Your route through Final Account Dispute Prevention

A sample report, built from invented answers, to show what yours will look like.

> This report is based only on your answers, before we have seen any of your papers. It is not legal advice, and you should not rely on any date or time limit in it: check every date against your subcontract. Legal questions go to your solicitor.

Where you stand

In your routine, the first thing to fix is the dates. That means when the account is due, and how long you have to notify a change or a claim. A line with sound evidence can still be cut if its notice went in late, and no work at the end puts that right.

Your subcontract can make a final certificate binding unless it is challenged in time. What it covers, when the time starts and what counts as a challenge all depend on the clause. The time can be short, so the day a certificate arrives matters.

Your instructions often come verbally and are not always confirmed. An unconfirmed change is the first line your main contractor's surveyor strikes. Any given on this job so far are best confirmed now, while the people who gave them are still on site.

Your subcontract sets time limits for notice, but nobody tracks them. That is the gap that loses a sound line in a busy month. Closing it takes one diary, kept against every change from the day it happens.

You keep a list of variations, but not the whole account. Omissions, provisional sums, claims and deductions are then pieced together at the end, when a line nobody logged is easily missed.

Your variations are applied for each month, but few get agreed. Silence is not agreement: a line nobody answers stays open, however often it goes in.

One person keeps the account, with no cover. In a holiday or a busy month it goes stale, and nobody else knows where it stands.

What to do now

In order of priority.

1. **Put every date the account depends on in one diary**
   Why: Some subcontracts set time limits to notify a change or a claim, and for the final account itself. A limit nobody tracks is the one missed in a busy month, and a late notice cannot be taken back.
   How: Open the subcontract and its schedule of amendments. Find the clauses on variations, extensions

of time, loss and expense, the final account and final payment. Loss and expense is the extra cost of delay and disruption. Note what each needs, to whom and by when. Then diary each limit against each change the day it happens, in a diary more than one person can see.

2. **Decide now who sends a final certificate to your solicitor, and when**

   Why: A letter objecting to the certificate may not stop it becoming binding. One that sits unread in an inbox for a week can use up the time you have to challenge it.

   How: Put the clause and its time limit in the job diary. Tell whoever opens the post and the project inbox where a final certificate goes. Anything headed final certificate or final payment goes to one named person the day it arrives. That person sends it to your solicitor with the subcontract, the same day.

3. **Confirm every verbal instruction in writing, the same week**

   Why: Many subcontracts need changes instructed or confirmed in writing, sometimes within a set time. A confirmation sent now is evidence; a memory at the final account is not.

   How: Write to the person your subcontract names for instructions. Say who asked for what, when and where, and that you are treating it as a variation. Send it the way your subcontract requires, keep the sent email and any reply, and add the line to the account that day.

4. **Turn what you have into a running account**

   Why: The account has to show everything the job became, not just the extras. A line left out until the end is argued when it is hardest to prove.

   How: Start from the subcontract sum. Give every change its own line: variation, provisional sum, omission, claim or deduction. Against each, note its instruction or document, your figure, and whether it is applied for, agreed or disputed. Update it with every application.

5. **Put each open variation forward for agreement, now and with every application**

   Why: An agreed line is banked while the people who know it are still on site. One left open becomes an argument at the end, when they have gone.

   How: With each application, send a short list of the open variations: the instruction, your figure and the document behind it. Ask for each to be agreed, or for reasons if not. Record every reply, or that none came, against the line.

6. **Find the document behind each line, now**

   Why: Each line is only as strong as the document behind it. Records made at the time count for far more than ones made later.

   How: For each line without one, look for anything dated at the time. That means the instruction email, a marked-up drawing, a measure, a daywork sheet, photos, delivery notes or the site diary. Ask your site team now, before they move on. Note the reference against the line.

7. **Reconcile your account to the certificates and payments**

   Why: The account has to start from figures that add up. A missing certificate is exactly where a variation goes unaccounted for.

   How: List every application, certificate and payment for the job in date order. Check that each change a certificate included is in your account, at the certified figure or more. Note every difference and why. If you would rather we did it, that is where our set-up starts.

8. **Name one person to keep the account, and a deputy**

   Why: A running account nobody owns goes stale within months. A deputy keeps it going when the keeper is away.

