

How to Handle Difficult Staff



Strategic Success. Delivered.

Without Tribunal Risk

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Every Instinct Says Deal With It. Every Worry Says Be Careful.

A team member keeps missing deadlines. Another pushes back on every new system.

One wrong conversation could turn a performance issue into something far more serious.

Avoiding it altogether rarely stays safer for long.

What Actually Creates Tribunal Risk

Inconsistency

Treating similar behaviour differently depending on who is involved.

Poor Documentation

A conversation that happened but was never written down.

A Rushed Decision

Moving straight to a final warning without a fair process first.

Punishing a Complaint

Rather than looking into the concern that was actually raised.

The Conversation Scripts That Keep Things Constructive

"That won't work."

becomes → "I see it differently, can I share why?"

"Just do what I asked."

becomes → "Help me understand your concern."

"This is unacceptable."

becomes → "What got in the way, and how do we fix it?"

When the Issue Is Genuinely Serious

This guide covers the everyday leadership side of a difficult situation.

It does not replace formal HR or employment law advice, and is not intended to.

Bring in a qualified HR adviser or employment solicitor before a formal process begins, not after.

DWB does not provide legal advice.

We offer the leadership
groundwork underneath it.



Where to Start This Week

1

Write down specifically what is happening

Rather than a vague impression of someone being difficult.

2

Have the conversation this week

Using the language covered above.

3

Make a brief written note straight afterwards

While it's still fresh.

Handle It With Confidence

If you want structured support handling this kind of conversation, book a practice coaching call with DWB.

Book a Practice Coaching Call with DWB

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