



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 we have positive news from private and public organisations who are putting mediation into action and reaping rewards as a result. However, we showcase also more than one cautionary tale of the negative consequences of people in conflict not talking to one another!

**Marc Reid**

### Conferences highlight positive use of mediation in workplace

Two recent conferences highlighted how mediation can be used positively in the workplace. On 1st February the Civil Mediation Council (CMC) held it's 'Save Time, Save Money, Save Stress: Make Mediation Work for You' conference (click [here](#)) which set out to convince employers to use mediation as an integrated part of conflict resolution in their organisations. This included practical case study presentations made by business leaders including Sony Europe's Regional Head of HR, who highlighted a 100% success rate from their internal mediation programme and large cost savings. CEDR's workshop on Organisational Mediation (click [here](#)) gathered a panel of experts to share experiences and observations with HR and Employment Law professionals to gain a better insight into workplace conflict, how to manage it as early as possible and resolve disputes if they escalate. It is good to see these discussions happening and in particular that CMC is now getting out there and promoting mediation.

### Kitchen quarrels lead to woe in the workplace



A [smallbusiness.co.uk](#) article (click [here](#)) examines research of 1,000 UK office workers carried out by online household appliance retailer AppliancesDirect.co.uk. It revealed that, amongst other frustrations, 67% have had a falling out over kitchen cleanliness and washing up in the past 12 months. When faced with this, 15% have directly confronted a colleague, while 35% have sent a passive aggressive email or left a note. An unclean kitchen is just one of the many workplace issues that can annoy colleagues. What amazes me is how few people will address these issues directly – in this research more than double prefer to email / write. It's no wonder there are so many conflicts at work!

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

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## FIFA - Mediation in staff disputes



The website Insidefootball reports FIFA has engaged two Zurich- based independent external special-

ists to mediate in staff disputes from January 2017. (click [here](#)) A FIFA spokesperson confirmed that the mediators' mandate is to "work with employees of FIFA to explore and assist them in determining options to help resolve conflicts, problematic issues or concerns" as well as "to bring systemic concerns to the attention of the organisation for resolution". This high profile use of mediation will be interesting to watch to see how the mediators maintain impartiality, particularly when it appears they also have a role in flagging issues raised by employees... confidentiality?!

## Yorkshire Police Force brings in mediators to deal with complaints

Another innovative use of mediation, less high profile than FIFA but just as valid is West Yorkshire police using mediators to help with complaints made about its officers by the public (click [here](#)). A pilot scheme, supposedly one of the first of its type in the country, sees Leeds charity Yorkshire Mediation lead meetings between complainant and police officer in low-level cases. The West Yorkshire police and crime commissioner states "It is in the initial stages and we only have one successful example to talk about, however the mediation went well and the process has the full support of the Federation and buy-in from those involved, both the officer and the person making the complaint." Still early stages but it is clearly a positive step forward to offer another option in complaint cases.

Website: [www.mediation4.co.uk](http://www.mediation4.co.uk)

## Another one of those....

....did it have to come to this? This Telegraph article (click [here](#)) tells the story of the Finance Company Boss and the Bankers who have been at war over the width of parking spaces outside their multi-million pound converted church housing development in Hampstead. The dispute has racked up six-figure lawyer's bills at court with one side claiming each house has a right to a 7ft 8in wide space and the other a foot bigger at 8ft 8in with claims of trespass also being made. This case not only shows how a neighbour dispute can happen anywhere and to anybody but is a key example of how a 'minor' issue can escalate into a major battle which clogs up the courts. An early mediation solution could have saved everybody significant amounts of time and money.

## Your Colleague becomes your Boss is conflict inevitable?

My latest blog (click [here](#)) is based on a familiar scenario: Two team members get on well then one of them is promoted to be the other's



manager. Is conflict inevitable? Several cases I've been involved with have had this type of scenario. Typically the new working relationship starts off well with everyone 'being adult' about it. But fairly soon cracks begin to show and before long we are looking at a relationship conflict that is causing pain and damaging performance. My blog examines the impact on friends Andy and Jackie when Jackie is promoted to become Andy's boss. I also offer five tips for anybody facing this situation to help them avoid the pain and damage of conflict in the workplace.