   How: Pick the person who already makes the applications, usually your QS or commercial manager, and name a deputy. Write down who logs each instruction, who prices each change and who puts lines forward for agreement.

9. **Keep every instruction, certificate and notice exactly as it arrived**

   Why: At the final account, each line turns on who asked for what, and when. The original email or portal record keeps its date and time; a forwarded copy, a printout or a screenshot may not.

   How: Make one folder for each job. Save each instruction, confirmation, application, certificate and notice in it as the original email or portal record. Do not edit or rename the attachments.

What to gather

Everything the work is built from. Copies are fine: send what you have and we will tell you what is missing.

- **Instructions, confirmations and the variation register. You said you do not have this yet.** The instructions as dated PDFs or scans; the register in its original Excel file, every line included, not a summary of totals.
  Where to find it: The site instruction file, the email trail with the main contractor, and your QS's variation tracker.
- **The signed subcontract.** A complete PDF, every schedule and amendment included.
  Where to find it: The job's commercial folder or the order email.
- **The account as it stands, or your final account so far.** In its original Excel file, not a PDF printout; whatever exists, however early.
  Where to find it: Whoever keeps it, your QS or your accounts team, holds the working file.
- **Every application and certificate so far.** The complete run, from the first valuation to the latest; a partial set leaves gaps the reconciliation cannot see past.
  Where to find it: Your QS's file of applications, Payment Notices and certificates.
- **Any measures or valuations.** As Excel spreadsheets.
  Where to find it: Your QS's working folders.
- **Who will keep the account.** A name, and a deputy for when that person is away.
  Where to find it: Your own decision: usually the QS or commercial manager who makes the applications.

Why Quantsurv

You can do a good deal of this yourself, and the steps above show how. If you would rather have it done for you, or want the notices checked before you act, this is the work we do.

- **Specialists in exactly this.** We work only for subcontractors, on the claims and disputes that cost them money. Behind it: 10 years on the commercial side of construction, and £100m+ of construction projects worked on.

- **A fixed fee, agreed first.** We never bill by the hour. Fixed set-up fee, including the pre-submission review, agreed in writing before work starts. Optional monthly checks have a fixed fee agreed first. Pause between jobs or stop at month-end. If the work runs over, the cost is ours, not yours.
- **Fast where it matters.** Ten working days. A fixed fee also gives us every reason to finish quickly.

How Final Account Dispute Prevention would run for you

The whole service, step by step. Where your answers decide a route, it is shown under the step it belongs to.

Step 01 You tell us about the job

One call on the job, the subcontract and how the account is kept today, if it is. The first conversation is free and commits you to nothing.

Step 02 We confirm the scope and fixed fee in writing

We confirm what we will set up, for which jobs, the fixed fee and the timetable, in writing before work starts. The review before you submit is included.

What you get: A written scope, fixed fee and timetable

Step 03 You decide whether to go ahead

You read the scope, the fee and the timetable, and decide. Nothing starts until you have agreed it in writing.

Step 04 You send us the paperwork

You send everything in the list below in one go, so the account is set up from the documents rather than from memory.

Step 05 We read the signed subcontract

We read the signed subcontract and everything it brings in. We note how changes are valued, which notices it needs, when the account is due and how your main contractor must answer it.

What you get: A note of the rules and dates your account must meet, each with its clause

- **If it has a final certificate or conclusive evidence clause:** the clause and its dates go in the diary, and your team knows to send any certificate to your solicitor the day it arrives.

Step 06 We check how the account is kept now

We compare how your team logs instructions, prices changes and puts them forward for agreement with what the subcontract requires. We note each gap and anything it has already cost you.

What you get: A written list of the gaps between how you work now and what the subcontract requires

- **If work was done on a verbal instruction:** we list it, and your team asks for written confirmation now, while the people who gave it are still on site.

Step 07 We set up the running account

We start from the subcontract sum and every adjustment so far. Each variation, provisional sum, omission, claim and deduction gets one line, with its document reference and status.

What you get: Your running final account, one line per adjustment, reconciled to what has been paid

- **If a line has no document behind it:** we mark it and name the record that would prove it, so your team can get it while people still remember.

