



This is a regular look at recent news in the world of mediation, focusing in particular on the workplace and throwing in some of my own views for good measure. In this edition I look at some interesting data published that indicates increasing workplace conflict and market data produced by CEDR suggesting that mediation, in the commercial area at least, is continuing to grow. A couple of articles look at one of my pet subjects, ensuring managers are trained to manage conflict!

Marc Reid

Workplace conflict on the increase?

I was struck by two different stories, one relating to the Employment Tribunal system ([here](#)) and the other a survey output on workplace grievances ([here](#)), which both indicate an increase in conflict in the workplace. There were over 50,000 open cases in the Tribunal system last October, up around 8% on the previous year. The delays in the system are now so bad it could be 4 years after an incident before it gets addressed at Tribunal.

The other article reports on an XpertHR survey that reveals almost a third of organisations have seen an increase in grievances in the past 2 years. There is a clear need for conflict to be addressed early before it goes formal, let alone to Tribunal. I like the comment in the article from the XpertHR representative “*HR need to push employers to drive a culture that is sufficiently open to address minor issues effectively before they escalate and provide support to all staff.*” Exactly, and a good way to do this is to use mediation to nip issues in the bud.

Increase in use of commercial mediation



One of the mysteries in the field of workplace mediation is the size of the market and to what extent is it growing. There are no authoritative data sources on this. However for commercial mediation CEDR has been running a biennial survey which has just released the findings of its tenth mediation audit ([here](#)). There may be question marks about how representative the data sample is, but the survey’s longevity gives a long term picture of how the demand for commercial mediation has increased. The next big jump in usage could come from mandatory mediation for small value claims which would indeed be a turning point for the industry. However, I’d be against making workplace mediation mandatory, even if it meant lots more cases to work on!

Want to share a thought or make an enquiry? We’ll be glad to hear from you:

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Workplace team conflict

Dealing with conflict within a team and indeed between different teams has always been a challenge and in recent times we have seen the additional complication of hybrid working. This article ([here](#)) explores how the nature of hybrid working creates increased risk of conflict and proposes sensible strategies to mitigate the risk. The emphasis is on improved communication, which is also one of the key themes addressed in this article ([here](#)) which suggests strategies on mediating team tension. In any relationship, and particularly within teams, communication is critical - if the relationship starts to deteriorate communication will worsen. This is the time when intervention is needed to re-establish communication to ensure the issues can be discussed and addressed positively.

Growing use of mediation in NHS



It is always good to hear of situations where mediation is being used to both

save money and reduce the pain and stress of formal / legal disputes. And I doubt anyone would disagree that spending money on costly legal cases is not what we want our NHS doing. It's good to hear (see [article](#)) that many personally injury and clinical negligence claims are now being addressed through mediation. There is clearly much more that can be done, in particular as the article says convincing claimants to go down this route, but the progress that has been made and the success achieved is another mediation triumph!

We have recently published a new website, with even more great resources available, most of which are free, including our ebook '8 Stages of Workplace Conflict'. See the new website at www.mediation4.co.uk

Is fighting better than avoiding?

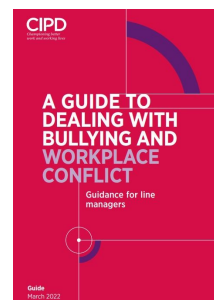


This is an excellent article ([here](#)) which considers how engaging in a conflict situation, although difficult,

is more likely to lead to a positive result than avoidance. It is natural to avoid conflict. We are afraid of the emotion, especially if we have no experience of, or training in, how to manage it effectively. But the benefits of not avoiding are significant. If you can harness differences of opinion and competing ideas you have fertile ground for innovation and development. The converse is also true. Handled badly, conflicting ideas can escalate causing damage to working relationships. So there is a strong case for training managers in effective conflict management.

CIPD guide for managers

As the previous article mentions, training of line managers is key in addressing workplace conflict. As the first line of defence a line manager is ideally placed to nip conflict in the bud. But how do they go about it? I was delighted to see that the CIPD has recently published a series of guides for managers including one on bullying and workplace conflict which features in my latest blog ([here](#)). The guide is strong in many ways, in particular the emphasis placed on using informal intervention rather than relying on formal processes. BUT there is one big omission in my view! You may be able to guess what it is, but read the blog to find out if you are right!



Website: www.mediation4.co.uk