

Fighting the Good Fight: Effective Dispute Resolution Tactics

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Compact Advocacy Programme

Despite best intentions, disputes arise and sometimes threaten important partnerships. Follow the top tips below on how to best resolve disputes.

- **Keep your own house in order** – you have a better chance of settling a dispute successfully if you make sure you abide by funding agreements, honour your Compact commitments and fulfil financial obligations. This includes sending reports on time and keeping a written record of all communication with public bodies.
- **Prevention is better than cure** – if you have concerns around your funding or relationship with a public body, don't wait for it to turn into a problem. Read your local Compact and open up a dialogue. If you can engage them constructively before something really becomes an issue, you'll have a better chance of getting it solved.



- **Challenge early** – the longer time that elapses after a decision has been made, the harder it will be to reverse it. In cases of Public Law breaches, a challenge has to be brought to court promptly and in any case no more than three months after the decision was taken.
 - **Be clear about your objectives** – know what you are unhappy about and what you want to achieve. Keep it as straightforward as possible, and try to be realistic.
- **Keep it professional** – although emotions can run high, you are more likely to achieve what you want if your organisation is viewed as professional, effective and good to work with.
 - **Consider all your options** – every organisation has the right to their independence and to manage their own affairs, but some are reluctant to be seen to confront their funder. It may be that you can raise the issues through your Compact group, or perhaps there's an appeal process or complaint procedure that you can use. Think about what would be best for your organisation and beneficiaries.
 - **Get help** – it is useful to get an outsider's perspective on the dispute. The Compact Advocacy Programme can help you identify Compact or Public Law breaches, suggest next steps, help draft letters, attend meetings and sometimes take on your case, advocating on your behalf.

Contact Us

If you want to talk to someone about dispute resolution, contact the Compact Advocacy Programme on 020 7520 3161 or at evsadvise@ncvo-vol.org.uk. For more information visit <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy>