

## A new shape of lawyer

**I have a member of staff whose mood can be very erratic. They tend to be quick-tempered and rude to colleagues and I'm not quite sure how I should approach the problem. What would you suggest I do?**



Simon Crack

**Every now and then a business may find it has to deal with an employee whose behaviour in the workplace is causing problems.**

While all of us might be grumpy or irritable now and then, if a member of staff is continually causing problems it can upset other members of the team, create a bad atmosphere in the workplace and generally create difficulties for your business. In these circumstances it is important to take steps to resolve the issue, even though it can be a delicate issue to tackle.

You should first arrange an informal meeting to discuss the situation. Before the meeting takes place you should gather details of the problem, including examples of inappropriate behaviour and a clear explanation of the problems that this is causing.

It is also important to approach this meeting in a measured way. Make clear that while you have concerns about the person's behaviour, you are also interested in their welfare and ask if there are any problems that you need to be aware of.

It may well be that there is an underlying reason for the employee's behaviour, particularly if they had previously been even-tempered and easy to deal with.

If there is an explanation, such as difficulties at home, an illness, a problem with a colleague or an excessive workload, then you can obviously look at ways you might be able to help.

If the individual denies that there is a problem, discuss with them the specific examples you have listed.

While it is important to give an employee a chance to improve their behaviour, you should also remind them that if the situation **doesn't** change then you will have to consider the option of disciplinary action.

If you would like advice please call Hethertons employment team on **01904 528 200** and speak to Jo Yeates or David Scott. Alternatively, email [jy@hethertons.co.uk](mailto:jy@hethertons.co.uk) or [ds@hethertons.co.uk](mailto:ds@hethertons.co.uk)