



Strategic Dispute Resolution

A practical guide for senior leaders and decision-makers

Cosil Solutions Ltd

Civil and Commercial Mediation | Strategic Dispute Consultancy

Start Here

This guide is an introduction to how Cosil Solutions approaches dispute resolution. It covers the landscape, the framework that underpins all our work, and the three pillars of support we provide.

If you already know you need mediation or strategic deputising, dedicated guides for each are available on our website. This document is the right starting point if you are dealing with a dispute and are not yet sure what kind of support you need.

How Disputes Actually Develop

Disputes rarely erupt from a single event. More often they grow from small misunderstandings, missed signals, and decisions made under pressure. By the time formal complaints or legal claims surface, positions have hardened and options have narrowed. But that is not the end of the road.

How a dispute is handled at any given point frequently determines where it ends up. Reactive decisions, defensive posturing, and loss of structure can turn a manageable situation into a protracted crisis, whether the dispute is just beginning or already entrenched.

Cosil Solutions works across the full range of dispute stages: emerging, ongoing, entrenched, and under formal scrutiny. The approach shifts to match where a matter is and what it needs at that point.

Build Clarity Before You Act

When a serious complaint or conflict surfaces, uncertainty rises quickly. Facts may be tangled, obligations unclear, and emotions running high. That is precisely when establishing clarity pays off most, regardless of how far the matter has developed.

Begin by establishing the facts: who is involved, what happened, when, and in what context. Examine the underlying causes. Is there a history of complaints? Unmet expectations? A pattern of miscommunication? Has the dispute shifted over time?

Decisions made without factual grounding are costly and difficult to reverse. When you and your team share a clear understanding of the problem, you can respond with judgement rather than react under pressure.

Evidence to Gather and Review

Collecting and reviewing the right material anchors your strategy in fact rather than assumption.

Prioritise:

- Correspondence: emails, letters, messages, and records of relevant communications
 - Documentation: contracts, policies, agreements, and written terms governing the relationship
 - Records and logs: meeting notes, call records, incident reports, and event timelines
 - Supporting evidence: photographs, reports, or documentation of conditions relevant to the dispute
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The R.E.S.O.L.V.E.™ Framework

All Cosil Solutions work is underpinned by the R.E.S.O.L.V.E.™ framework. This is a proprietary methodology developed through direct practice across civil, commercial, housing, and organisational disputes, and recognised for its contribution to dispute resolution practice.

The framework provides a structured, repeatable approach to moving through conflict constructively. It applies across the full range of dispute stages and is not a theoretical model: it has been developed, tested, and refined through real engagements.

The R.E.S.O.L.V.E.™ framework is proprietary to Cosil Solutions Ltd and is not published in full in this document. Licensing arrangements for organisations are available on request.

What Changes at Each Stage

Cosil Solutions works across the full dispute lifecycle. The approach shifts to match where a matter actually is.

Emerging

Where a matter is just becoming difficult, structure and clarity can prevent unnecessary escalation and keep options open. The focus is on establishing facts, clarifying obligations, and creating conditions for dialogue.

Ongoing

Where a dispute is active but unresolved, the priority shifts to bringing order to a situation that may have become reactive or fragmented. This involves establishing who is managing what, reviewing what has been communicated, and creating a coherent strategy going forward.

Entrenched

Where positions have hardened and direct engagement has broken down, the work requires careful assessment of what each party actually needs, not just what they are asking for, and an approach that can shift the dynamic without requiring either side to publicly concede ground.

Under formal scrutiny

Where a matter has reached tribunal, regulatory investigation, or formal complaints handling, the focus is on clarity, consistency, and defensibility. Every communication and decision carries greater weight at this stage.

Practical Scenarios

The following scenarios illustrate how a structured, considered approach changes outcomes across different dispute contexts and stages.

Scenario 1: Housing and Property Dispute

Situation

A resident raises a serious disrepair complaint. Communications become increasingly frequent and

difficult. The landlord's team, feeling overwhelmed, grows defensive. Formal complaint deadlines and regulatory scrutiny add further pressure.

Without a structured approach

Handled reactively, this situation escalates into formal proceedings or regulatory action. Missed deadlines, defensive responses, and eroded trust carry real legal and reputational risk. A dispute that should resolve in weeks stretches into months, with costs compounding at every stage.

With a structured, considered approach

A structured approach moves the landlord from defence to problem-solving. The facts and obligations are established. A mediated conversation allows both parties to explore solutions without admission of liability. The complaint is resolved through agreement, avoiding enforcement and preserving the relationship.

