

Questions to ask when engaging with a client/supplier around working mindfully

The most important thing about a conversation with a client/supplier around working mindfully is that you are having the conversation in the first place. How the conversation goes after that will have its own ebb and flow. It will also depend on the context – is this the start of a relationship with no immediate work in mind, have you worked together in the past, is there an immediate and pressing project, are you thinking about occasional ad hoc work etc. The following are some things you might want to think about to include in the conversation depending on the circumstances:

- Is the other organisation an MBC signatory – if not is there scope to introduce it to them? We have other material to help you with that – see MBC resources in the members area of the website.
- What team members are going to be involved from either side, what are their roles, their working patterns, any leave coming up and anything you know about communication preferences?
- Would it be sensible to arrange a meeting of the teams so they can get to know each other and talk about some of this with each other?
- Do either of you have work allocation protocols that you would like the other to observe?
- Do either of you have internal working hours and other relevant protocols/codes of conduct it would be helpful to share?
- If a particular project is involved, how important is it to each of you – what are your expectations of how the other team will work? What would you like that other team to know about your expectations and also what do you want the other team to know about what you expect of your team?
- How, and how often, will you meet to discuss how things are going, give and receive feedback etc? Consider making a formal commitment to each other about doing this honestly and respectfully.
- What communication methods are your teams going to use?
- What are the expectations in terms of responsiveness and picking things up out of hours?
- How should people be contacted if they are needed out of hours?
- What are your respective expectations around working at the weekend and on holiday – personally and in respect of your teams?
- What arrangements do you put in place in your team to cover holidays and how can the other team best work with that?
- Would it help to discuss meeting protocols - 50 mins not an hour, only inviting those who need to attend, can there be sub-meetings for subject matter experts on particular points etc?
- Do you want to agree any particular approach for instructions to be given and received – consider the checklist for instruction/delegation for things this might include?

