



Mediation BUCKS

Annual Report 2017-18

Mediation Buckinghamshire Annual Report 2017-18

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.

Highlights of the year

Feedback from our referrers shows that in 82% of the cases referred, the referrer never heard from the parties again.

In February we ran a very successful Conflict Coaching course for 21 of our volunteer mediators.

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:

140 cases were completed.

Contact was made with the referrer in all cases.

In **79%** of the cases our volunteer mediators visited one or more of the parties.

Our mediators contributed a total of over **1,260** voluntary hours of service.

Our Successes

Where joint meetings were held, **84%** resulted in an agreement being reached.

6-months after a case is closed we ask the referrer if they have heard from the parties again.

In **82%** of the cases, the referrer has never heard from the parties again.

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 two new trustees, Andy Kenward and Lin Instone, 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 £6,900 from fee paying mediation which represents 17% 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.

Testimonials

These are some of the testimonials that we have received during this year.

“At the very start you made me feel at ease and that carried on through the meeting. You handled the situation very well and were able to have a meeting on a Saturday.”

“The mediation service was excellent as far as it occurred for me - Thank you.”

“Calm environment created.”

“I much appreciate the mediators giving their time voluntarily.”

“The two ladies who came to my house were lovely- never judged me or took sides.”

“I really thought it wouldn't work as it had gone so far but it really helped. Thank you.”

Our Trustees, Staff and Volunteers

At Mediation Bucks we have a small team of trustees, staff and volunteers who are all passionate about mediation.

Our 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 (till 27 September 2017)

Andy Kenward (from 12 July 2017)

Lin Instone (from 12 July 2017)

Our staff

During 2017-18 there were 2 part time staff who were employed for a total of 33 hours per week. They were: Henza Cruz, and Helen Sendall to June 2017 and Julia O'Sullivan from July 2017.

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 2017-18 a total of 36 volunteer mediators were actively involved with the service. As of 31 March 2018 these volunteers were:

Alan, Amanda, Andy, Anna, Annie, Antony, Aylene, Cate, Eileen, Harriet, Helen, Henza, Janet, Jeremy, John E, John M, Karen, Lin, Linda, Louise, Marten, Mike, Naseem, Philmore, Phyllida, Rachael, Rajiv, Rebecca, Rita, Stephanie, Stephen, Steve, Stig, Sue, 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 those Who Use 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, 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

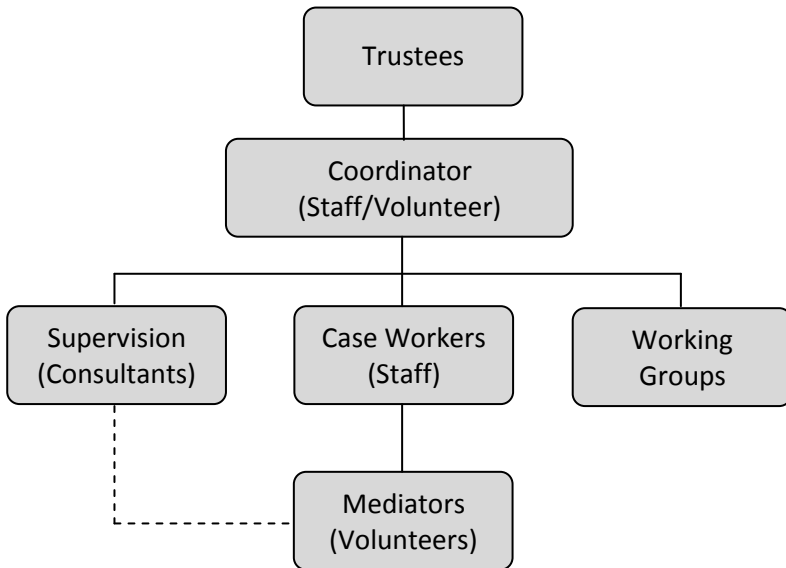
In carefully chosen cases, victim-offender mediation is offered to young people and those affected by their offending behaviour. This type of mediation is usually co-ordinated by the Youth Offending Service, or the police.

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.

The Supervisor ensures the quality of the mediation service and reports 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 Supervisor.

