

Dispute resolution

In this section

Resolving disputes

Mediation

Conciliation

Arbitration

Resolving disputes

Sometimes things go wrong and issues arise between businesses and consumers. Online platforms will often have their own dispute resolution services to resolve issues between buyers and sellers. If not, or if the dispute is not successfully resolved by this means, court proceedings might be an option, but these could be costly and time-consuming.

To avoid the use of courts, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) can be used to settle disputes arising between traders and consumers based in the UK. This involves the use of an ADR body which is impartial and offers a variety of methods of resolving consumer disputes, such as mediation, conciliation or arbitration. To gain access to ADR, traders can join either a trade association that offers an ADR scheme or an ADR body, although they do not have to do so.

Under the Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015, if you have exhausted your internal complaint procedure in relation to a complaint brought by a consumer, you must provide the consumer with all of the following information regarding ADR schemes on a durable medium:

- the name and website address of an ADR entity that could resolve the complaint
- whether or not you intend to use ADR. However, if you are required by law or membership to a trade association to use ADR, then you must agree to do so

The online marketplace may provide a specific facility for you to provide this information on the website platform. Where there is no specific place for the information, you should provide the information clearly where the consumer can find it - for example, in product listings or your seller page.

Further information can be found at: [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#).

"To avoid the use of courts, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) can be used to settle disputes arising between traders and consumers."

Mediation

Mediation is a process whereby an independent third party helps the parties in dispute come to a mutually acceptable outcome.

Conciliation

Conciliation is a process whereby the parties use a conciliator who meets with the parties, both separately and together, in an attempt to resolve their differences.

Arbitration

Arbitration is a process where the outcome is decided upon by a third party. Parties agreeing to arbitration usually agree to the decision being binding and therefore enforceable through the courts.

[< Consumer cancellation rights](#)

[> Selling within the EU](#)

© 2026 Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Source URL:

<https://businesscompanion.owastaging.co.uk/focus/selling-goods-online-platforms/dispute-resolution>