

BERR

Department for Business
Enterprise & Regulatory Reform

**RESOLVING DISPUTES IN THE
WORKPLACE – A NEW FRAMEWORK**

acas



...a simpler and less prescriptive system...

...new system has the potential to save business thousands of pounds...

...your organisation and its employees will have greater flexibility...

...saving the time, expense, and stress of employment tribunals...


...problems at work are resolved at work...



Did you know that the way in which your organisation deals with disputes at work will change from April 2009?

Subject to the completion of the parliamentary process, the existing law dealing with disputes at work will be replaced by a simpler and less prescriptive system. It will no longer be essential to follow the existing 3-step procedure for dealing with discipline and grievance issues.

However, your organisation will still be expected to act reasonably when dealing with a discipline and grievance issue. Acas, the employment relations service, will produce a new Code of Practice and further guidance for employees and employers. This will explain the principles of good practice when there is a problem at work. Employees and employers will be expected to comply with the new Acas Code and if they do not, employment tribunals will be able to apply financial penalties.



The new system has the potential to save businesses thousands of pounds. Complying with the current dispute resolution legislation costs UK businesses nearly £175m every year. Simply dealing with the paperwork for employment tribunal claims costs businesses on average £2,000 per claim.

Under the new system, your organisation and its employees will have greater flexibility to resolve problems at an early stage – saving the time, expense, and stress of employment tribunals.

The Government will provide additional help for your organisation and its employees to navigate the new system. The Government is investing up to £37m in additional resources for Acas to provide an enhanced helpline with extended opening hours and to offer employees and employers early conciliation for problems which are potential employment tribunal claims.

Is your organisation ready for the changes in April?

If your organisation's current mechanisms for dealing with disputes at work comply with existing law, they will also be compliant with the law under the new system.

However, the changes being made present a real opportunity for your organisation to review its existing procedures to ensure that, wherever possible, problems are resolved at work, and not in an employment tribunal. That may mean your organisation needs to think about the training of managers – from the first line all the way to the top – so that they are equipped to avoid or resolve problems at work as early as possible.

For more information on employment matters, please visit

www.businesslink.gov.uk/employingpeople

For more information on how to resolve a dispute at work, please visit

www.acas.org.uk

