

Acas teams up with universities to develop managers skills on handling conflict at work

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Workplace expert, Acas, has worked with the University of Westminster and the University of Sheffield on a conflict research project that looked at innovative online training to help managers prevent, handle and resolve conflict at work.

The success of the research has led to the creation of an online conflict management platform that helps line managers build strong relationships with their team and prevent difficult workplace issues from escalating.

Anne Boyd, Acas Director of Advice and Business Solutions, said:

"This is a groundbreaking project for Acas that builds on the work that we do day in and day out with a range of partners.

"Employers and managers across Great Britain will be able to reap the same benefits as the participants from our study and effectively manage conflict at work through our new training platform."

The initial research project was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and explored the link between management practices, employee engagement and organisational performance.

Project lead of the research at the University of Westminster, Professor Peter Urwin, said:

"We know that building managerial capability is crucial in creating more productive workplaces, but many managers don't have the time and space to access conventional training.

"Therefore, we developed a light touch and flexible intervention focussed on key core skills. Tests involving more than 1,000 managers found that those completing the training developed more collaborative styles and, in most organisations, managers were more likely to address conflict in a proactive way."

Project lead at the University of Sheffield, Professor Paul Latreille, said:

"Conflict is something almost all line managers have to deal with, but too many avoid it, lacking the confidence and skills to do so effectively. That may be because line managers are typically promoted on the basis of good technical skills and as so-called 'accidental managers', have to learn how to manage people on the job.

"Poorly managed conflict is costly. Yet we know from research what skills are needed to have more effective conversations and to prevent, manage and resolve conflict, and that these skills can be taught."

Acas works with a wide range of partners and draws on expertise and insights with millions of employers and employees across the country to reinforce our role as the leading authority in Great Britain on workplace relations.

[Find out about the conflict management skills online course](#)