



Conflict in the workplace

It is an inevitable part of working life that some form of conflict will occur. It can happen for a number of reasons and in some cases, no one may be at fault, it may just be a clash of personalities. Organisations can be adverse to dealing with conflict, often choosing to ignore the situation leading to a breakdown in relationships.

Potential problems if you fail to deal with conflicts

The liability that can arise from failing to deal with conflicts can be substantial. The key point to remember is if a conflict isn't resolved it can have a serious impact on your business and may lead to:

- Low moral
- Disruption of communication
- High turnover of staff
- Under performance
- Absenteeism
- Employment tribunal claims

The cost of conflict

It is not only the emotional cost of conflict that affects employees; it can be financially costly too. ACAS has calculated that the average cost to an employer of a conflict is £9,000. If the matter is taken to a tribunal this figure rises to £19,000.

How we can help

We can give guidance and support to help you deal with conflict in a timely, professional and fair manner through an informal or formal route.

Grievance Procedures: The informal stages should allow for early intervention where a conflict is identified.

Mediation: The ACAS guidelines suggest mediation as a way to resolve conflicts in the workplace. Businesses should consider mediation as a positive way of coming to a sensible, cost effective solution and which is often in place of a more formal grievance route if both parties agree. The conflict can be resolved; no one has to leave the business and it is cost effective in terms of the management of time, legal costs and the costs of finding a replacement employee.

Compromise Agreements: Alternatively, if mediation and/or a formal grievance procedure is not the route you wish to take, a compromise agreement may provide a solution. For more information please refer to our factsheet headed 'What is a Compromise Agreement and when should employers use them?'

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