



Organising the Venue

The choice of a suitable venue for a mediation or course can make a significant difference to the success of the day. The parties need to be in comfortable surroundings with good facilities and refreshments provided throughout the day.

- Private and separate rooms are required for each of the parties and usually one larger room, sufficient in size to accommodate all attending, is also required. Care needs to be taken that the rooms are of sufficient size for the party's team, together with the mediator and any assistant. However, it should be noted that if rooms are too large for the numbers attending, it can be difficult to create a relaxed and confidential atmosphere. Points to consider:
 - Internal rooms with no outside light can be less suitable for a whole day;
 - Adjacent rooms may not be appropriate unless there is good soundproofing between the rooms. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate, if possible, to accommodate parties on different floors to minimise the chances of accidental meetings.
- Flexibility at the end of the day is essential. It is not uncommon for mediations to last beyond normal office hours and the venue should allow parties to remain there until, at least, the early evening.
- Flipcharts should be available in each of the rooms. Photocopying facilities will often be needed and it may be necessary to have printing facilities especially later in the day if a Resolution Agreement or Heads of Agreement are prepared.
- Tea and coffee and fruit juice should be available on arrival in the private rooms and at regular intervals during the day. Water should be available throughout the day in all rooms.
- Lunch should be provided for all attending, including the mediator and assistant. Normally, lunch is taken in the private rooms and the mediator works with the parties during lunch. Given that mediations may run into the early evening some provision for food later in the day is also helpful. It may not be necessary to have this pre-ordered provided there is somewhere nearby where food can be obtained.
- Any special requirements of those attending will need to be considered. These may include dietary requirements and appropriate access to the building.