



Mediation BUCKS

Annual Report 2020-21

Mediation Bucks is grateful for the support it has received from



Mediation Buckinghamshire

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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 and community housing grants. Unlike many not-for-profit charitable organisations, our funders have continued to support us and to use our services. However, we are not complacent and we continue to look for new sources of funding so that we can continue and enhance the services that we provide to the community.

In this regard, the past year has been dominated by COVID but Mediation Bucks rose to meet the challenges and to exceed all of our expectations. We drew on the IT skills of our volunteers and ran training courses in the use of Zoom which were enthusiastically embraced by our mediators. We were also fortunate to have been given an IT grant by Leslie Clarke of Wycombe District Council which enabled us to equip our casework manager to work from home.

With more people furloughed and at home, there was an increase in referrals for our mediation services and, having mastered the technology for on-line mediation, we were well placed to support referring parties including individual members of the community as well as the Police and Housing Associations.

In September we were approached by South Oxon & Vale of White Horse Community Safety Partnership to supply mediation services and after discussions we were awarded a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Also, during the year we mediated a number of civil cases and in February we were awarded an SLA by Buckinghamshire Family Support Services. This will enable us to take referrals from them and help to resolve issues between parents and children and issues of communication between parents themselves.

Mediation Bucks has also started offering Conflict Coaching on a trial basis and plan to roll this out more extensively in the coming year.

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:

- **248** cases were received. **This was a 43% increase over the previous year, 2019-20.**
- **233** cases were completed.

In **56%** of the cases closed, our volunteer mediators visited one or more of the parties.

Our mediators contributed a total of over **1,686** voluntary hours of service.

Our Successes

Where joint meetings between the parties were held, **72%** resulted in an agreement being reached.

3-months after a case involving mediators is closed, we write to the referrer and ask if there have been any further incidents between the parties involved in the disputes.

In 69% of the replies the referrer reported that there had been no further incidents.

Moving Forward

We realise that the prevailing economic climate is very 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 and adjoining counties 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 plan to build on our expertise in mediating by Zoom and offer our services to a wider area. In addition we will be recruiting a Development Officer to meet this objective and to liaise with our existing referrers.

Our plans include:

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

Funding

We have continued to enjoy the support of our funders and in addition we have earned over £6,955 from civil and workplace mediation which represents 13% of our activity generated funds.

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.

A very professional operation, thank you all

All worked very well on zoom which was new to them both, I think! I think it is well set up and our experience has been positive. The fact that our neighbours pulled out of the mediation is more down to their attitude than a reflection on the mediation. I really liked that you did not focus on the issues we faced but on the mediation process. I admire that! Great professionals and great service. Really a good thing!

An excellent service with an excellent result.

I felt understood and able to speak freely.

I had complete trust in my mediators that they would conduct the process properly. I listen to what both parties had to say and guide both towards a resolution. Meeting the mediators gave me complete trust in the process

I felt they were very empathic.

Made me feel very comfortable

The mediators listened with real skill, and were able to relay back to us exactly what was said.

They did an excellent job, very professional and well trained. I was very impressed.

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
- Andy Kenward
- Lin Instone
- Phyllida Middlemiss

Our staff

During 2020-21 there was 1 part time staff member, Henza Cruz.

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

Our volunteers

As of 31 March 2021 our volunteers were:

Andy, Annie, Antony, Aylene, Barry, Catherine, Claire, Eileen, Emma, Graham, Janet, Jeremy, John, Lin, Linda, Liz, Lynne, Margaret, Michael, Oliver, Pally, Pat, Philmore, Phyllida,, Rajiv, Richard, Rita, Russell, Sandy, Stig, Sue, Teresa and Tony.

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 confidential process of resolving disputes in which the mediators act in a neutral capacity to assist the parties involved to identify the issues; to clarify misunderstandings; to explore options and find solutions that work for both parties.

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 have a wide range of backgrounds. They 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

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
Conflict Coaching	Neighbours, members of the community, Organisations	Self-referrals, local authorities, housing providers, police, HR departments
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)
Mediation Awareness	Organisations wishing to gain knowledge of what mediation can achieve and when to use it	Local authorities, Police, 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

Conflict Coaching

We can offer conflict coaching when only one party in a dispute is willing to engage. Our mediators help the person develop coping strategies to deal with the dispute. It can be used when the person:

- Requires additional support after suffering from Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Wants to make a positive change and needs help to achieve this
- Works in a dysfunctional team
- Manages staff who demonstrate high conflict behaviours

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

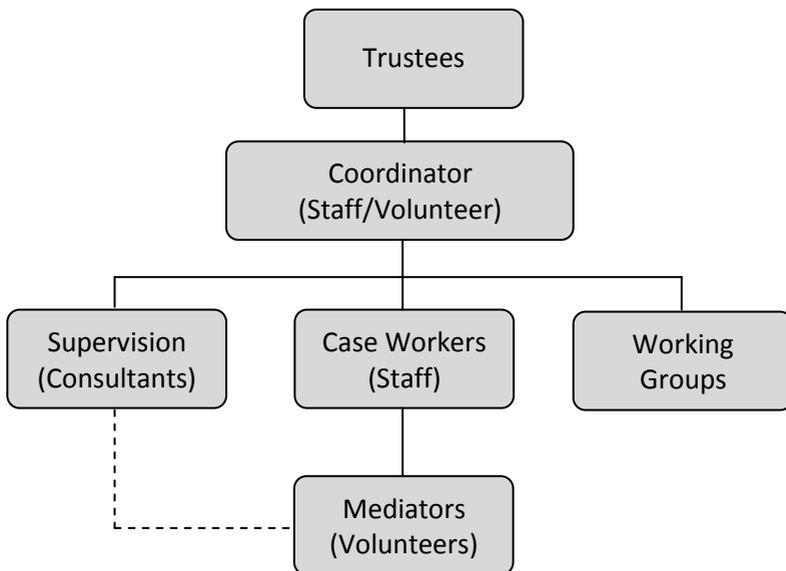
In commercial relationships, mediation offers a fast, cost-effective and less stressful way of resolving disputes that might otherwise end up in court. Government policy is to encourage alternative forms of dispute resolution. Civil mediation is an independent method of resolving contract disputes by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

