



Annual Report 2009-10

Mediation Leeds - positive resolution for all



Chair's Report

The past year has provided another step forward to achieving our long term strategic goal of becoming a fully income-generating organisation without reliance upon traditional grant funding.

Strategically, we have begun to explore region-wide opportunities by developing collaborative work with other organisations to meet common goals. Initial indications are positive and shown this could enable Mediation Leeds to provide services and training to a broader audience whilst supporting our key charitable aims. It is also reflective of the need to meet new market demands - many of the Leeds based housing providers we work with actually own properties dispersed as Thirsk in North Yorkshire to Barnsley in South Yorkshire. As such our services have adapted to these needs to provide mediation swiftly and on demand to a broad geographical area.

Operationally, we continue to provide an excellent independent service via our accredited volunteers and dedicated staff team. We have retained the Investors in People award and continue to enjoy good working relationships with the vast majority of social housing providers and other organisations across the city. Where organisations do not offer independent mediation, we continue to lobby the benefits of our services to them and the benefits gained by empowering individuals and communities alike.

Governance development has continued to focus upon implementing our action plan based on the National Council Of Voluntary Organisations 'Good Governance Guide'. This has resulted in a number of changes including the introduction of Board member appraisals and making Board processes more open

and transparent – a positive change that has seen a number of volunteers and staff attending and contributing at Board meetings. I am also very pleased to welcome Ian Adderley from Social Enterprise Yorkshire and the Humber as a new trustee to the Board.

Opportunities for Mediation Leeds during 2009/10 have continued to focus upon developing new business and growing our market share. A recent report written for by Re'new highlighted a number of opportunities for us to expand our services in future, and our focus will remain very much on this over the coming year.

Additional opportunities are seen in the recent launch of the Tenant Services Authority regulatory framework for social housing in England (April 2010). This places a requirement on registered landlords to publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in areas where they own properties. It also advocates that landlords have a strong focus on preventative measures tailored towards the needs of tenants and their families. This is a fundamental part of the work that Mediation Leeds provides.

Challenges of course remain. As public sector cuts become increasingly inevitable and the third sector environment becomes tougher, Mediation Leeds must continue to deliver excellent value for money via a range of highly professional services which provide positive outcomes and benefits to individuals, communities and organisations alike.

Simon Williams
Simon Williams, Chair

Director of Services Report

In 2009 we celebrated our 21st year! Cause for celebration for any voluntary sector organisation in the current economic climate and one that we are really proud to have achieved. We celebrated by organising a picnic in the park for staff, volunteers and trustees.

We managed to re-secure all service level agreements and consolidated the mediation service we provide for Leeds Housing Options clients who face homelessness. 2009-2010 was a very busy year and we had a record number of enquiries and cases.

We also undertook some collaborative work: with Mediation Yorkshire in the delivery of community mediation skills training for volunteers, and the delivery of workplace mediation training for Bradford Council. We secured a grant from Capacity Builders Modernisation Fund to support this collaborative work. We were also pleased to renew our partnership working with Together for Peace and the Centre for Good Relations, developing community relations work in Gipton.

We are grateful to the Big Lottery Grant for their support which helps us to focus on the most deprived areas of Leeds in providing a mediation service and recruiting and training volunteer mediators.

Our hope was to develop Service Level Agreements for more than 1 year – whilst this is still our intention, the reality is that cuts in public service funding over coming years will make this unlikely and we look forward to challenging times ahead. In spite of these challenges, staff remain positive and resilient and morale is still high and once again I wish to express my gratitude to all – staff, volunteers and trustees for their steadfast commitment.

Building Positive Neighbourhoods

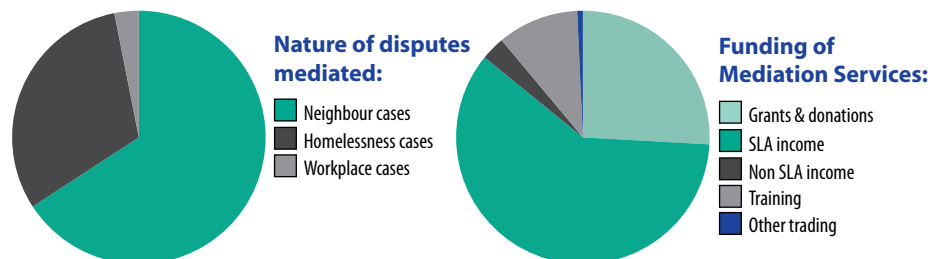
In 2009 we successfully secured funding from the Big Lottery to support our community mediation service in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Leeds.

We had 129 referrals from the most deprived super output areas; 85 of these were accepted as cases resulting in a successful outcome in 62% of cases. Improvements reported by parties included a reduction in stress and anxiety, a reduction in anti social behaviour, better communication with neighbours and feeling safer in their homes. We also trained 8 new volunteer mediators. Funding for this work continues for the next two years.

Julia Edmunds
Director of Services

Statistics

Of the 318 referrals received by Mediation Leeds in this period, 193 were converted to case. The success rate for neighbour mediation was 75%, rising to 85% where a Joint Meeting took place. Workplace cases enjoyed a success rate of 100%. Of the homelessness prevention cases, 78% were successful.



Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating the income and expenditure account) Year ended 31 March 2010

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2010 £	Total Funds 2009 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	2	2,014	51,921	53,935	34,071
Activities for generating funds	3	154,422	-	154,422	163,838
Investment income	4	429	-	429	3,342
Total Incoming Resources		156,865	51,921	208,786	201,251
Resources Expended					
Charitable activities	5/6	(137,379)	(49,362)	(186,741)	(159,233)
Governance costs	7	(2,333)	-	(2,333)	(2,452)
Other resources expended	8	-	-	-	(584)
Total Resources Expended		(139,712)	(49,362)	(189,074)	(162,269)
Net Incoming Resources for the year/NetIncome for the year	9	17,153	2,559	19,712	38,982
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward		(19,923)	1,326	(18,597)	(57,579)
Total Funds Carried Forward		(2,770)	3,885	1,115	(18,597)

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

Balance Sheet

31 March 2010

	Note	2010 £	2009 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	12	5,420	7,228
Current Assets			
Debtors	13	26,634	55,249
Cash at bank and in hand	14	107,699	76,385
		134,333	131,634
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	(35,722)	(36,009)
Net Current Assets		98,611	95,625
Total Assets less current liabilities		104,031	102,853
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	16	(102,916)	(121,450)
Net Liabilities		1,115	(18,597)
Funds			
Restricted income funds	17	3,885	1,326
Unrestricted income funds	18	(2,770)	(19,923)
Total Funds		1,115	(18,597)

The trustees are satisfied that the charity is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477(2), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476(1) of the Act.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- ensuring that the charity keeps adequate accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charity.

These financial statements were approved by the members of the committee on the 9 August 2010 and are signed

on their behalf by: S. Betts Miss S Betts

Treasurer's Report

2009-10 has been another successful year financially for Mediation Leeds. There were net incoming resources of £18,597 which have brought the overall reserves for the organisation into surplus for the first time since the 2005-06 financial year. This shows that the organisation is well on the way to becoming financially sustainable for future years.

Total incoming resources have increased by 4% from £201,251 in 2008-09 to £208,786 in 2009-10. During the year £154,422 (£163,838 in 2008-2009), was received from income generating activities including contracts with Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), Housing Associations (HAs) and the provision of training courses and conciliator services for a number of organisations.

In 2009-10 grant funding has increased to 26% of the total income (17% of total income in 2008-09). Total income from grants was £53,921 including £45,196 from the Big Lottery which paid for staff time to work in some of the most deprived areas and training volunteer mediators, and £6,725 from Capacity Builders Modernisation fund to support scoping collaborative working.

As part of an ongoing agreement with the Social Investment Business, the repayment of the loan (secured to allow Mediation Leeds to build up a variety of diverse income sources, improving its sustainability in the long term) continued to be paid.

Outlook for 2010 and beyond

The majority of organisations have renewed their contracts with Mediation Leeds for the 2010-11 financial year

which means that the majority of income required for the coming year is already secured. However, although Mediation Leeds has made progress towards becoming totally financially sustainable it is likely that for the foreseeable future the organisation will be reliant of a proportion of its income coming from grants. Mediation Leeds will need to continue to try to move towards full cost recovery on all Service Level Agreements and continuing to diversify its income base.

Susan Betts

Sue Betts
Treasurer

"My service with Mediation Leeds was excellent. It took all the stress off my shoulders...without mediation Leeds I feel I wouldn't be in the fantastic position I am in today"

"Very helpful service. Thank you, great help, keep up the good work!"

"I found Val and Irene extremely helpful and friendly...Thank you"

"I was impressed at the flexibility of the mediation appointments. I would like to thank Elinor and Gerry for their professionalism in helping us in our situation."

"I would like to thank the mediator who worked with me for all her help and support and for getting to the bottom of everything for me and my neighbour. Thank you."

Privacy and Greenery v Sunlight and Open Surroundings

Neighbours often have different requirements from their gardens, which is fine until their wants and needs clash. A compromise can be difficult to find since there is no legislation around the majority of situations that arise. Therefore, any agreement depends on peoples' ability and willingness to reach some understanding of each others needs.

Take a recent dispute between three neighbours who asked Mediation Leeds to help them resolve their differences with regard to hedges and trees in the boundaries between their homes:

The parties

Neighbours who enjoyed a good relationship but who had different needs. Keen not to further harm their friendship, they demonstrated a willingness to listen and then to negotiate some agreement.

The process

The mediator visited each party at home. One party invited a neighbouring landscape gardener to attend the outdoor gathering that followed. Another party provided a 15' length of wood, marked at 12" intervals to help with measuring. The mediator then hosted a meeting between all three parties to discuss how all their needs could be met, with the benefit of the Gardener's professional 'opinion' about what a feasible and realistic height the boundary hedges and trees might be allowed to grow to.

