

Workplace conflict – how we can help

Dearden understands that sometimes working relationships can become strained whether this is due to different personalities or styles of working, harassment and bullying, a lack of understanding of cultural differences, differing views and opinions or different management approaches.

Any of these issues can lead to poor communication, misunderstanding and conflict, the result of which can have a significant impact on many fronts including a lack of productivity, poor morale, prolonged absence and increases in turnover.

In a survey undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) in 2015, 38% of UK employees that were surveyed reported some form of interpersonal conflict either with isolated disputes or ongoing difficult relationships with differences in personality or styles of working cited as the most prevalent reasons for the conflict. 43% of those surveyed perceived the impact of conflict as a stressful experience with 39% stating that workplace conflict had led to a drop in motivation or commitment to their work.

Increasingly organisations have looked to alternatives to costly and time-consuming grievance procedures through using facilitation or mediation.

How can Dearden HR help?

Dearden can help by offering mediation or facilitated discussions between individuals and small groups.

Facilitative discussions may be used between individuals and parties where there are matters of mutual concern which impact on their working life. Mediation, however, is a voluntary, confidential process that enables two or more disputing parties to resolve a conflict with the help of a neutral third party. The process is facilitated by a mediator or mediator(s) at the end of which, it is hoped the parties will reach an agreement to move forward and, crucially, an agreement which is sustainable.



What can be expected at a facilitated discussion?

A facilitated discussion will normally be used where there are concerns raised by

an individual or individuals about a specific or range of issues which may impact on their work and have the potential to lead to conflict. The facilitator plays a neutral role in the discussion, helping to summarise and record the main points and outcomes which can be taken forward.

What can be expected at a mediation meeting?

Mediation will normally be considered when local efforts to resolve the situation have been unsuccessful. Employees may or may not have been through a formal grievance process.

The first stage will involve holding separate meetings with the parties. Sometimes there may be two Mediators present particularly with groups. These meetings are normally held back to back on the same day if possible and are designed to ensure that the parties:

- Understand and have confidence in the Mediation process and Mediator(s).
- Are able to communicate the issues to the Mediator(s) on a one to one basis.
- Are tasked to think about key issues identified by the Mediator(s) at the initial meeting so that they are better prepared for the joint meeting.

The second stage will be a face to face meeting with all parties where, with the support of the Mediator(s) acting as facilitator(s), they will work towards reaching a mutually satisfactory outcome.

At the end of the discussion the Mediator will assist the parties to draw up a confidential agreement, if one has been reached.

Want to know more.....?

At Dearden HR we have extensive experience of managing individual and group conflict and gaining resolution. For further information on how we can help, contact Juliette Stern, HR Consultant on 07552235566.

