



# Mediation BUCKS

Annual Report 2016/17

Designed with

RIDGE



## Overview

Mediation Buckinghamshire provides community mediation services operating in Buckinghamshire and adjacent counties. We seek to help people involved in disputes by facilitating discussions that allow the parties to reach their own agreements. Mediation empowers people to take control of the issues and to find solutions.

Our volunteer mediators are all qualified and provide their time freely to support the community.

Traditionally most of our income to pay for our overheads has come from local authority/community housing grants. Unlike many not-for-profit charitable organisations, our funders have continued to support us and use our services. However we are not complacent and are continually looking for new sources of income.

## Our Support for the Community

Our case workload in the year which is the benchmark of our support to the community has been as follows:

- 144 cases were received.
- Contact was made with the referrer in all cases.
- In 79% of the cases our volunteer mediators visited one or more of the parties.
- Where joint meetings were held, 63% resulted in an agreement being reached.
- Our mediators contributed a total of over 1,450 voluntary hours of service.

## Testimonials

We have received the following testimonials from people using our service:

*"I have nothing but praise for the service received from Mediation Bucks. I would give full marks on every issue Aylene and Andy who were officials at the meeting were absolutely excellent."*

*"Service is excellent. Appreciate such a service offered. Makes a difference in the community. Thank you for your time spent."*

*"Thank you very much [to the mediators] for explaining the mediation process and for their patience in listening to our concerns."*

*"The ladies were lovely and I thank them for their time and patience."*

*"They were both professional and helpful in all meetings and conversations we had with them."*

*"I am very grateful for the help you have offered and feel reassured there are good people out there who want to help others."*

*"Although my neighbour still has the same attitude, I am trying to change mine."*

*"Thank you so much. Dispute has been resolved without need for meeting."*

*"Thank you for all you did."*

## Highlights of The Year

Feedback from our referrers shows that in 83% of the cases referred, the referrer never heard from the complainants again – see 3.2

In September 2016 we completely redecorated the offices, bought new furniture and replaced the two main PCs. Many thanks to Becky Loughran for her interior design expertise. We now have a working environment that is both refreshing and inspiring.

## Moving Forward

We realise that the prevailing economic climate is still difficult and that we must continue to be prudent. However we are determined to meet our aims of making mediation available to all the residents of Buckinghamshire who find themselves in conflict of one form or another. To this end we are focussed on expanding the support that we provide to the community. We are also delighted to have a new trustee, Trish Tomkyns, who is already bringing positive ideas to take Mediation Buckinghamshire forward.

## Funding

We have continued to enjoy the support of our funders and in addition we have earned over £2,700 from fee paying mediation which represents 7% of our total income.

## Our Appreciation

We would like to thank our staff, volunteers, past and present, and our supervising mediator Denis for their hard work and contributions. We would also like to thank our funders for their continued financial support and commitment to the work that we do in support of the community.

## The Trustees

The trustees who held office during the year were as follows:

- Kevin McKee (Chairman)
- John Elliot
- Rita Jackson
- Rebecca Loughran
- Jo Loftus
- Trish Tomkyns (from 16 May 2016)

## Our staff

During 2016-17 there were 2 part time staff who were employed for a total of 33 hours per week. They were: Henza Cruz, Sharon Edwards (to May 2016) and Helen Sendall (from July 2016).

The Trustees have delegated the day to day management of the charity to John Elliot, trustee, who does not receive any remuneration.

## Our Volunteers

In 2016-17 a total of 38 volunteer mediators were actively involved with the service. These volunteers were:

Alan, Amanda, Andy, Anna, Annie, Antony, Aylene, Carrie, Cate, Eileen, Greta, Harriet, Helen, Henza, Janet, Jeremy, John, Karen, Lin, Lisa, Louise, Marten, Mike, Naseem, Pam, Philmore, Rachael, Rajiv, Rebecca, Rita, Robin, Stephanie, Stephen, Stig, Sue, Terry, Tony and Yvonne.

## Aims and Organisation

### Who We Are

We are a charitable not-for-profit organisation that cares about our community and which has the capability to play a valuable role in resolving issues and disputes and, thereby, to assist in creating a better environment for people to live and work. The following key statements help to define us and the service that we provide:

- Mediation is a flexible process of resolving disputes in which the mediator or mediators act in a neutral capacity to assist the parties involved to identify the issues; to clarify misunderstandings; to explore solutions; and to negotiate an agreement.
- Our Aim is to help people in the community to resolve their disputes through respectful communication and listening in order to achieve better understanding and solutions.

