



# Workplace Mediation Information Leaflet



# Benefits of Workplace Mediation

Mediation is a valuable tool for addressing workplace issues and is a form of alternative dispute resolution in the workplace. It can be an effective way of addressing conflict at work, helping to resolve disagreements on a confidential basis without the need for more formal proceedings, which can be stressful and timely.

Workplace mediation can help to repair and maintain professional relationships, by encouraging and empowering those involved to find solutions and move past their conflict.

Additionally, workplace mediation can help to open up the lines of communication between people involved in workplace conflict and can therefore create a more stable and positive work environment.



# What is Workplace Mediation?

Workplace mediation is a confidential process in which an independent, neutral mediator assists two or more parties to resolve a workplace dispute.

Most types of disputes can be mediated if those involved want to find a way forward and the aim of workplace mediation is to restore an effective and productive working relationship.

During a mediation process, a mediator will work with those involved to explore the underlying issues in a working relationship and will help participants listen to one another. The mediator will listen carefully to what each participant has to say and will encourage participants to talk through their issues together in a constructive way. The mediator will do as much as they can to help those involved find a positive and constructive way forward. However, ultimately, whether the mediation process is successful is determined by the participants involved. The mediator oversees the process of seeking to resolve the problems, but not the outcomes.



# What is a Mediator?

A mediator is an independent person who has been appropriately trained and is invited to work with the participants involved in a dispute to help them find a positive way forward. The Education Authority has an internal team of trained mediators.

A mediator does not judge who is right or wrong and they do not apportion blame.

A mediator will seek to build positive, safe and constructive interactions between the participants involved.

The mediator will guide the participants through the process. It is the mediator's responsibility to manage the process and ensure that participants are given an opportunity to discuss their issues in a constructive way.



# The Principles of Workplace Mediation

The four key principles which underpin workplace mediation can be summarised with the acronym **VICS** (Voluntary, Independent, Confidential and Self Determined).

## Voluntary

Mediation is an entirely voluntary process.

This means that participants are there voluntarily and have not been coerced or forced into mediation.

Participants should enter into the process because they want to and not because they are being told to.

By agreeing to use the process participants are giving a commitment to work through their issues in a constructive manner.

## Independent

Mediators are entirely independent and impartial in the mediation process.

Mediators do not take sides, apportion blame or judge who is right or wrong.

## Confidential

Mediation is confidential and offers a safe and confidential space for participants to find a way forward.

This means that anything that is discussed during the mediation process is confidential to the participants involved.

The mediator will not discuss any details of the discussion with anyone else.

## Self-Determined

The outcome of the mediation is determined by the participants involved, not dictated by anyone else.

You are in control of any agreements made and you will not be forced into making any agreements against your wishes. Both participants involved will be asked to agree and to adhere to what is finally agreed.

# The 6 Stages of Workplace Mediation



The 6 stages of workplace mediation are illustrated here.

In the EA, when a mediation referral is received, an independent mediator is nominated from the internal mediation team. There may also be some occasions where 2 mediators will carry out a mediation.

The mediator will make initial contact with the participants individually, via email, and provide some introductory information on the mediation process.

The mediator will hold a 1 to 1 pre-meeting with both participants, separately.

It is important that the mediator is clear about the nature of the dispute and understands the key issues and the overall situation. In this pre-meeting, the mediator will listen carefully to each participant and may ask questions in order to better understand the issues. The aim of this first meeting is to allow each individual involved to tell their story and find out what they want out of the process.

If the mediator is content that mediation is an appropriate process to try and resolve the issues, the mediator will arrange a joint mediation session.

At a joint session, the mediator will facilitate the process, and the participants will be brought together to listen to one another and discuss their issues face to face before considering potential solutions, collaboratively.

## Conclusion

Thank you for reading this information leaflet. Hopefully you now understand what workplace mediation is, the role of a mediator, the key principles that underpin mediation and the actual mediation process that will be followed.

If you have agreed to participate in a mediation process, you will be invited to attend a 1:1 pre-meeting with the mediator in due course where you will be able to tell your story and outline the issues you wish to resolve in mediation.

If you have any queries regarding the mediation process, you will have the opportunity to ask the mediator during the 1:1 meeting.