



Key Annual Report Figures for 2020:

Rental Disputes in 2020

- 5,178 applications received for dispute resolution in 2020.
- The top 3 dispute types reflect the changes in the rental sector in 2020 and the impact of Covid-19; Rent Arrears remained the highest dispute type in 2020 with 1,599 (31%) cases taken. However, this was followed by Deposit retention (27%) and Breach of Landlord obligations (20%), both of which increased in percentage terms from 2019 levels. 19% of dispute resolution cases were related to rent arrears or rent arrears and overholding, where a tenant remains in a property after a valid notice of termination has expired.; And 3% were for other miscellaneous reasons.
- 58% of dispute applications were made by tenants and 39% by landlords. Third parties accounted for 3% of applications in 2020.

Mediation Services

- In 2020, 80% of Telephone Mediation cases ended with an agreement; Mediation remains the fastest method available to RTB customers for dispute resolution.
- In 2020, a total of 2,732 Telephone Mediation and Adjudication hearings took place, a significant decrease of 41% compared to 2019. This was due to the impact of Covid-19 and the Adjudication process being put on hold and impacted for a number of months while new processes were being introduced.
- 2020 also saw a high number of case withdrawals, with 30% of complete applications withdrawn before the hearing took place, the high level also partially impacted by the pandemic. The role of the RTB is to work with landlords and tenants to inform them of their rights and responsibilities. In many cases parties come to their own resolution without the need for any further intervention from the RTB.

Determination Orders

- In 2020, there were 1,794 cases where a Determination Order (a legally binding agreement) was issued following an Adjudication or Telephone Mediation case.

Rent Arrears Awarded

- In 2020, a total of €1.38m was awarded in rent arrears with the average award at €4,455 which was a slight increase from the 2019 figure of €4,274.
- In 2020, the highest single award of rent arrears was €31,549. If a landlord and tenant fail to agree on a rent arrears payment plan informally, a landlord submits an application for dispute resolution to the RTB.

- In 2020, 27% (412) of the Determination Orders issued following Telephone Mediation or Adjudication were in relation to rent arrears.
- To view a Breakdown of Notices of Termination Related to 2020 Determination Orders by Types of Notices Served, see Table 8 on page 38 of the 2020 Annual Report.

Adjudications

- In 2020, the RTB awarded a total of €271,352 in damages as part of Adjudication decisions.
- Of the 1,503 cases where a Determination Order issued following a hearing, 288 cases (15%) received an award of damages.

About the RTB

What is the Residential Tenancies Board?

The Residential Tenancies Board, also known as the RTB, is a public body set up to support and develop a well-functioning rental housing sector. Our remit extends to the private rental, Approved Housing Body (AHB) and Student Specific Accommodation sectors.

Our role is to regulate the rental sector, maintain a national register of tenancies, resolve disputes between tenants and landlords, initiate an investigation into conduct by a landlord, provide information and research to inform policy, and make information available to the public to ensure tenancies run smoothly and no issues arise.

Registrations

All private residential landlords, Approved Housing Bodies (who are not-for-profit housing providers, often referred to as Housing Associations) and landlords of Student Specific Accommodation must register their tenancies with the RTB. You can search to see if a tenancy is registered on the RTB website. The registration of tenancies enables us to collect important data on the sector. It is also a key part of regulating and supporting the sector and ensuring that landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Dispute Resolution

Since 2004, the RTB replaced the courts in dealing with the majority of disputes between landlords and tenants through our Dispute Resolution Service. This service offers a choice of resolution types to parties – Telephone Mediation or Adjudication – and the option to appeal through a Tenancy Tribunal.

Investigations and Sanctions

The RTB has powers to investigate and sanction landlords who engage in certain breaches of rental law called Improper Conduct, such as such as increasing the rent by more than is allowed under the calculation set out in the Residential Tenancies Act or ending a tenancy by citing a reason which the landlord did not ultimately act on, amongst others. Investigations can commence either on the basis of information received from a member of the public or proactively by the RTB on the basis of information available to us under the Residential Tenancies Act. Sanctions include a formal written caution and/or a fine of up to €15,000 and/or costs of up to €15,000.

Information, Research and Education

The RTB provides high-quality information and assistance to landlords, tenants and the public on their rental rights and responsibilities, both in terms of living in and providing accommodation in the rental sector. We also provide accurate and authoritative data on the rental sector, such as the Quarterly Rent Index, which allows us to monitor trends in the rental sector, but also allows individuals to check and compare rents in particular locations.

Further information about the RTB can be found on www.rtb.ie