Our Core Values that guide the way that we work together and with our community can be summarised by the following key words:

- Respect
- Co-operation
- Open mindedness
- Integrity

We operate by providing trained and accredited volunteer mediators who are organised and overseen by a small team of staff members with direction and governance provided by a board of trustees.

Our unique selling points are that:

- We are a local community based service
- Our mediators work in pairs
- We can help people to achieve their own solutions
- Our community mediation is free at the point of delivery
- We are a not for profit organisation
- In the commercial sector, our volunteer mediators have broad professional and industry expertise.

## Public Benefit

We believe that it is everybody's right to live peacefully with their family and neighbours. The stress that is caused by disputes is real and should not be underestimated. Our clients and referrers tell us that mediation is an effective way of resolving disputes and as such provides a public benefit to the residents of Buckinghamshire.

In addition the trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty of Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. The charitable purpose for the charity within the meaning of the Act is enshrined within its objects as stated above.

# What We Do

## Our Services and Who Uses Them

The following Table briefly identifies the services that we provide together with typical users and referrers of the services, a fuller description of the services is then provided. We are able to develop these services to suit particular needs where our communication skills can be of value providing that these accord with our Aims and Core Values.

Mediation Service	Typical Users of Service	Typical Referrers
Community Mediation	Neighbours, members of the community	Self-referrals, local authorities, housing providers, police
Room to Talk	Family members	GPs, school pastoral care, social care, parents
Workplace mediation	Organisations employing staff	HR departments
Civil Mediation	Individuals and/or businesses with a contractual relationship	Solicitors, parties to a contract, professional bodies (e.g. RICS, CI Arb)
Restorative Justice	Victims and offenders	Youth Offending Service, police
Mediation Awareness	Organisations wishing to gain knowledge of what mediation can achieve and when to use it	Local authorities, housing providers, universities

## Community Mediation

Communities can use our independent service to resolve neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour issues. We seek to provide this service free at the point of delivery. Cases can be self-referred or referred through other agencies such as local authorities, housing providers or the police.

The following scenarios are typical:

- Breakdown of communication
- Noisy behaviour
- Inconsiderate parking
- Disagreements about fences, hedges and boundaries
- Rubbish or nuisance caused by pets



- Children and teenagers' difficult or anti-social behaviour
- Shared space or access
- Verbal abuse, intimidation and harassment

## Family Mediation

Where there is tension within a family and a young person is thinking of leaving home, or maybe has already left on bad terms, our Room to Talk service can help family members by enabling them to talk and to listen to each other. It can be used if young people are:

- Experiencing problems at home
- Not sure where to go
- Worried about the future
- Finding it difficult to express themselves
- Feeling that no one is listening.

## Workplace Mediation

Workplace Mediation is available to managers, employers, HR departments and businesses to resolve differences among work colleagues without resorting to industrial legislation in the first instance. By engaging in mediation, businesses are able to save both time and money. Participation in this process often results in improved employee satisfaction and increased productivity.

## Civil Mediation

In commercial relationships, mediation offers a fast, effective and less stressful way of resolving disputes that might otherwise end up in court. Government policy is to encourage alternative forms of dispute resolution. Civil mediation is an independent method of resolving contract disputes by enabling the disputants working with trained mediators to make their own agreement rather than having one imposed on them in a court.

