

20 March 2020

Collective Conciliation Service Interim Delivery Arrangements

1. In line with existing public health advice and the Agency's consequent decision to restrict all face-to-face contact between staff and service users it has been necessary to rethink the practical arrangements governing delivery of the Collective Conciliation Service.
2. Until further notice the Agency will not convene any meetings amongst parties involved in a trade dispute.
3. The Agency will however seek to agree, where possible, alternative arrangements with the parties which might assist in facilitating some form of dialogue in an effort to resolve the dispute.
4. This will include the use of any secure technology available to the participants for example by telephone, email or video (skype) calling/conferencing.
5. Officers will continue to be mindful of the need to maintain confidentiality and information security in delivering the Collective Conciliation Service and will take advice as appropriate from the ICT Manager in using any alternative technology to conduct collective conciliation work.
6. The Agency will not encourage the respective parties to act in a manner which would run contrary to existing public health advice for example by grouping together as either management or trade union sides or breaching social distancing guidance.
7. It is therefore recommended that a lead representative is identified (for both management and TU sides) to act as a single point of contact when using telephone or skype facilities.
8. In order to speed up the opening stage of the process the respective parties will each be asked to make an initial brief written (email) submission (or response) highlighting their perspective on any issues in dispute (and proposed remedies where known).

9. This initial submission should be prepared on the basis that it will be shared amongst all involved and the parties should be asked to positively indicate permission to share it on that basis.

10. The Agency will sequence the conciliation exercise itself in a manner which allows each of the parties to properly consult and develop consensus amongst its own stakeholder group, and which also takes account of the need to use alternative methods other than face-to-face contact.

11. This may involve scheduling of video/telephone calls for specific times in the day (allowing sufficient breaks in between for discussions) or scheduling over successive days. The Officer facilitating the conciliation will manage sequencing in conjunction with the respective parties.

12. These arrangements will be maintained under review in light of emerging advice and the Agency's ongoing response to the Coronavirus outbreak.