



## How TCM helped Simplyhealth

*“It opened my eyes to the benefits of mediation and how you could use it as a first resort rather than a last resort.”*

With 140 years in business and 3 million customers, Simplyhealth has amassed an extraordinary wealth of expertise in the health insurance industry. It is an organisation committed to constantly evolving to improve the way it does business. And it applies the same principle to its internal structures.

Angela Presland, HR Employee Resourcing and Relations Manager at Simplyhealth, found that although the organisation’s employee relations were very good, there was still room for some fine tuning. Having attended a TCM course on mediation, Angela began to think that Simplyhealth could benefit from what she had learned,

*“It opened my eyes to the benefits of mediation and how you could use it as a first resort rather than a last resort.”*

The grievance procedure at Simplyhealth was a traditional system. And although Simplyhealth had a low number of formal grievances each case took up an average of 57 man hours to resolve, a total of around 1,000 man hours each year.

Angela recognised that a change would be beneficial and found that throughout the organisation people felt the same. Angela oversaw the development of a mediation-based framework known as the Resolving Issues at Work Policy (RIAW) to replace the grievance procedure. This new policy encourages those experiencing problems to focus on resolution and if mediation is necessary, come together in a supportive

environment to find their own solutions with the help of specially trained staff within the company.

The new policy was launched at the start of 2015 and Angela Presland says the effect has been immediate:

*“Only one case has reached a formal stage since we launched the policy. It is now a much more engaging, much friendlier process. We have seen much less of the normal loss of engagement and loss of productivity during disputes this year.”*

And she says the financial cost of resolving conflict is now a *“tiny proportion”* of what it used to be:

*“In terms of cost, this is a no-brainer for us.”*

And while dramatically lower costs are an attractive benefit for the company, it is the positive human impact that is perhaps even more powerful. Angela Presland says:

*“It helps people to take responsibility for working with us to resolve their own issues. I have had one person who took part in mediation tell me that she felt able to say things that she never thought she’d be able to express. And that’s what I’m hearing from managers too; they tell me people are able to open up in ways they have rarely seen before during employee disputes, and issues are resolved much more quickly and much more satisfactorily for all parties.”*