



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 there are reports of rather alarming workplace culture and behaviours in two of our major public services, the NHS and HMRC. In addition I've featured a great short video that the BBC has produced on how to work effectively with someone who you don't get on with.

**Marc Reid**

### Employment Tribunals may be delayed till 2020



In my last News and Views Letter I reported on the most recent case numbers for Employment Tribunals and how the removal of fees had led to a dramatic increase in referrals. In this article (click [here](#)) in People Management, employment law firms report how the tribunal service is really struggling to cope with the additional caseload. The article highlights that recruitment to replace staff reductions incurred when fees were introduced has so far failed to provide the staff needed. Consequently tribunal hearings are delayed for many months, and potentially more than a year as in the case of Croydon. The situation is unlikely to change in the near future, therefore looking at alternatives makes absolute sense. One of the major advantages of workplace mediation is the speed. A mediation can be set up and completed within days saving time and money for the employer and saving stress for the employee.

### Survey reveals worrying levels of bullying in NHS

We are fortunate in the UK to have a widely respected and expert health service. So it is worrying to hear the results of the annual NHS Staff Survey, as reported in People Management (click [here](#)). Results indicate that more than 1 in 4 staff have experienced bullying, harassment or abuse from another member of staff in the past 12 months, and an increase over the previous year. The proposed answer is to drive an improved culture but given the increasing demands being placed on the NHS, is this area likely to be high priority? I fear not. I would argue that much can be done with some basic skills training for employees, particularly around having difficult conversations. If employees were competent and confident to have these difficult conversations much conflict could be nipped in the bud.

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

**Tel: 07870 444444**

**Email: [enquiry@mediation4.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@mediation4.co.uk)**

## Abusive environment at HMRC

On the front page I reported on a worrying survey of the NHS. This article in Civil Service World (click [here](#)) reports on what appears to be another unacceptable working environment, this time HMRC. The article refers to an extensive report into the HMRC workplace culture. Some of the findings are truly frightening. In particular the author did not find a single person who had confidence in the grievance process. The report (which is available in full on gov.uk) provides several recommendations. Of particular relevance is the call for an urgent redesign of the grievance process which should include more widespread and robust use of mediation. Let's hope HMRC management act rapidly in the wake of this alarming report and address the many failings identified.

## 3 case studies, 3 benefits



In my latest blog (click [here](#)) I picked three of my mediation cases as examples of three of the key benefits of using workplace mediation. The three benefits I highlight are:

- speed of the process, meaning the situation can be rapidly addressed and resolved,
- that mediation addresses underlying issues, thus giving a sustainable resolution,
- and that participants determine the outcome themselves without someone else telling them what they have to do

By using the case studies I've tried to show how these benefits work in practice rather than just in theory.

**Our latest book '8 Stages of Workplace Conflict— and how best to resolve each stage' is still available to download for free from our website. Just go to [www.mediation4.co.uk](http://www.mediation4.co.uk) and click on the download link.**

## BBC video highlights how to get on with people at work

 It's great to see the BBC has put out this short video on getting on with people at work under their 'BBC Ideas' brand (click [here](#)). It's less than 5 minutes long and manages to pack in some excellent advice about workplace relationships. The title is rather provocative, referring to getting on 'with someone you hate at work', but the content is spot on. It is delivered in clear simple points by an ACAS mediator and an executive coach. Tips include very sensible suggestions around having a difficult conversation rather than avoiding it, not making assumptions, and checking how the other person sees things. So if you want some free, quick training, show this video to all your employees!

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

## Potential for workplace intergenerational conflict

There are many reasons why conflict can arise in the workplace. Differing workstyles, clash of personalities, misunderstandings and miscommunication are some of the typical scenarios that can lead to conflict. But what about generational differences? This article on the World Economic Forum website (click [here](#)) suggests that we need to be 'generationally intelligent' to be able to work effectively with colleagues from different generations. Personally I don't like the generational labels. The labels generalise too much so I'd rather people considered how others may have different values from themselves which could lead to conflict. This could be from generational differences, but could be a wide variety of other differences.