

Quick Guide: Positive mini-disciplinaries (1)

Having to conduct a mini-disciplinary meeting (timekeeping, absences, minor conduct or behaviour issues etc) can fill managers and supervisors with dread. But remember that whatever the situation, if it cannot be resolved now, it will likely have to move towards a formal disciplinary. In part 2, we will look at how to give the feedback, but in the meantime, here are the **top ten tips** to help you to prepare for and conduct the meeting.

- 1. Remember the purpose of the meeting** is to inform and correct unacceptable behaviour or performance and prevent it from happening again. This isn't about "telling off" or issuing formal warnings!
- 2. Gather your facts** so you do not prejudice the issue. For example if you think someone has been late "frequently", don't rely on your memory: know when and by how much they are late on each occasion.
- 3. Check your firm's disciplinary procedure.** Should a representative be involved? Can the employee be accompanied by a colleague or other person? Is the employee aware of the process?
- 4. Clarify what actions or options are available to you**, if you are unsure, with the HR Department.
- 5.** During the meeting, **identify the "gap"** between the expectation (standards) and what has been achieved (for example lateness). Ask them why this gap exists and encourage them to talk and to give a full explanation.
- 6. Listen closely** and make notes of what the team member says. Try not to hide your notes.
- 7. Move towards the future** and get agreement on how to bring this performance back to the standard, including a time period over which to do it. Encourage the team member to make suggestions for improvement as they will be more readily adopted.
- 8. Offer help where this is possible**, or a "trial" period for a particular solution. Remember, too, to tell them what the consequences will be if the standards are not eventually met and maintained.
- 9. Set an agreed review date** for the purpose of monitoring progress, finding another solution if this one isn't working, or praising the team member for their efforts to make the changes.
- 10. Record the meeting, and monitor the situation**, checking that help is given as promised or agreed. Remember to encourage and praise improvements.

Compiled by Des Whitehorn