

West Sussex Mediation Service



Workplace Mediation Proposition



About Us

West Sussex Mediation Service (referred to as WSMS) has been in existence since 2000.

Our Mission is to prevent and resolve disputes between neighbours, within families and communities by providing advice, guidance and mediation services to people and organisations in West Sussex. To achieve this, we provide free mediation services to resolve intergenerational and community disputes, often in areas of low income or deprivation, funded through income earned from Family (pre-divorce), Civil and Workplace Mediation (which are offered at a competitive price point reflecting our charitable status).

Why choose WSMS?

- We have a wealth of experience in various types of mediation
- We have an excellent reputation and receive great testimonials from our clients
- Last year **95%** of cases that went to joint mediation reached a signed or verbal agreement.
- We have a genuine passion for our work and energetically promote mediation as a form of **Alternative Dispute Resolution**.
- We received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services in 2019 for our work
- As a registered charity, we are not profit driven using income from paid services to provide free mediation in the community

Our Workplace Mediation proposition

"Workplace conflicts cost employers £28.5bn a year. Another shocking figure is the number of people who resign each year from their job, due to a dispute at work = nearly half a million! In addition, 874,000 employees annually took sickness absences because of conflict at work, costing organisations around £2.2bn" (ACAS May 2021)

Workplace Mediation is a very cost-effective way of dealing with workplace grievances and conflict. There can be significant savings by using it as an early intervention tool.

Our **Workplace Mediation** service helps resolve disputes between colleagues at all levels on issues such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, personality clashes, management issues, perceived inequality and returning to work. Such disagreements lead to sickness and absence, high staff turnover, poor productivity, and low morale, resulting in reputational damage and bad publicity. We can help resolve all this with our impartial and non-judgmental mediators who have many years of experience in the field and who can empower the individuals concerned - all at very cost-effective rates.

WSMS has existing resources in place enabling us to provide an immediate response to any current needs. Our Mediators are willing and able to travel to your workplace, as appropriate, subject to the payment of travel expenses. We can also arrange suitable venues, away from the workplace, at additional cost.

We are fully conversant with video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Teams. It can suit some clients, save time and cost, but still achieve good outcomes. We would expect to complete most mediations within one day. It may sometimes be possible to resolve minor disputes within half a day.

WSMS can also offer ongoing in-house training to HR professionals, or others within the organisation, at a fee to be negotiated. This will incorporate mediation into their skill set, as part of their continuous professional development. It would be aimed at those whose job involves promoting a harmonious and mutually supportive work environment. It puts the tools used by a specialist mediator into their hands in the form of problem-solving interventions and negotiation skills. Whilst not replacing the impartiality and independence of an outside mediator, it might help prevent workplace disputes from escalating and give a greater understanding of the dynamics of conflict.

The process

- The mediator(s) will make initial phone contact with the parties involved and may liaise with the referrer.
- Arrangements are made for individual confidential meetings with each client. The mediator is likely to conduct a shorter follow up, having spoken to all those involved.
- A joint mediation session will then follow.
- The estimated timescale for this work is 1 full day and it is requested that the parties involved have no work commitments for that period.
- The mediator(s) will carry out follow up meetings with the parties 4-6 weeks post event to monitor effectiveness of the mediation.
- We are happy to provide phone/email support to those involved in the workplace mediation on an ongoing and confidential basis if required, upon negotiation.
- We can provide a full report and evaluation at the conclusion of each case, but this will respect each party's confidentiality.

In-house Training provision

Our trainer has been a workplace mediator since 1998. They carry out all initial and ongoing training and CPD, plus accreditation for mediators. Our trainer is both an Accredited Mediator and an Approved Training Centre with Laser Learning Southeast – part of the Open College Network (OCN).

They have a degree in education (Cert Ed FE) and train to Level 7 Postgraduate through the ILM. They also provide Management Training to both large organisations and SMEs and have worked with several Local Authorities, NHS Trusts and The British Dental Association. Our trainer has also been involved in the development of mediation practises within the Police force and supervised large teams within the service.

Our Mediators

We benefit from a strong pool of fully qualified and accredited workplace mediators. Unlike many other providers we can offer two mediators, if necessary, creating appropriate gender and demographic balance. This is at no extra cost to the client.

Biographies for our individual mediators are available upon request. They include HR professionals and mediators experienced in various fields of conflict resolution, all specialising in Workplace Mediation.

Fee Summary

WSMS is a Registered Charity (1084592) with low overheads and can therefore offer competitive rates.

WSMS is not VAT registered. (Our earned income is below the tax threshold).

Our rates are set out below:

Full Day - £500

Half Day – £300

Admin/Arrangement Fee - if the case does not proceed through no fault of WSMS, but costs to our service have been incurred - £100.

Payment terms – within 14 days of the mediation taking place.

Fees do not include expenses such as room hire, travel costs, catering and other out of pocket expenses which we may incur in connection with the case, and these will be charged in addition to the above on a basis to recover our costs in this regard only.

Referral procedure

Referrals can be made via the form on our website - <https://wsms.org.uk/referral-form/>. Contact details of clients can include personal, as well as work telephone numbers/emails, to aid confidential contact, with their approval. An alternative to the above is a word

document referral form which can be emailed to us (copy available on request). We will also take details over the phone, if necessary, or from an email to support@wsms.org.uk.

Case studies

Case 1

This involved two administrative co-workers of a large health related organisation. WSMS were originally contacted due to a dispute between the co-workers over the allocation of working hours. The bad feeling extended to others within the workplace, where sides had been taken, with remarks made creating an unpleasant atmosphere for all concerned. One of the parties involved had taken sick leave due to associated stress and both co-workers were considering leaving their jobs. Both were experienced and valuable members of the team.

WSMS conducted a structured workplace mediation session, commencing with a meeting with each party separately, a short break, and then two further individual meetings of short duration to finalise an agenda, then lastly, a joint meeting. This final meeting resulted in a joint written agreement outlining a way forward. The parties involved were quite emotional at times but left the venue with their arms around each other's shoulders.

Case 2

WSMS had been asked to assist in a case where an official complaint had been made by an employee about a colleague who had made homophobic comments about them, which had allegedly been overheard by other colleagues. This matter was thoroughly investigated by the organisation and not upheld. However, further issues existed between the employee and the line manager surrounding the level and nature of challenge experienced by the line manager from the employee. The employee was said to have felt that they could do the line managers job better, owing to the line manager having a shorter length of service with the organisation, and being 15 years their junior.

The line manager was extremely busy managing a team of 23 employees across two sites. The employee however had claimed to be bored and underutilised. They also claimed that their ideas were not listened to and that the line manager became defensive when questioned.

Following implementation by WSMS of the structured workplace mediation process, both parties were able to reach agreement on four constructive points during the joint meeting stage and were keen to improve the way things were done and to improve their working relationship positively going forward.

Testimonials

“We had excellent feedback regarding the service you provided us and would be grateful if you could undertake another mediation session with two individuals within the organisation”

“a brilliant service – keep up the good work”

“I was always told ‘stick to the process and eventually it will work’ and it does! How I don’t know – it’s magic!”

“I was extremely impressed by the conduct of the mediators and the professional way in which they chaired the meeting”

“Everything is going well now. Airing the matter in a controlled environment certainly did the trick”

“Thank you once again for the support in helping us resolve our differences so painlessly”