most suitable dispute resolution mechanism.

By adopting this commitment, government departments and their agencies are communicating to their customers, contractual partners, service providers, employees and the general public that they are serious about effective dispute resolution.

Government departments and their agencies commit to;

- being proactive in the management of potential disputes and in working to prevent disputes arising or escalating, in order to avoid the need to resort to the use of formal disputes mechanisms wherever possible;
- including dispute resolution mechanisms within their complaints and disputes handling procedures;
- engaging in a process of appropriate dispute resolution in respect of any dispute which has not been resolved through the organisation's normal complaints procedure, as an alternative to litigation;
- adopting appropriate dispute resolution clauses in their contracts with other parties;
- using prompt, cost effective, and efficient processes for completing negotiations and resolving disputes;
- choosing processes appropriate in style and proportionate in costs to the issues that need to be resolved;
- making informed choices by considering the benefits to the organisation, and to whomever they are in dispute, of all available processes in achieving resolution;
- recognising that the use of appropriate dispute resolution processes can often avoid the high cost in time and resources of going to court;
- educating their employees and officials in appropriate dispute resolution techniques in order to enable the best possible chance of success when using them.



**Dominic Grieve QC**  
**Attorney General**



**Jonathan Djanogly**  
**Justice Minister**

## **Background**

The overriding objective for the launch of the Dispute Resolution Commitment (DRC) is a demonstration of the Government's commitment to lead by example in resolving disputes quickly and effectively. This can be done by utilising the most suitable dispute resolution mechanism, to avoid, manage and resolve disputes. The DRC builds on the ADR Pledge that was launched in 2001.

The Commitment encourages Government Departments and Agencies to use appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms to avoid, manage and resolve disputes that may arise out of contractual engagements in order that the relationships with suppliers of goods and services can be maintained throughout central government. The commitment terms also encourage the effective management and resolution of general claims brought by individuals or organisations against government departments and their agencies through the use of appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms.

The Dispute Resolution Commitment expects Government Departments and Agencies to use dispute resolution mechanisms in the most effective and proportionate manner, where appropriate, to manage and resolve disputes, in order to avoid the need for expensive legal costs and court actions that may arise out of contractual disagreements.

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for government policy in relation to the justice system including policy relating to alternative dispute resolution.

The Attorney General is the Chief Legal Adviser to the Crown, with responsibility for superintending the prosecuting departments and has a number of independent public interest functions.

## **Supporting guidance**

[Guidance is available](#) to provide additional information on the Dispute Resolution Commitment and the various ways in which disputes can be resolved.