## Restorative Justice

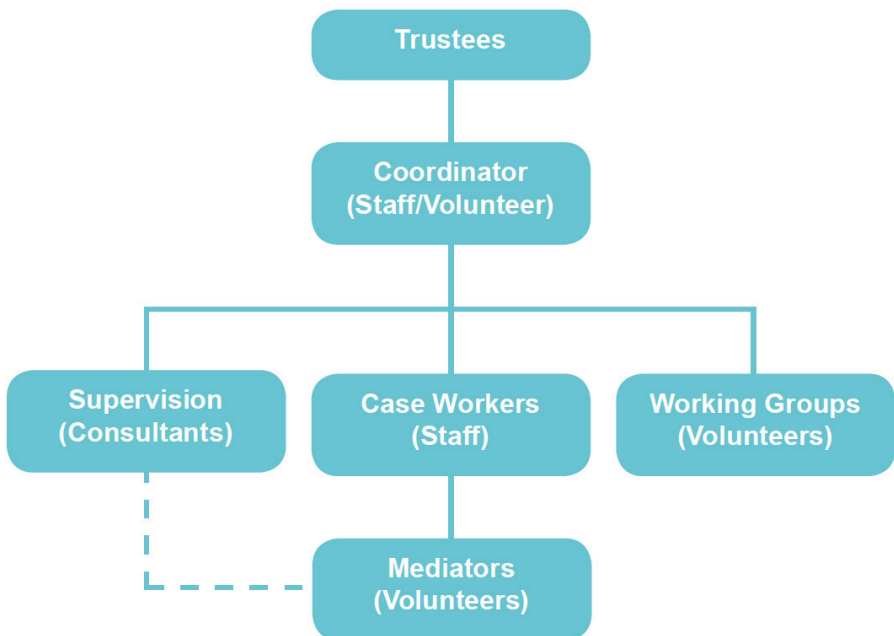
In carefully chosen cases, victim-offender mediation is offered to young people and those affected by their offending behaviour. This type of mediation is usually co-ordinated by the Youth Offending Service, or the police.

## Mediation Awareness

Training in the use of mediation can be provided to ‘front desk’ staff working with our partners (funding organisations) to ensure that they appreciate the uses and benefits that mediation can bring and can recognise cases where mediation can help.

## How We Work

Mediation Buckinghamshire is a not for profit company (limited by guarantee) and is a registered charity. The structure of the organisation can be represented as follows:



Outline responsibilities are as follows:

**The Board of Trustees** is responsible for developing strategy, setting goals and ensuring compliance.

**The Co-ordinator** implements the strategy, liaises with funders, co-ordinates activities and reports to the Trustees.

**The Case Workers** manage the mediation referrals from first contact to completion, maintain contact with referrers and carry out associated administrative duties. They report to the Co-ordinator.

**Supervisors** ensure the quality of the mediation service and report to the Co-ordinator.

**Working Groups** are established on an ad-hoc basis to meet specific requirements. They receive a Brief and report to the Co-ordinator.

**Volunteer Mediators** are the core of our service and receive referrals and report back to the Case Workers. Oversight is provided by the Supervisors.

Currently we have two part time **Case Workers** who are members of staff and two part time Supervisors who are self-employed and paid on an hourly basis. All other assistance is provided by volunteers.

The charity has a wide range of policies covering Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding Children and Young Persons, Confidentiality, Health and Safety and other relevant subjects. These policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The charity has a 3-year business plan that is updated annually.

# Achievements And Performance

## Details of cases

Cases Received	2016-2017		2015-2016	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total number of cases received	145		154	
Housing Associations	47	32%	37	24%
Police	39	27%	32	21%
Local Authorities	14	10%	38	25%
Self-referrals	41	28%	40	26%
Others	4	3%	7	5%

Cases Closed	2016-2017		2015-2016	
	No.	%	No.	%
Total number of cases closed	156		129	
No of residents involved in these closed cases	392		323	
No of cases closed that involved mediators	122	78%	95	74%
No of cases closed where we met all parties	67		59	
No of cases where we met both parties and then had a joint meeting	27	40%	24	41%
Joint meetings that resulted in an agreement	19	70%	19	79%
Total number of volunteer hours	1398		1392	

## Equal Opportunities

Comparison between the 2011 census return for Buckinghamshire and Mediation Buckinghamshire's clients.

	2011	2016-2017	2015-2016
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Bucks County</b>	<b>MB clients</b>	<b>MB clients</b>
White	86%	78%	80%
Asian/Asian British	8%	12%	12%
Black	1%	7%	4%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	1%	1%	2%
Other	4%	4%	2%
<b>Age distribution of adults over 20</b>			
20-29	14%	14%	13%
30-39	17%	18%	18%
40-49	21%	25%	25%
50-59	17%	20%	19%
60-69	15%	11%	15%
70+	16%	11%	9%
<b>Disability</b>			
Severely, a little or a lot disabled	14%	21%	15%

## Feedback From Our Referres

6 months after a case is closed we write to the referrer and ask if there have been any further incidents between the parties involved in the disputes. In 2016-17 we had 12 replies. Of these replies:

Referrers reporting that there were no further incidents in the 6 months after a case was closed: 10 (83%)

## What Did Our Clients Think Of Us?

Satisfaction surveys are sent to all clients who met our mediators.