Scenario 2: Commercial and Contractual Dispute

Situation

A major project between two organisations has stalled. Each side blames the other for missed targets. Correspondence has become combative, a significant contract is at risk, and both organisations have taken legal advice without progress.

Without a structured approach

Without a change of approach, this dispute heads towards termination and litigation. Both organisations face substantial cost, disruption, and reputational damage. The working relationship is likely lost regardless of the outcome.

With a structured, considered approach

A structured consultant reviews the project records and establishes the factual issues. Decision-makers engage in a without-prejudice facilitated discussion. Miscommunications are acknowledged rather than argued over. The parties reach a negotiated settlement: the project continues on adjusted terms, or is brought to a clean close. Court is avoided.

Scenario 3: Workplace and Organisational Dispute

Situation

A senior professional has lodged a formal grievance after feeling unfairly treated. The matter has been through initial HR process without resolution. Morale has deteriorated and a tribunal claim is being considered.

Without a structured approach

A perfunctory or adversarial response at this stage drives the employee further towards formal action. The organisation faces tribunal risk, negative publicity, and potential loss of a valued team member.

With a structured, considered approach

A structured mediator gives the individual a proper opportunity to be heard and the organisation the space to respond constructively. In facilitated dialogue, practical remedies are explored. A mutually agreed plan addresses the core concerns. The tribunal claim does not proceed.

In each scenario, a structured approach changed the outcome. The stage at which Cosil Solutions becomes involved does not determine whether it can help. What matters is that the right approach is applied with judgement and proportion to where the matter actually is.

Three Ways Cosil Solutions Supports You

Cosil Solutions operates across three pillars. They work independently or in combination depending on what a situation requires. Dedicated guides for mediation and deputising are available to download separately from our website.

Independent Mediation

A structured, confidential process in which an impartial mediator supports parties to reach a workable resolution. Effective at any stage of a dispute, including where formal proceedings are already underway. See the Strategic Mediation guide for full detail.

Strategic Dispute Consultancy

Structured support to help you assess risk and plan your approach at any point in the dispute lifecycle. This may include dispute diagnostics, stakeholder analysis, communication strategy, and decision support.

Strategic Deputising

Where direct involvement has become counterproductive, a Cosil Solutions representative steps in to manage communication, process, and progression within agreed boundaries. See the Strategic Deputising guide for full detail.

We work alongside your legal advisers, not in place of them. We complement legal strategy with practical dispute judgement and operate with discretion throughout.

Assessing Your Dispute Readiness

The difference between organisations that suffer lasting damage from disputes and those that manage conflict well often comes down to how they respond when a matter lands, not just whether they had a plan beforehand.

Consider these questions:

- When a serious complaint or conflict arises, does your team have a clear structure to work within, or does each situation get managed differently?
- Are risks being identified and assessed consistently, at every stage of a dispute?
- Do your leaders have the skills to navigate high-stakes conversations, negotiations, and mediation?
- Are you balancing legal, commercial, and relationship considerations effectively, or over-relying on formal process?

A dispute readiness assessment can identify gaps in policy, team capability, or escalation procedures and provide concrete recommendations. Being dispute-ready means your team responds with structure and judgement, at whatever stage a matter has reached.

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The R.E.S.O.L.V.E.™ name and framework are proprietary. Licensing arrangements are available for organisations wishing to implement the framework internally. Please contact us for details.

This Document Does Not Constitute Legal Advice

The content of this guide is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It reflects the professional experience and practice of Cosil Solutions Ltd in the field of civil and commercial mediation and dispute consultancy.

Nothing in this document should be construed as legal advice, nor does it create any legal or professional obligation on the part of Cosil Solutions Ltd or the reader. Individuals and organisations dealing with disputes are strongly encouraged to obtain independent legal advice appropriate to their specific circumstances.

Professional Status

Cosil Solutions Ltd is a civil and commercial mediation and strategic consultancy practice. It provides mediation, dispute consultancy, and strategic dispute support services.

Cosil Solutions Ltd does not provide legal advice or legal representation. Clients requiring legal advice in connection with any dispute or complaint are encouraged to seek independent legal counsel appropriate to their specific circumstances.

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Our Commitment to Responsible Practice

Cosil Solutions Ltd is committed to operating as a responsible, proportionate practice. We are a low-footprint, digitally delivered business. We minimise unnecessary resource use in how we work and how we deliver our services.

Our approach to dispute resolution is itself grounded in proportionality: we support outcomes that avoid unnecessary escalation, wasted resource, and avoidable cost. We consider this a reflection of responsible professional conduct as much as good practice.

We are committed to reviewing and improving our approach to responsible practice on an ongoing basis.

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