

Conflict in the workplace is a costly business

Conflict is an inevitable part of the employment relationship; however differences between individuals can lead to a range of costs associated with:

- Staff time consumed by formal grievance procedures, and employment tribunal claims.
- Lowered performance, as focus shifts to the dispute.
- Absence costs
- Recruitment and re-training costs where individuals leave an organisation.
- Lower staff morale.
- Poor working relationships within the teams affected
- The employer's external reputation could be compromised.

Some Facts

- A manager loses 25% of their time dealing with dysfunctional conflict.
- A manager loses 14.4 days to each formal grievance, and 18 days for each disciplinary (CIPD 2011).
- The average cost of defending an Employment Tribunal Claim is £8,500 (British Chamber of Commerce 2011).
- The average Employment Tribunal settlement is £9,120 (Tribunal Service Statistics 2009/10).

What is workplace mediation?

Workplace Mediation is outside formal processes and can provide a speedy resolution to disputes. A safe place is created for the individuals to say what they want to say, and to be heard. It is a structured approach that is highly effective at all stages of a dispute. Mediators do not take sides and encourage communication between the parties. The parties are helped to talk through the issues, gain insights, and open up the possibility of change.

The benefits of using mediation

- Quicker and cheaper than internal procedures or litigation.
- Reduces stress and anxiety commonly associated with conflict.
- Improved working relationships.
- Reduction in sickness absence.
- Better staff retention.
- Generates better and longer lasting solutions.
- Prevents disagreements getting out of control and affecting the wider team.
- Encourages a more positive workplace - a culture of openness, empowerment and personal responsibility.
- Personal growth –helping participants develop the skills to resolve disputes for themselves in future

Situations that are suitable

- Bullying & harassment allegations.
- Disagreements about roles and responsibilities.
- Personality clashes.
- Lifestyle and cultural differences.
- Gender issues.
- Conflicts arising from change and the management of change.

Mediation can be used between work colleagues in any situation where relationships are strained. Colleagues might have the same job or similar grade, but equally they might hold positions of different seniority.

The Process

Two mediators co-work on a case. The mediation can be completed in one day or spread over two half days and is achieved using the following process:

Initial Assessment – by telephone

Confidential meeting - person 1

Confidential meeting - person 2

Preparation for joint meeting

Joint meeting

In complex cases more time may be required for which there will be an additional cost. The sessions are usually held at MESH premises, a neutral venue, to ensure confidentiality. As a charitable 'not for profit' organisation we offer competitive prices for this work. There are two rates: one for the private/public sector and one for the voluntary sector. For more information about prices please **Contact our mediators on 0114 2412771.**

MESH Community Cohesion Services

MESH is now promoting a mediation service for the workplace in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, and North Derbyshire. We are being supported by Voluntary Action Sheffield. MESH is a charity, dedicated to the use and promotion of mediation as a means of conflict resolution. MESH has a reputation for excellence in mediation training and the provision of mediation services.

Government promotion of Workplace Mediation

During recent years there has been an increase in the use, and promotion of workplace mediation. In 2007 the Government's Gibbons Report recommended that employers be encouraged to pursue early resolution to workplace disputes. Greater emphasis is now placed on the informal resolution of conflict. ACAS specifically highlights the use and benefits of mediation, dedicating a section in its guide to dealing with disciplinary and grievance cases to mediation.

In 2012 the Department for Business Innovation and Skills announced that the **Government want to "position workplace mediation as an essential part of the dispute resolution toolkit – to be the default option in the event of conflict at work" (BIS - resolving workplace disputes)**

Contact MESH

Would you like to discuss making a referral with one of our highly skilled Mediators?

Call: 0114 241 2771

Email: enquiries@meshccs.org.uk

MESH

Scotia Works

Leadmill Road

SHEFFIELD

S1 4SE



WORKPLACE MEDIATION

*A cost effective solution to
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