

Introducing mediation in your workplace

If you're an employer looking to introduce mediation in your workplace, you should think about what you want to achieve from using mediation. For example, this could be to:

- reduce grievances and conflict
- improve workplace culture

There are 2 ways you can introduce mediation in your workplace. You can:

- use an external mediator that comes to your workplace
- set up your own internal mediation scheme by training employees to act as mediators

The option you choose should be suitable for your workplace. For example, a larger organisation might invest in its own mediation scheme. A smaller organisation might use an external mediator when necessary. Or, some might choose a combination.

3. Using an external mediator

If you use an external mediator, it's a good idea for a person or team to be responsible for overseeing mediation arrangements. The anticipated cost for mediation will also need to be included in the organisation's budget.

In smaller organisations

Using an external mediator might be a good option for a smaller organisation. This is because it can be expensive to set up an internal scheme. It can also be difficult to make sure that employees in a smaller organisation are:

- impartial (the parties involved should not know the mediator)
- available for mediation (employees will need time off for mediations)

Using an external mediator means that you can mediate when necessary without taking up your employees' time.

In larger organisations

You might still use an external mediator in some situations, even if you've invested in your own internal mediation scheme. For example, it might be appropriate to use an external mediator when:

- the internal mediator has a conflict of interest
- an internal mediator is not available quickly enough
- those involved in potential mediation are senior managers
- the issue involves a very sensitive situation

If you use an external mediator that comes to your workplace, you need to be sure that the mediator will:

- not take sides
- work with both sides of the dispute to find a solution that's workable for everyone

There are many mediation providers you can choose from, including Acas. Once you have decided which provider you're going to use, you should discuss:

- the contract
- costs
- timings
- the parties' contact details so the mediator can contact them directly

Acas mediators

To request an Acas mediator, you can call us on 0300 123 1150, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

We're experiencing high demand due to coronavirus. We'll try to answer your call as quickly as we can.

Or [fill in our enquiry form](#).

Setting up an internal mediation scheme

If you're thinking about introducing your own internal mediation scheme, you could pilot a scheme first to see if it works. For example, you could set up a pilot scheme in one area or region of your organisation. If it's successful, you could expand the scheme.

It's a good idea for a person or team to be responsible for overseeing mediation arrangements. For example, telling potential parties about the mediation process and keeping statistics so you can evaluate your mediation scheme.

Selecting employees to act as internal mediators

When selecting employees to act as mediators, you can ask:

- employees to volunteer
- managers to nominate employees

If employees do volunteer, it's a good idea to set minimum standards which they should meet. For example, having an understanding of conflict management. This will help make sure that only those who meet certain criteria apply, and you do not have too many applications to review.

You should select a diverse range of employees to act as mediators. This will help you:

- match mediators to parties more easily

- make sure that mediators are impartial

Training employees to act as internal mediators

If you decide to train your employees to act as mediators, you should:

- make sure mediation responsibilities are included in their job descriptions
- give employees time off for mediations

Employees who act as mediators need to be trained in mediation techniques. They also need to understand their role and how it fits in with their organisation's policies and procedures.

Acas offers accredited mediation training called the Certificate in Internal Workplace Mediation (CIWM). CIWM training gives trainees the skills and knowledge they need to effectively mediate in their own workplace.

[Find out more about Acas-accredited mediation training.](#)

Including mediation in your policies

Mediation should be introduced as part of your organisation's approach to people management. There are many ways mediation can be included in policies and procedures. For example it could be:

- written into employment contracts
- written into your bullying and harassment policy
- included as part of your grievance or dispute resolution procedure

Getting support from your trade union and managers

When you introduce mediation to your workplace, it's important that you get support from:

- senior managers
- line managers
- trade unions
- employee representatives

You should work with them to introduce mediation, so that they understand why mediation is being introduced, the benefits it can bring and how it will be embedded in the organisation.

Getting this support will help you to promote mediation in your workplace and will encourage employees to mediate when they're in conflict.

Launching and promoting mediation

You should think about how you're going to launch and promote mediation in your workplace.

If you've set up your own internal scheme, it's more likely that there'll be a formal launch to promote the scheme.

If you're using external mediators, it's important that mediation is promoted across the organisation so that people are aware of it.

It's up to you whether you decide to launch mediation in a high-profile way, or engage people over time.

Mediation should be promoted as an option to resolve a workplace dispute that's:

- flexible
- confidential
- less formal
- voluntary

You could promote mediation through:

- intranet articles
- leaflets
- posters
- information from HR
- workshops for trade union representatives and managers