



CASE STUDY

Local Authority

"One of my more important and sizeable teams developed significant problems after a change programme. Julian Evans worked with me and my subordinate line-managers, coaching us on the issues of greatest concern, our own management style, and covering options for resolution. Simultaneously, he facilitated discussions within the team, both with individuals and in groups, to get a better understanding of the issues and a way forward was established through his mediation over a period of time. I was most impressed by Julian's ability to engage with and gain the trust of everyone, in a highly charged atmosphere! His objectivity, friendly challenge and practical creativity, coupled with his calmness, patience and ability to handle emotions enabled us to turn the situation around and head towards success."

Head of Service

The local authority is based in one of the Home Counties around London. The team in question was critical to the smooth running of the entire authority. The problems resulted from a change programme which went wrong.

The major issues facing this team in the authority were:

- The supervisor for a key customer-facing team was promoted to this position for which she was not especially well suited – in terms of good people management and performance management skills.
- The team was declining in performance and became dysfunctional.
- The line managers (above the supervisor) all the way up to head of service reacted to the developing situation in a 'hard' way which caused the customer-facing team to react badly and get demotivated.
- A downward spiral of events ensued leading to deadlock, greater stress and sickness absence and an inability for either side to deal with the issues in a constructive way.

Results:

- The head of service and line managers below were coached in how to manage their staff in a more helpful way, avoiding destructive conflict and enhancing performance in a collaborative way.
- A revised and more suitable role for the supervisor was negotiated – this was a relief to the person concerned as well as the team and line managers.
- Mediation resulted in the customer-facing team and management having better understandings of what each other needed which gave rise to slightly modified roles, working practices and attitudes.
- The combined effect of all these interventions was better morale, less stress and sickness absence and higher productivity.

Julian Evans, Mediator