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 that they can recognise cases where mediation can help and refer accordingly.

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 one Case Work manager who is a member 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 regularly updated.

Achievements and Performance

Cases

Cases Received	2020 - 2021		2019 - 2020	
Total number of cases received	248		173	
Housing Associations	63	25%	34	20%
Police	100	40%	69	40%
Local Authorities and Social Services	26	10%	32	18%
Self-referrals	59	24%	37	21%
Others			1	1%

Cases Closed	2020 - 2021		2019 - 2020	
Total number of cases closed	233		171	
Cases that involved mediators	130	56%	113	66%
Cases where we met all parties	71	55%	28	25%
Cases where there was a Joint Meeting	40	31%	23	20%
Joint Meetings that reached an agreement	29	72%	20	87%
Number of residents involved	551		412	
Total number of volunteer hours	1,686		1,218	

Equal Opportunities

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

Ethnicity	Bucks County	MB clients 2020-21	MB clients 2019-20
White	86%	80%	88%
Asian/Asian British	8%	11%	8%
Black	1%	3%	3%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group	1%	1%	1%
Other	4%	2%	0%

Age distribution of adults over 20	Bucks County	MB clients 2020-21	MB clients 2019-20
20-29	14%	6%	7%
30-39	17%	23%	14%
40-49	21%	21%	29%
50-59	17%	24%	24%
60-69	15%	13%	18%
70+	16%	13%	8%

Disability	Bucks County	MB clients 2020-21	MB clients 2019-20
Severely, a little or a lot disabled	14%	24%	20%

Feedback from our referrers

3-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 2020-21 we had 74 replies. Of these replies:

*Referrers reporting **no** further incidents was 51 (69%)*

What did our clients think of us?

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

In 2020-21 we had 28 replies.

1 Booking the appointment:

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Undecided	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
80%	16%	2%		2%

2 How well did we keep you informed of progress?

Very well	Fairly well	Undecided	Fairly poorly	Very poorly
66%	23%	7%	2%	2%

3 How do you feel the mediators treated you?

Fairly	Unfairly	Undecided
89%	7%	4%

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

Very well	Fairly well	Undecided	Fairly poorly	Very poorly
78%	4%	7%	4%	7%

5 How well did the mediators explain the mediation process?

Very well	Fairly well	Undecided	Fairly poorly	Very poorly
82%	11%		2%	4%

6 Case Outcome:

Better	Same	Worse
38%	49%	13%

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

Better	Same	Worse
33%	58%	9%

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

Definitely	Likely to	Undecided	Unlikely to	Definitely not
38%	22%	24%	9%	7%

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 2020-21 there was an increase in funds of £4,866 (2019-20 £8,076 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 2020-21 we had Service Level Agreements with:

Vale of Aylesbury Housing Association

Red Kite Community Housing

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Community Safety Partnership

In addition, we have received grants from Buckinghamshire Council, the Police Property Fund

The Charity undertakes workplace mediation, civil mediation, and mediation of disputes involving residents of Paradigm Housing for which it gets paid on a case-by-case basis.

Summary of accounts

Income	2020-21	2019-20
Thames Valley Police	£5,000	£5,000
Housing Associations	£21,350	£22,000
Local Authorities / Community Safety	£19,000	£7,500
Fee work	£6,955	£3,818
Donations		£350
Interest	£43	£307
Grants		£7,100
Total Income	£52,348	£46,075

Expenditure	2020-21	2019-20
Salaries	£30,434	£23,065
Mediator expenses and venue hire	£443	£2,570
Premises	£6,002	£7,232
Insurances	£414	£390
Office costs	£3,783	£5,874
Training	£70	£8,575
Supervision	£5,730	£3,600
Independent Examination	£480	£480
Trustee expenses	£13	£440
Depreciation	£73	£1,025
Repairs, Renewals and Small Capital Items	£40	£900
Total expenditure	£47,482	£54,151

Net movement of funds	£4,866	-£8,076
Funds brought forward from previous year	£54,537	£62,613
Total funds carried forward	£59,403	£54,537

Note - None of these funds are restricted

Balance Sheet	2020-21	2019-20
Tangible Fixed Assets	£74	£147
Bank Accounts	£74,134	£66,893
Debtors	£3,161	£477
Creditors	£17,966	£12,980
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	£59,403	£54,537

Mediation Bucks

45-47 Oxford Road
High Wycombe
HP11 2EB

01494 520821

mediation@mediationbucks.org.uk

www.mediationbucks.org.uk

Mediation Bucks is the operating name of Mediation Buckinghamshire

Registered Charity No 1093803

Company Registration No 04443326

