

**Occupational Health, Safety
and Wellbeing Services**

Mediation



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk/ohsw

What is Mediation?

Mediation is a method where all of the parties are willing to participate in looking for a solution. Part of the outcome of the mediation is aiming to keep the relationship of all parties intact.

Workplace mediation is based on the principles of encouraging constructive communication in a safe and confidential environment, identifying mutual solutions and agreements and restoring respectful, professional working relationships.

The aim is to help the parties to communicate with each other, and explore the issues that are of real importance to them.

The mediation process uses an independent third party i.e. the mediator, to help facilitate a resolution to the dispute. The mediator does not, and cannot, impose a settlement.

Mediation is confidential

Details of what is discussed would not be revealed outside the session, reports are not produced as it is up to the parties involved to communicate the outcomes themselves.

The aim is to produce an action plan to return to a harmonious working relationship. Mediation is not counselling, but if any party requires further support, our Counselling Service is, as always, available to them.

Mediation is voluntary

Any party may withdraw at any time.

How does it work?

The individuals/parties come together and the mediator helps them to find their own acceptable solutions.

The individuals are encouraged to find ways to address their present and future needs and raise any issues related to their dispute that they believe are important. It is important not to dwell on who may have been right or wrong in the past.

In many cases of harassment, bullying, or any other type of dispute, people don't want to go down the formal investigation route, especially if they want the working relationship to continue. This is where mediation is the best way forward.

Often there are issues on both sides that could be helped by better communication leading to greater understanding.

Similarly, disputes can sometimes harbour undiscovered or undisclosed issues and mediation offers the flexibility to explore them and deal with the deadlock and emotions that can often be a barrier to reaching a settlement.

What is a mediator?

A mediator is a neutral third party, i.e. they do not represent either party.

They bring a fresh pair of objective eyes to a dispute, along with their negotiation, communication and problem solving skills.



Their role is to gather information from all parties, identify common ground and help generate options leading to a settlement on which all parties can agree.

The mediator does not impose a decision, nor make any kind of judgement.

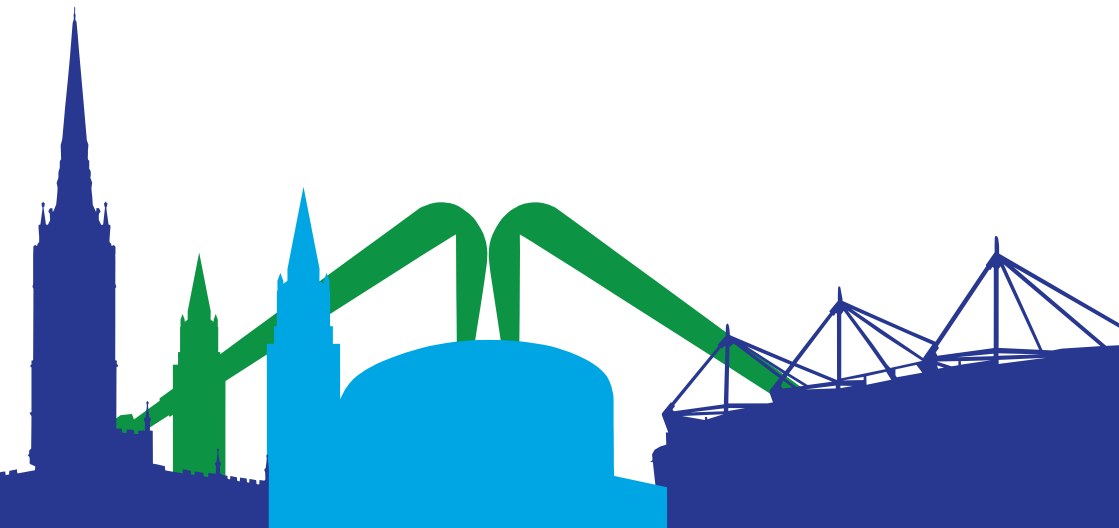
What can get in the Way?

Most disputes become very personal, i.e. finding fault, 'picking holes', showing blame or error. Initially, individuals may not be inclined to settle, they are more focused on wanting to show the other party that they were in the wrong.

These are very natural reactions, but they do not really help and can act as a barrier to reaching a settlement.

The mediator listens, allows the parties to express their feelings, and explores underlying issues, challenging and encouraging where necessary.

The mediator spends time helping each party to focus on their interests, and the interests of the other parties, rather than their rights. Mediation looks at the common ground, the positive aspects and finds the best resolution for both parties.



Outcome

- Communicate better with each other
- Reduce conflict
- Reach their own agreed and informed decisions

For many, there is a realisation that formal procedures and investigations can, in some circumstances, be so stressful to all concerned that any possibility of people working together again is minimal.

Mediation develops communications between parties. It is also more likely to support individual employees in resolving their working difficulties and to actively encourage respectful working practices.

Mediation facilitates a solution through negotiations that addresses the issues that are most important to the individual. These important issues will not necessarily be the same for the opposing party.

Workplace mediation is the most favoured method for the resolution of employee conflicts including harassment and bullying.



Further information:

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There will be no report or recommendations following the mediation.

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