In 2016-17 we had 32 replies.

<b>Booking the appointment:</b>	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Fairly satisfied</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Fairly dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>
	77%	16%	6%	0%	0%
<b>How well did we keep you informed of progress?</b>	<b>Very well</b>	<b>Fairly well</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Fairly poorly</b>	<b>Very poorly</b>
	67%	17%	10%	3%	3%
<b>How do you feel the mediators treated you?</b>	<b>Fairly</b>	<b>Unfairly</b>	<b>Don't know</b>		
	90%	3%	7%		
<b>How well do you feel the mediators listened to you?</b>	<b>Very well</b>	<b>Fairly well</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Fairly poorly</b>	<b>Very poorly</b>
	77%	16%	0%	6%	0%
<b>How well did the mediators explain the mediation process?</b>	<b>Very well</b>	<b>Fairly well</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Fairly poorly</b>	<b>Very poorly</b>
	87%	7%	7%	0%	0%
<b>Case Outcome</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Worse</b>		
	40%	43%	17%		
<b>Do you feel that you can now deal with the situation with your neighbour?</b>	<b>Better</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>Worse</b>		
	30%	60%	10%		
<b>Would you try mediation again, or recommend us to someone else?</b>	<b>Definitely</b>	<b>Likely to</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Unlikely to</b>	<b>Definitely not</b>
	50%	23%	7%	10%	10%

## Financial Review

The financial statements appended to this report reflect the activities outlined above and have been drawn up to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice for charities.

In 2016-17 there was a decrease in funds of £8,789 (2015-16 £2,910 decrease). The overall funds available to the charity are sufficient to enable it to continue to carry out its stated objectives.

## Summary of accounts

	2016-17	2015-16
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Thames Valley Police	£5,000	£5,000
Housing Associations	£19,800	£23,800
Local Authorities / Community Safety	£10,000	£9,000
Fee work	£2,700	£3,000
Donations	£107	£704
Interest	£198	£230
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£37,805</b>	<b>£41,734</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salaries	£19,147	£19,280
Mediator expenses and venue hire	£3,307	£3,944
Premises (including redecoration)	£11,301	£5,561
Insurances	£443	£438
Office costs	£5,248	£7,448
Training	£487	£1,084
Supervision	£4,371	£4,935
Independent Examination	£1,200	£1,200
Trustee expenses	£138	£542
Depreciation	£952	£212
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>£46,594</b>	<b>£44,644</b>
Net movement of funds	-£8,789	-£2,910
Funds brought forward from previous year	£71,719	£74,629
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>£62,930</b>	<b>£71,719</b>
<b>Note - None of these funds are restricted</b>		
<b>Balance Sheet</b>		
Tangible Fixed Assets	£2,856	£0
Bank Accounts	£60,886	£70,492
Debtors	£388	£2,427
Creditors	£1,200	£1,200
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>£62,930</b>	<b>£71,719</b>



## Principal Funding Sources

The charity works in partnership with its principal funders including Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and the Police. In 2016-17 we had Service Level Agreements with:

- Chiltern District Council
- South Bucks District Council
- Paradigm Housing Association
- Vale of Aylesbury Housing Association
- Red Kite Community Housing

In addition, we have received grants from the Community Safety Partnerships in Buckinghamshire, the Thames Valley Police Property Fund and Hastoe Housing Association.

The Charity undertakes workplace mediation, civil mediation, mediation of disputes involving “High Hedges” and community mediation for some housing associations for which it gets paid on a case-by-case basis. We are particularly pleased to work with Slough Borough Council in this way.

## Plans For The Future

The charity’s plans include:

- Increasing the number of clients that benefit from our service.
- Promoting mediation throughout Buckinghamshire to further our charitable aims and to demonstrate value to our funders.
- Strengthening relationships with our existing funders.
- Seeking new funders to work with.
- Strengthening our board by recruiting new members with relevant skills.





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