



# Mediation

## BUCKS

Annual Report 2014/15

*Designed with*

**Red Kite**  
Community Housing

## 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. In line with many not-for-profit charitable organisations, we have seen a drop in funding as a result of the continuing squeeze on public finances. In response to this challenge, in 2013 – 2014 we re-organised in order to reduce our costs whilst maintaining our level of service. The changes that we made have been successfully implemented and, in the current year, the emphasis has been on stability and consolidation whilst ensuring that we continue to play a valuable role in supporting the community.

## 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:

- 150 cases were received.
- Contact was made with the referrer in all cases.
- In 73% of the cases our volunteer mediators visited one or more of the parties.
- Where joint meetings were held, 85% resulted in an agreement being reached.
- Our mediators contributed a total of over 1,400 voluntary hours of service.

## Testimonials

When talking to the office one of our clients said:

*“You have such words of wisdom. I can’t believe you offer this service as a charity - you will definitely be going to heaven!”*

From another:

*“The day after our joint session with Anthony and Rita, we agreed to meet with our parents to try to iron out what looked like becoming permanent creases in our relationship. I am delighted to say the result was the first road to resuming this. I know it will take time, but we have a dinner arranged at my house on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, when I hope more progress can be made. I am quite sure without the help of your two very understanding and wise mediators, this would not have been achieved. Please pass on my grateful thanks to them.”*

## 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.

To this end, we have recruited and trained 17 new volunteer mediators and this has provided us with greater capacity and has enabled us to respond quickly to referrals. In addition the new mediators have injected renewed enthusiasm into the service and brought a wealth of expertise in other areas that assist us in running an efficient organisation.

We have set up a marketing group to raise awareness of mediation and to increase the number of referrals we receive. This group is made up of a number of mediators led by Carrie Grafham and one of their first tasks will be to re-launch our

website in 2015-16.

We are also delighted to have two new trustees, Jacqueline Brown and Rebecca Loughran, who are 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 £5,300 from fee paying mediation which represents 8% of our total income.

## Our Appreciation

We would like to thank our staff, volunteers, past and present, and our supervising mediators Jackie and 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
- Jacqueline Brown (from 20 January 2015)
- Rebecca Loughran (from 20 January 2015)

## The staff

At the start of 2014-15 there were 2 part time staff who were employed for a total of 33 hours per week. They were:

- Sharon Edwards (Casework Manager) and Henza Cruz (Caseworker)
- John Elliot acted as manager in a voluntary capacity

## The volunteers

In 2014-15 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, Julie, Lin, Lisa, Louise, Marten, Mike, Naseem, Pam, Philmore, Rajiv, Rebecca, Rita, Robert, 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 Aim 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, CIArb)
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

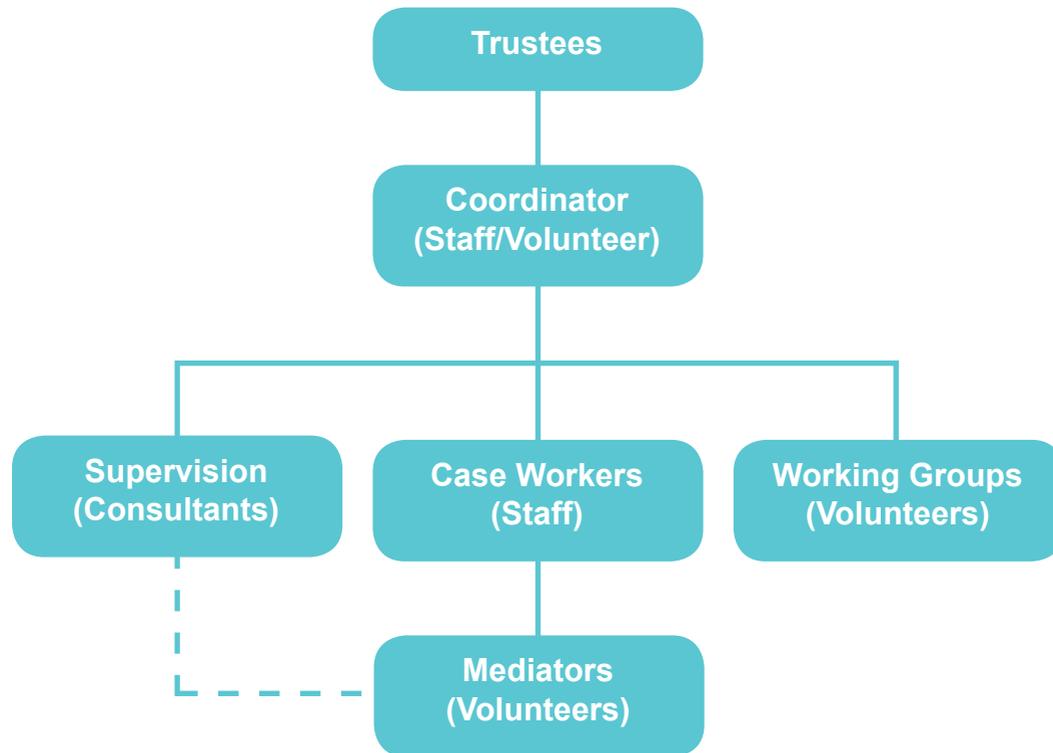
In carefully chosen cases, victim-offender mediation is offered to young people and those affected by their offending behaviour. This type of mediation is usually co-ordinated by the Youth Offending Service, or the police.

