

## Can other people play a role in the mediation process?

Personnel and unions may be involved in identifying situations where mediation may be of value. Workplace mediation is supported by senior management and trade unions.

## Where is mediation not likely to succeed?

Mediation is not likely to succeed if one or more participants are demonstrating an intention to maintain a grudge, an entrenched position, or cause harm to others, or where formal / legal sanctions are thought appropriate.

## What do clients say about the service?

*“My working relationship with my manager has really improved.”*

*“Mediation really helped to change a very difficult situation.”*

*“I could speak up without feeling judged and it helped me understand another perspective.”*

## How do I contact the service?

Tel: 03000 411411  
Fax: 03000 422846

Staff Care Services, Mediation  
Park House  
110-112 Mill Street  
East Malling  
Kent ME19 6BU

Email: [supportline@kent.gov.uk](mailto:supportline@kent.gov.uk) or visit  
[www.staffcareservices.com](http://www.staffcareservices.com)

If you use a minicom, please email our Support Line email address and our advisers will assist you.  
If you have any questions or comments about this leaflet please contact us.

This leaflet is also available in alternative formats.

## Workplace Mediation

Resolving Workplace Disputes Effectively



- ✓ Helps reach fair, amicable and clear agreements
- ✓ Impartial, confidential and entered into voluntarily
- ✓ Allows people to be heard in a neutral place
- ✓ Provides a basis for improved communication

## Why mediation?

Preventing and resolving conflict early using professional mediation can be highly effective in stopping workplace problems from escalating. Mediation can save valuable time and money, maintain morale in the wider workforce, and allow people to concentrate on their core roles.

Our highly trained and qualified mediators give people the opportunity to communicate privately and constructively with each other, in a safe and secure environment, to reach solutions acceptable to everyone involved. They have experience of working in a variety of settings.

There are a range of reasons that may cause conflict to arise, including:

- Personality clashes
- Poor communication/misunderstandings
- Inability to accept criticism
- Insecurity and defensiveness
- Feeling undervalued
- Inappropriate use of authority.

## When can mediation help?

- ✓ Difficulties arising from change
- ✓ Interpersonal conflicts
- ✓ Unresolved disputes
- ✓ Issues around discrimination, harassment and bullying
- ✓ Differences in working style or perceptions
- ✓ Communication breakdown.

## What is involved?

Mediation involves participants defining the problem, agreeing on objectives to resolve the problem and working towards an acceptable solution for all parties. Participants must be prepared to work towards resolution and have the authority to agree on a solution.

The experienced mediation team are trained in managing workplace disputes. Generally two mediators work on a case.



Mediators facilitate and broker agreements, remain impartial and make no judgements regarding the parties involved. Mediators assist and enable all parties to work through problems and identify solutions.

The process concentrates on upholding safe boundaries and fairness for all concerned. Mediation will always take account of the individual circumstances of the case.

## What happens in a mediation meeting?

Typically, mediation sessions are held in 'neutral' venues. Mediators work with all parties to establish needs, personal positions and to explore the key issues. Ground rules are agreed and the basis for resolution stated.

During discussions key points are noted which form the basis of any agreements. Mediation is carried out on the basis of confidentiality but mediators have the right to break confidentiality if there is an identified risk of harm to any parties whether inside or outside the mediation process.

## Can the process be stopped once started?

Yes:

- ✓ Participants can choose to withdraw at any time
- ✓ Mediators have the right to halt the process if they feel any party is not serious about reaching an agreement
- ✓ If a formal procedure for example a grievance or disciplinary is started, this is likely to halt a mediation process.

## How does mediation work with other processes or formal procedures?

The nature and spirit of mediation is co-operative. It provides an alternative to formal procedures or it can be used as part of a resolution within formal procedures e.g. a return to work negotiation.