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# **Employment Relations in MOD and the use of Formal Disagreements**

An update on formal disagreements and its role in employee relations.

As the legal representatives of all members of staff, PCS and other trade unions (TU) are at the heart of good employment relations where PCS and the MOD working together can deliver better outcomes when staff are impacted by change initiatives.

The most successful and effective engagements with the TUs happen when conversations start early, when management are clear on what they are trying to achieve but have not made final decisions and give TU colleagues the opportunity to fully understand the proposal, engage with employees in scope of the proposal and contribute their views.

Regular information sharing, embargoed as necessary, can enable understanding, create relationships built on trust and support meaningful engagement. Information sharing may be a precursor to more formal consultation or negotiation.

PCS's experience is that information-rich, meaningful engagement in some areas of MOD works very well, where our union's experience understands and supports taking people through the change agenda.

Our experience also includes dealing with areas in MOD where engagement with our union is seen as a barrier to be got around. This usually happens because of a lack of shared information to enable our union to space and influence decisions before they are made; and reach for those better outcomes where policy and process are applied correctly to those members of staff impacted by change.

Moving to a Formal Disagreement is a serious step under employment relations and only undertaken by PCS as a last resort.

The employment relations policy says that a formal disagreement can only be raised in certain circumstances, under the premise of failure to engage and

consult meaningfully

- A failure in the engagement and consultation process, where the TUs believe they have not been provided with sufficient information or time to allow them to reach a view on a proposal, or their responses / counter proposals to an engagement have not been adequately responded to by management.
- A failure in the engagement and consultation process, where the TUs believe they have not been provided with sufficient information by DBS and Civ HR or time to resolve their belief that the proposals are not policy compliant allowing them to avoid going to FD, by addressing our concerns.
- Action by management in the pursuit of a proposal that the TUs believe will cause detriment for their members.

Formal disagreements are a last resort, but occasionally our union has to raise them to protect not only our members but all members of staff impacted by a change proposal.