

Introducing mediation at work

If you're an employer looking to introduce mediation in your organisation, you should think about what you want to achieve from using mediation.

For example, this could be to:

- reduce grievances and conflict
- improve the culture at work

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

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

The option you choose should be suitable for your organisation. 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.

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.

You should also include the expected cost for mediation 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 have 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 who comes to your organisation, you need to be sure that the mediator will:

- not take sides
- work to find a solution that everyone agrees on

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

[Find out about Acas mediation support](#)

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 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). This training gives trainees the skills and knowledge they need to effectively mediate in their own organisation.

[Find out more about the Certificate in Internal Workplace Mediation \(CIWM\)](#)

Acas also provides:

- [mediation skills training for managers](#)
- [conflict management training](#)

Including mediation in your policies

Mediation should be introduced as part of your organisation's approach to people management. There are many ways you can include mediation in policies and procedures.

For example you could include it in:

- employment contracts
- your bullying and harassment policy
- your grievance or dispute resolution procedure

Getting support from your trade union and managers

When you introduce mediation to your organisation, you should 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
- how it will be embedded in the organisation

Getting this support will help you to promote mediation in your organisation as a way to resolve conflict.

Launching and promoting mediation

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

If you've set up your own internal scheme, you could have a formal launch to promote the scheme.

If you're using external mediators, you should promote mediation 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.

You can promote mediation as an option 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

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