RICS Dispute Resolution Service (DRS) is the leading global provider of alternative dispute resolution services, helping resolve disputes in areas related to land, property and construction, with specialist providers based in Australia, Scotland, England and Wales.

**Dispute resolution services**

RICS Dispute Resolution Service (DRS) is the world's largest provider of alternative dispute resolution services for the property sector, and has been in existence for over 30 years. There is a complete range of methods for resolving disputes on offer, including: arbitration, expert determination, mediation, adjudication and expert witness, enabling people to resolve property disputes quickly and effectively, without going to court.

DRS's customers include landlords, tenants, the government and consumers. A key role of DRS is to appoint chartered surveyors who are dispute resolvers to act as arbitrators, adjudicators, mediators and experts. The aim is to inspire confidence in parties through complete impartiality and the quality of the dispute resolvers.

All DRS management and administration systems are accredited to BSI standard BS EN ISO 9001:2000.

DRS's main objective is to make chartered surveyors the natural choice for resolving property disputes. More and more surveyors are being recruited and trained to help deliver a range of new products and services such as a neighbour disputes scheme, an expert adviser service for planning matters and bespoke dispute resolution for commercial property service charge disputes.

**RICS Mediation**

PEOPLE ARE QUESTIONING whether traditional legal processes are necessarily the best way to settle disputes. In the UK the Lord Chancellor now advocates more streamlined, cost effective and informal alternatives. With a greater emphasis being placed on mediation.

Mediation is the name given to a confidential process whereby parties to a dispute invite a neutral individual to facilitate negotiations between them with a view to achieving a resolution of their dispute.

It is estimated that the mediation success rate exceeds 90%. It works because, unlike traditional methods, mediation provides an opportunity for the parties to work together constructively towards a settlement.

If you would like to refer a dispute to mediation through the RICS Dispute Resolution Service, get in touch. The RICS will contact the other party to the dispute if required, or will discuss with one or both parties the mediation services available. No charge is made for this initial consultation.

**Contact us**

Get in touch if you'd like to discuss how the RICS Dispute Resolution Service could help you.

**t +44 (0)870 333 1600 e drs@rics.org**

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**Debt recovery**

In the current economic climate, those in the property sector are not alone in finding that clients are taking longer to pay. The risk of not getting paid grows the longer payment is delayed and with bank facilities harder to come by, many are wondering how to recover debt.

**A lot of businesses have 'a stack of cheques in the drawer' waiting to be dispached when funds become available, so the challenge is to make sure that your cheque is the first in the post. The best way to do this is to establish a process which everybody in the office knows about and sticks to.**

Review contracts to make sure that the payment terms are clear. Send a reminder, not when payment is overdue, but before the due date confirming when payment is expected. Before threatening and incurring legal costs it's often worth picking up the phone. This is not best left to the clerk in accounts, but should be made by the senior person who has done the work, if only to explain that because payment is overdue, the firm's process for debtor collection will now be followed. Sometimes this is enough to trigger payment, but it can also have a positive impact on the relationship.

If payment is not forthcoming follow the agreed process, involving legal action if necessary. Stick to your guns and bear in mind that however big and important the client may seem, non-paying clients are not good clients.