

How mediation works

Mediation usually involves a separate meeting with each party, followed by a joint meeting, sometimes at the workplace or in a neutral venue.

2. Preparing for mediation

When the mediation is arranged, you'll get more information so you can prepare.

Sometimes both sides will be asked to write down:

- the problem you want the mediator to help with
- a short list of the main things that have happened

This is not always needed but it can help the mediator understand the problem and saves time on the day.

Separate meeting

When you first use a mediator to resolve a workplace dispute, the mediator will meet both sides separately. This helps each side tell their story and tell the mediator what they want from mediation.

You do not need to bring someone with you to the meeting. If you do want to, you should discuss this, or any other issues that you're concerned about, with the mediator.

The mediator will explain what happens in mediation so that you can decide if it's for you. They'll also explain some of the benefits of mediation.

Mediation is voluntary so you do not have to take part. If, after the first meeting with the mediator, you decide you do not want to mediate, they'll tell your employer that mediation is not possible.

Joint meeting

In the next stage, the mediator brings both sides together for a joint meeting.

Together, you can agree how everyone will behave in a joint meeting. You can ask for a break at any time.

The mediator asks the participants to tell their side of the story, without any interruption, and then sums up the main areas of agreement and disagreement and will talk about what will happen next.

Once the mediator knows the issues that need looking at, they'll encourage you to talk to the other side. The mediator will work with both sides to help you move your focus from the past to the future, and agree solutions to your dispute.

If you reach an agreement

The mediator will help check that any solution and agreement are workable and will discuss recording the agreement you reach.

Once both sides have reached an agreement, the mediator will end the mediation. The mediator will encourage both sides to keep a written record of what's been agreed so that everyone is clear about the way forward. The mediator will explain each person's responsibilities for making the agreement work.

The agreement will only be shared with the parties involved in mediation and anyone they give consent to share it with.

If an agreement is not reached

If an agreement is not reached, you might use other [dispute resolution services](#) to resolve the conflict.

Information on mediation for employers and trade union representatives

Guidance for employers

[Download our mediation guidance for employers written with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development](#) (PDF, 1MB, 41 pages).

Guidance for trade union representatives

[Download our mediation guidance for trade union representatives written with the Trades Union Congress](#) (PDF, 1MB, 18 pages).