## 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.

## Achievement and performance

### Cases

	2014-2015	2013-2014
No of cases received	150	151
No of cases received that were self-referred	16%	29%
No of cases closed	147	176
No of residents involved in these closed cases	382	469
No of cases closed that involved mediators	73%	76%
Total number of volunteer hours	1416	1992
No of closed cases that went to a joint meeting	26	43
Joint meetings that resulted in an agreement	85%	77%
Mediated cases with a satisfactory outcome	37%	44%

## Equal Opportunities

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

		2014-2015	2013-2014
Ethnicity	Bucks County	MB clients	MB Clients
White	86%	76%	82%
Asian/Asian British	8%	13%	12%
Black	1%	3%	4%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	1%	5%	2%
Other	4%	2%	2%

		2014-2015	2013-2014
Age distribution of adults over 20	Bucks County	MB clients	MB clients
20-29	14%	10%	9%
30-39	17%	19%	21%
40-49	21%	28%	21%
50-59	17%	15%	23%
60-69	15%	16%	18%
70+	16%	12%	8%

		2014-2015	2013-2014
Disability	Buck County	MB clients	MB clients
Severely, a little or a lot disabled	14%	18%	16%

## 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 2014-15 there was an increase in funds of £669 (2013-14 £32,843 increase). The overall funds available to the charity are sufficient to enable it to continue to carry out its stated objectives.

## Principal Funding Sources

The charity works in partnership with its principal funders including Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and the Police. In 2014-15 we had Service Level Agreements with:

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

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

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.

## Summary of accounts

Income	2015	2014
	£	£
<i>Grants</i>		
Buckinghamshire County Council	15,000	30,000
Midcounties Co-operative		1,994
Chiltern District Council		4,320
Thames Valley Police	5,000	5,000
Wycombe District Council		2,780
South Bucks District Council	2,500	
Paradigm Housing Foundation	2,500	
Red Kite Housing Foundation	2,500	
<i>Service Level Agreements</i>		
Housing Associations	23,500	23,500
Local Authorities	9,000	9,000
<i>Fee work</i>		
Donations	128	15
Interest	176	187
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>65,604</b>	<b>85,411</b>

Expenditure	2015	2014
	£	£
Salaries	19,783	28,275
Mediating	4,141	1,930
Premises	5,997	7,908
Insurances	840	615
Office costs	9,666	8,061
Training course for mediators	15,632	2,156
Supervision	7,434	2,226
Independent Examination	1,201	1,201
Trustee expenses	241	195
Total expenditure	64,935	52,567
Net movement of funds	669	32,844
Funds brought forward from previous year	73,960	41,116
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>74,629</b>	<b>73,960</b>

None of our funds are restricted

## Plans for the Future

The charity's plans include:

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





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