Currently we have two part time Case Workers who are members of staff and a part time Supervisor who is 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

Cases

Cases Received				
Total number of cases received	134		145	
Housing Associations	38	28%	47	32%
Police	36	27%	39	27%
Local Authorities and Social Services	23	17%	14	10%
Self-referrals	34	25%	41	28%
Others	3	2%	4	3%

Cases Closed				
Total number of cases closed	140		156	
Cases that involved mediators	110	79%	122	78%
Cases where we met all parties	30	27%	67	55%
Cases where there was a Joint Meeting	25	23%	27	22%
Joint Meetings that reached an agreement	21	84%	19	70%
Number of residents involved	345		392	
Total number of volunteer hours	1,260		1,398	

Equal Opportunities

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

Ethnicity	Bucks County	MB clients 2017-18	MB clients 2016-17
White	86%	86%	78%
Asian/Asian British	8%	7%	12%
Black	1%	3%	7%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	1%	2%	1%
Other	4%	2%	4%

Age distribution of adults over 20	Bucks County	MB clients 2017-18	MB clients 2016-17
20-29	14%	13%	14%
30-39	17%	16%	18%
40-49	21%	23%	25%
50-59	17%	19%	20%
60-69	15%	17%	11%
70+	16%	10%	11%

Disability	Bucks County	MB clients 2017-18	MB clients 2016-17
Severely, a little or a lot disabled	14%	24%	21%

Feedback from our referrers

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 2017-18 we had 39 replies. Of these replies:

*Referrers reporting **no** further incidents was 32 (82%)*

What did our clients think of us?

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

In 2017-18 we had 34 replies.

1 Booking the appointment:

<i>Very satisfied</i>	<i>Fairly satisfied</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Fairly dissatisfied</i>	<i>Very dissatisfied</i>
59%	29%	6%	3%	3%

2 How well did we keep you informed of progress?

<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Fairly poorly</i>	<i>Very poorly</i>
61%	36%	3%	0%	0%

3 How do you feel the mediators treated you?

<i>Fairly</i>	<i>Unfairly</i>	<i>Undecided</i>
100%	0%	0%

4 How well do you feel the mediators listened to you?

<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Fairly poorly</i>	<i>Very poorly</i>
76%	24%	0%	0%	0%

5 How well did the mediators explain the mediation process?

<i>Very well</i>	<i>Fairly well</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Fairly poorly</i>	<i>Very poorly</i>
79%	21%	0%	0%	0%

6 Case Outcome:

<i>Better</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>Worse</i>
45%	48%	6%

7 Do you feel that you can now deal with the situation with your neighbour?

<i>Better</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>Worse</i>
42%	55%	3%

8 Would you try mediation again, or recommend us to someone else?

<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Likely to</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Unlikely to</i>	<i>Definitely not</i>
58%	18%	18%	6%	3%

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 2017-18 there was an increase in funds of £1,834 (2016-17 £8,789 decrease). 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 2017-18 we had Service Level Agreements with:

Paradigm Housing Association
Vale of Aylesbury Housing Association
Red Kite Community Housing

In addition, we have received grants from the Community Safety Partnership, Wycombe District Council and District Councils of Chiltern & South Bucks.

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, Chiltern District Council and Hightown Housing Association in this way.

Summary of accounts

Income	2017-18	2016-17
Thames Valley Police		£5,000
Housing Associations	£22,000	£19,800
Local Authorities / Community Safety	£12,500	£10,000
Fee work	£6,938	£2,700
Donations	£366	£107
Interest	£122	£198
Total Income	£41,926	£37,805

Expenditure	2017-18	2016-17
Salaries	£18,650	£19,147
Mediator expenses and venue hire	£2,860	£3,307
Premises (including redecoration)	£5,537	£11,301
Insurances	£504	£443
Office costs	£4,906	£5,248
Training	£1,531	£487
Supervision	£4,290	£4,371
Independent Examination	£500	£1,200
Trustee expenses	£362	£138
Depreciation	£952	£952
Total expenditure	£40,092	£46,594

Net movement of funds	£1,834	-£8,789
Funds brought forward from previous year	£62,930	£71,719
Total funds carried forward	£64,764	£62,930

Note - None of these funds are restricted

Balance Sheet	2017-18	2016-17
Tangible Fixed Assets	£1,904	£2,856
Bank Accounts	£62,889	£60,886
Debtors	£471	£388
Creditors	£500	£1,200
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	£64,764	£62,930

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.

Recruiting more volunteer mediators.

Offer Conflict Coaching where appropriate.

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