

How your employer should inform and consult you about workplace matters

It's useful for employers to discuss any important workplace matters with their employees.

These discussions often take place through a workplace group ('forum') where the employer and employees (or representatives) can discuss important matters.

A workplace forum should be used for:

- employees or representatives to raise ideas and questions with management
- management to present their ideas to employees, and listen to their views and any concerns

A workplace forum is a good way for:

- you to be informed of and respond to matters that affect you
- workplace decisions to be made quickly with everyone's involvement
- workplace decisions to be made in a way that reduces the risk of disagreements about them later on

A workplace forum works best when:

- it includes representatives from all parts of the business or organisation
- the employer and employees feel confident about expressing their views and listening to each other
- it deals with issues that affect the wider workforce instead of individual employees
- it looks at all possible options to resolve a problem, rather than just one or two

Example

The managers of a textiles factory plan to buy new equipment, to improve productivity. They could use the forum to get feedback from employees who will use the equipment, such as what issues they experience with the current equipment and any suggestions for improvements.

For the employer, this would reduce the risk of spending money on equipment that's wrong or does not improve productivity.

For employees, this means they can feel involved in the decision-making. It's also more likely they'll be confident that any decision will not have a negative affect on their workload or morale.

1. The law

You have a legal right to be 'informed' and 'consulted' by your employer about:

- any possible [redundancies](#)
- [changes to your contract](#)
- a [business transfer \(TUPE\)](#)
- changes to your pension arrangements

In terms of the law:

- 'informed' means the employer is communicating with staff to ensure they're updated about workplace matters
- 'consulted' means the employer actively seeks and considers employees' views before making a decision

If there are 50 or more employees in your workplace

If there are 50 or more employees, you have the right to request a formal agreement to be informed and consulted.

This is known as:

- an ICE agreement (as it's part of the 'Information and Consultation of Employees' regulations)
- an information and consultation agreement

This agreement covers significant workplace matters and decisions. It often includes:

- working conditions
- new ways of working
- the output and quality of the business's goods or services
- training
- health and safety
- new equipment
- staffing levels
- physical and mental wellbeing

You can also request this agreement [if there's already an agreement](#) but you feel it does not meet employees' current needs.

Even with an agreement, your employer has the right not to change any business decisions they plan to take. But it does mean:

- employees will be able to give their feedback and raise any concerns
- the employer will be able to make a more informed decision

If your employer requests a formal agreement

Your employer can start setting up an information and consultation agreement without a request from employees. This is called 'giving notice'.

When they give notice:

- the information must be in writing, dated, and provided so that as many employees as possible will see it, for example in an email to all staff
- they must tell you this is a 'requirement of the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations'