

What is mediation?

Mediation is recognised as an informal, voluntary and confidential process of dispute resolution in which an impartial third party facilitates the parties in a dispute to find a resolution on which they both agree.

Why should organisations consider using mediation?

Mediation offers a safe, structured, effective and confidential process for participants to find their own solutions to a conflict — by providing the parties with an opportunity to express their feelings and concerns to the other party in a safe and non-threatening way; and by exploring the potential options before agreeing on a solution which meets both parties' needs.

The Stages of Mediation

Introductory meeting - getting to know each other

The process always commences with a 1½-2 hours 'introductory meeting' between the mediator and each of the individuals involved. This enables:

- Each individual to ask questions of the mediator, and learn everything that they need to know about the process before committing to proceed with the mediation;
- Each individual to evaluate whether the mediator is someone they believe they can trust and work with;
- The mediator to learn more about the situation and to make a professional assessment as to the suitability of mediation and appraise whether it could be an appropriate and useful means of seeking to resolve the issue between the two people.

Individual meetings

The individual meetings - the mediator meets each party separately initially:

- To explain and clarify to the parties the role of the mediator and the mediation process;
- To consider the various elements of the dispute and the impact on the individuals involved;
- To identify, through a process of active listening, the history of the situation as well as the participants' future needs and expectations;
- To discuss participant's goals for mediation

Joint Meetings

The joint mediation meeting is a carefully structured process which follows simple and effective guidelines. Entering into joint mediation meeting clearly symbolises commitment towards a positive and realistic outcome to the current situation.

The purpose of the joint meeting is:

- To establish a safe and structured environment where all participants involved in the dispute/conflict can meet each other and engage in open and honest dialogue;
- To evaluate all available options and ultimately to arrive at realistic, manageable and agreed outcomes;
- To develop an action plan and agreement about how best to work together and;
- To consider longer-term requirements and follow-up arrangements.