

## **CASE STUDY**

*An outline of the mediation and facilitation process devised by Homer Creative to harmonise working practices between union representatives and the HR Department at Birmingham Healthcare Trust*

### **Introduction**

**An all too common impasse arose at the Birmingham Healthcare Trust between staff union representatives and the hospital's HR Department.**

Feelings of misunderstanding and mistrust between the two parties could only realistically be addressed by appointing an impartial third party mediator.

The vast experience and skills of Homer Creative in group working and facilitation were already known to the Trust. It was therefore decided to appoint them to help both sides reach a mutually beneficial outcome.

## **The Action Plan**

The high level consultancy work instigated by Homer Creative involved a programme of interviews with key members of both teams in order to create a practical 'mediation model'. This was complemented by the innovative introduction of three 'Away Days' into the mediation mix.

Representatives from both sides of the Healthcare Trust therefore had the opportunity to express the feelings and issues that were standing in the way of a solution. The interactive 'Away Days' resulted in some powerful insights being gained by individuals from both sides as they began to understand the pressures their counterparts had to face.

## **The Clear Aims of Homer Creative**

It was important from the outset that Homer Creative set out clearly the main aims of the mediation process. An essential starting point was to highlight the main difference between the two parties. The obverse of this was to find ways of clearly communicating and optimising the chances of an amicable outcome.

An illustration of this is where it became clear to participants in the mediation process that misunderstandings had arisen because each side had not fully understood the roles and responsibilities of their opposite numbers. What had previously looked like 'ill will' was now seen as a natural and reasonable response to functional demands.

**This new set of perspectives allowed Homer Creative to complete the facilitation by working successfully with the participants to draw up an agreed set of protocols for future interaction between the two groups. Brian Homer – Managing Director at Homer Creative – was delighted by the feedback received from everyone involved:**

*“Both parties have told us they found the sessions very helpful,” said Brian. “It’s good to know that working relationships have been totally transformed at both an individual and collective level.”*

**The Homer Creative team working on this project included Brian Homer and senior associates Dr Jan Walmsley and Chris Stagg. More information about the company’s expertise in this and related fields can be found on the [About Us](#) page (**create link**) of this website.**

**Birmingham Healthcare Trust  
(Address & contact details)**

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