

The Property Ombudsman

ADR Regulation Report

2024-2025



The Property
Ombudsman

Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 Information for ADR Bodies

The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Competent Authorities and Information) Regulations 2015, require you to supply the competent authority (Chartered Trading Standards Institute) with your Schedule 5 (annual) and Schedule 6 (biennial) reports when they are due.

The Schedule 5 report must be supplied every year (including when you also supply your biennial report) and must be made available on your website as per the legislation. The Schedule 5 report must be supplied to the competent authority and uploaded onto the website within a month of the anniversary of your date of approval as an approved ADR body.

The Schedule 6 report must be supplied biennially and is not required to be available on your website, only sent to the competent authority. The years that you supply the biennial report, you still must supply an annual report in addition. The Schedule 6 report must be supplied to the competent authority within a month of the anniversary of your approval date. The information (data) (as per section 11.3 of the legislation) is to cover the whole (totals) of the 2-year reporting period.

All details of what must be included in the reports can be found below.

This is the minimum data required for reporting, but any other or extra data supplied would be much appreciated for further insight.

As of 1st January 2021, there have been several amendments made to the legislation due to Brexit. It is no longer a requirement of the legislation to handle cross-border disputes and report on these disputes. However, if you continue to handle cross-border disputes, we would ask that you supply any information in relation to these cases.

Additionally, if your ADR scheme's outcome is binding on either party, please provide us with the percentage of whether the outcome was ruled in the consumer or trader's favour at the end of the Schedule 5 and Schedule 6 report.

Schedule 5 – The Property Ombudsman – 2024/2025

Information to be included in an ADR entity's annual activity report

(a) the number of domestic disputes the ADR entity has received;

No. enquiries received (domestic)	No. enquiries received (cross-border)	No. disputes received (domestic)	No. disputes received (cross-border)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (domestic)	No. disputes accepted (continued to case) (cross-border)
32,284	N/A	5,806	N/A	1,880	N/A

In producing data regarding the number of disputes, we have refocused on the direct enquiries, and have excluded website traffic, including use of our self-serve forms. Consequently, whilst the number of enquiries appears to have dropped, the number of direct contact (emails and telephone calls) is consistent with previous years.

(b) the types of complaints to which the domestic disputes and cross-border disputes relate; TPO resolves disputes between consumers and property professionals. Most of the work of the organisation relates to Estate Agents, Lettings Agents and Residential Leasehold Management providers.

In addition, TPO provides a voluntary redress scheme for other professionals in the property sector such as surveyors and property sourcing agents. We also maintain commercial agreements with organisations connected with the property sector as an independent dispute resolution provider for their customers/members.

The types of disputes we resolve relates to the service provided by property professionals to consumers. This is in respect of typical consumer issues such as communications and provision of information, as well as issues of fairness and integrity.

(c) a description of any systematic or significant problems that occur frequently and lead to disputes between consumers and traders of which the ADR entity has become aware due to its operations as an ADR entity;

Demand for our service remains high, and is projected to increase in light of market conditions.

Consumers continue to be concerned about financial issues (fee, charges) reflecting the stringent economic environment. Many concerns of this nature, however, have communication failures as their root cause. Consumers may not fully understand fees, and the value of the service for which they are paying. Such issues can be exacerbated by complicated agreements and a failure by traders to clearly explain the basis of charges.

Housing disrepair is a major cause of concern for tenants in particular. This reflects that many properties in the private rented sector are older, with costs of maintenance being high.

(d) any recommendations the ADR entity may have as to how the problems referred to in paragraph (c) could be avoided or resolved in future, in order to raise traders' standards and to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices;

Many of the disputes referred to TPO relate to the breakdown of communication between the property professional and the consumer. Failures in communication can be caused by no communication at all, to a failure to properly explain roles and responsibilities, or providing partial and/or incomplete information. Our Codes of Practice set out the type and quality of information that should be given to consumers. In addition, we stress the value for good communication in our interactions with the industry across those sectors, even those that do not sign up to our Codes.

Weaknesses in complaints handling is also a common feature of disputes that are referred to us. TPO provides a complaints toolkit free of charge for use by agents. In addition, we have run a number of webinars, training sessions, and education sessions to property professionals to improve awareness in this area.

(e) the number of disputes which the ADR entity has refused to deal with, and the percentage share of the grounds set in paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 on which the ADR entity has declined to consider such disputes;

Total no. of disputes rejected	1,309
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Reason	No. rejected	Percentage of rejected
a) the consumer has not attempted to contact the trader first	0	
b) the dispute was frivolous or vexatious	0	
c) the dispute had been previously considered by another ADR body or the court	234	17.88%
d) the value fell below the monetary value	0	
e) the consumer did not submit the disputes within the time period specified	71	5.42%
f) dealing with the dispute would have impaired the operation of the ADR body	0	
g) other (enquired too early, not yet complained to trader, trader not member, advice call etc...)	1,004	76.7%

(f) the percentage of alternative dispute resolution procedures which were discontinued for operational reasons and, if known, the reasons for discontinuation;

	No. discontinued	Percentage of discontinued
Discontinued for operational reasons	0	

(g) the average time taken to resolve domestic disputes and cross-border disputes;

	Domestic	Cross-border
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from receipt of complaint)	226	N/A
Average time taken to resolve disputes (from 'complete complaint file')	41	N/A
Total average time taken to resolve disputes		212

We have seen a 12% increase in accepted cases, year on year. However, we have completed significantly more cases than in the same period. We have completed 143% more cases in 2024/2025 than 2023/2024.

The large number of complaints completed in 2024/25 included many that had been open for a long time, so when they are closed the average time to resolve disputes remains higher than we would like to see. However, we have seen a substantial decrease in our average case days through this year: In Q4 2024, the average was 245, whilst in Q3 2025, the average was 186 days. We expect to see the average case days decrease significantly as we work through our older cases.

(h) the rate of compliance, if known, with the outcomes the alternative dispute resolution procedures (amongst your members, or those you provide ADR for)

The rate of compliance remains high, and averages above 99%.

(i) This point has been removed in amendments on 1 January 2021