



Regional mediation pilot schemes up and running as part of employment tribunal reforms

David Woods, JUNE 21, 2012



The latest steps in reforms to the employment tribunal system were unveiled by Employment Relations Minister Norman Lamb (pictured) yesterday, with the appointment of the Regional Mediation Network pilot scheme provider.

Consensio, a member of the Civil Mediation Council, is to develop and provide a comprehensive mediation-training package for a group of SMEs in both Cambridge and Manchester over the coming months.

It was announced earlier this year that these are the first regions, where the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills will fund mediation training for employees from a group of 24 SMEs to set up pilot networks of trained mediators.

These mediators will be available to provide mediation to other organisations in their respective network. It is anticipated that this will help resolve workplace disputes, at the earliest possible opportunity, before they reach the employment tribunal stage.

Lamb said: "We know that sometimes workplace disputes are unavoidable and that those involved see no alternative to the employment tribunal to resolve the issue. We want to promote alternative resolution options, and we are committed to encouraging parties to find other ways of resolving their problems. The use of mediation is one such way and this is why in January we announced the BIS Regional Mediation initiative.

"This initiative will give small businesses in Manchester and Cambridge the opportunity to experience mediation and discover the benefits it can bring for the first time. I am pleased to announce that Consensio will work with BIS to take forward this work, delivering accredited workplace mediation training to the members of each network."

Co-founder of Consensio, Anna Shields added: "We are delighted to be working in partnership with Government to deliver these pioneering pilot schemes. This will be an intensive programme across two commercially significant regions. We will work hand-in-hand with BIS from the outset on all aspects of the scheme to ensure this is a successful pilot."

Businesses can get involved in the pilot by attending one of the awareness raising seminars in Manchester on 26 June (Renaissance Manchester City Centre Hotel) and Cambridge on 2 July (Møller Centre).

The intention to pilot two regional mediation networks was published in the Government response to the Resolving Workplace Disputes consultation in November 2011. The pilots will run for 12 months and, if successful, the Government will consider introducing them into other areas of England, Scotland and Wales.