Step 08 We write the routine and the diary

One page sets out who logs each instruction, when each line is priced and how it is put forward for agreement. The diary holds every date the account depends on, from each notice to the submission date.

What you get: A one-page routine and a diary of every date the account depends on

- **If the subcontract sets a time limit for notice of a change or a claim:** that limit goes in the diary against each line, so the notice goes in on time.

Step 09 We walk your team through it

We take the person who keeps the account, and their deputy, through the routine, the account and the diary, on your own job.

What you get: A walk-through on your own job for whoever keeps the account, and their deputy

Step 10 You run it on a live valuation

Your surveyor updates the account for the next application and puts that month's lines forward for agreement, with us alongside to check it.

Step 11 We check the live run and hand it over

We check the month's account against the routine and correct anything it shows. Then we hand over the written routine, so it survives a change of staff.

What you get: The checked account and the written routine, handed over to your team

Step 12 We check the account each month, if you add the Ongoing check

Each month we read the running account and send you a short note. It flags any line that is unpriced, unagreed or missing its document, and any date coming up.

What you get: A short monthly note on the account, naming anything that needs action

Step 13 We review the account before it goes in

When the account is ready to go in, we test every item against the subcontract and the records, the way your main contractor's surveyor will. We reconcile it to the certificates and payments.

What you get: The review: a verdict on every item and a realistic range for the account

Step 14 You decide what goes in

The account is yours. On the back of the review, you decide what goes in as it stands, what is repaired first and what is left out.

Step 15 You submit the account

You submit it in the form and by the date your subcontract sets. The diary shows when your main contractor must answer.

Step 16 We close with a running account and a reviewed final account

You receive a running account showing the evidence and agreement status for each item, supported by a deadline diary and a tested team routine. A pre-submission review identifies the strong items, remaining gaps and realistic values.

Your path through the questions

The questions you answered, in order, as the page drew them. Your answers are in yellow, with the line running through them.

Which is closest to where you are now?

- A new job is starting, and we want its account right from day one
- **Our job is running, and we want the account built as it goes**
- Our job is nearly finished, and the account has not gone in yet
- Our account has gone in and been cut, rejected or ignored

Does a notice deadline, an application date or the date your account is due fall this week?

- Yes
- **No**
- Not sure

Do you have a signed copy of the subcontract for this job?

- **Yes, with its schedules and amendments**
- No, it was never signed, or we only have the order
- Not sure

Do you know what your subcontract says about the final account: when it is due and what it must contain?

- **Yes, we have read it and know what it says**
- It says nothing about the final account
- Nobody has read that part yet
- Not sure

Does it make a final certificate binding unless you challenge it within a set time?

- **Yes**
- No
- Not sure

When your main contractor changes the work, how does the instruction usually reach you?

- In writing, or we always confirm it in writing
- **Often verbally on site, and not always confirmed in writing**
- Not sure: it depends on the site team

Does your subcontract set a time limit to notify a change or a claim, and does anyone track it?

- Yes, and every limit goes in a diary
- **Yes, but nobody tracks them**
- No, we have checked and it sets none
- Not sure

How is the final account for this job kept today?

- As a running account: one line per change, updated with each application
- **We keep a list of variations, but not the whole account**
- Nothing yet: it will be written at the end
- Not sure

Are your variations agreed with your main contractor as the job goes?

- Yes, most are agreed within a month or two
- **We apply for them each month, but few get agreed**
- We leave them until the final account
- Not sure

Could you point to a document behind every line of the account?

- Yes, for almost every line
- **For some lines, not all**
- For very few
- Not sure

Does your account match what has been certified and paid so far?

- Yes, we check it against every certificate
- No, or nobody has checked
- **Not sure**

Who keeps your final accounts, and who covers when they are away?

- A named person, with a named deputy
- **One person does it, with no cover**
- Nobody in particular: whoever has time

Roughly how much is at stake?

- Under £5,000
- £5,000 to £25,000
- **£25,000 to £100,000**
- Over £100,000
- Not sure

Your report

Next step

The first conversation is free and commits you to nothing. Reply to the email this report came with, or email contact@quantsurv.com, and we will already have your answers.