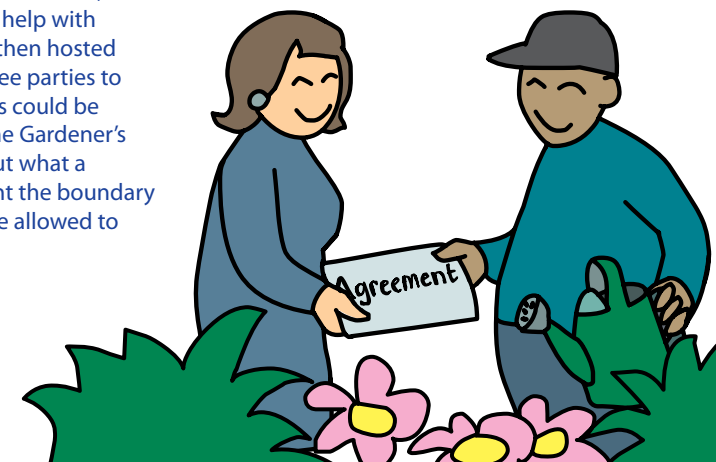
Agreement

Helped by their desire to maintain a good neighbourly relationship, the parties reached an agreement that met all their needs. Not only did they work out what work need to be carried out initially and how to share the cost of this between them; they reached an understanding about the way forward for future years.

Mediator's comment

"I came away understanding once more the importance of the people involved really wanting to reach a positive outcome"

"This case reminded me of how important it is that all people taking part in mediation have a real interest in achieving a positive outcome through the process"



Partnership Working

Mediation Leeds is engaged with partnership working with other organisations and agencies. One such organisation is Together for Peace (T4P) which, for several years, has been working in Leeds to stimulate and develop projects which bring people together, strengthen communities and promote peacemaking.

We have collaborated with T4P on a variety of different projects. This year, for example, I attended a training session they organised on 'The Art of Hosting'. This explored some of the ways that bigger groups can be engaged in dialogue, in a non confrontational way, to discuss issues in a positive and deep way. Techniques, such as 'World Café', 'Open Space Technology' and 'Affirmative Criticism', offer different ways to promote the resolution of disputes, share potential solutions or simply to air issues in a way which allows everyone in a large group to take part equally.

Mediation Leeds hopes to utilise some of these ideas of facilitation in future when working with larger groups. One of the projects that we have engaged in this year is working with the 'Good Relations' Team based in Oldham. This partnership work, also with T4P, is looking to improve relationships between agencies, neighbourhoods, communities and individuals in a specific area of Leeds initially, by improving and promoting ideas of dialogue, communication and improved understandings. Still in the early stages, we hope to encourage mediation skills and techniques as a basis for this kind of work with groups and localities, rather than limiting them to our work with neighbours.

By working with peoples' interests rather than fixed positions, of coming independently or freshly to a situation without taking sides, and allowing those involved themselves to find their own solutions to existing difficulties, we hope that communities may feel stronger and more able to take on the big challenges of the future.

Training & Development

Building Bridges

No, not civil engineering, but often uncivil disputes between neighbours or work colleagues. We provide initial training for volunteers who go on to become mediators. We also offer professional development for our existing mediator team, and training in conflict resolution for other organisations. Ultimately, our training is aimed at enabling local residents and professionals to build bridges, and make their communities & workplaces safer and more pleasant places to be.

New volunteers

The accredited programme in Community Mediation Skills gives new volunteers the skills to become mediators. They go on to help local residents resolve disputes with their neighbours, and hopefully prevent further conflict. This training also provides volunteers with a nationally recognised qualification. This year we have trained 8 new volunteer mediators, who each achieved 9 credits at OCN level 3. In addition, 5 of our mediators gained an extra 3 credits for their work as experienced mediators.

Professional development

For our established team of mediators, we run a wide-ranging programme of training and peer support. This year, we have included sessions on facilitating large groups, conflict & peacemaking, mediation techniques, working with people in crisis, and homelessness prevention.

We were also able to offer accredited training in Workplace Mediation Skills to our experienced mediators. This was run by TCM, a nationally recognised mediation & training provider. 9 of our mediator team gained the OCN level 3 qualification, together with 2 from Mediation Yorkshire. We now have a core team of trained workplace mediators, to support the development of our Workplace Mediation service.

External organisations

For other organisations and agencies, we train staff to understand and resolve conflict. It helps them to manage disputes involving their clients, and also to deal more effectively with conflict in their own workplaces. Training tenants or residents directly helps them manage their own disputes, and also gives them the skills to support others in their neighbourhood.

This year we delivered training sessions on 'Conflict Resolution' or 'Dealing with Neighbour Disputes' for East North East Homes Leeds (tenants), West North West Homes Leeds (staff), Leeds MIND, Leeds Federated Housing Association (tenants), and smaller voluntary organisations (through Voluntary Action Leeds).

We also co-delivered an accredited Workplace Mediation Skills course for Bradford Council managers. In addition, we ran a business seminar for the Leeds Chamber, on 'Dealing with Conflict in the Workplace'.

New developments

A fruitful new development this year has been working in partnership with Mediation Yorkshire, an equivalent organisation based in Kirklees. We have co-trained on two courses. We took the lead in delivering our Community Mediation Skills course, whilst Mediation Yorkshire took the lead for their Workplace Mediation Skills course.

By collaborating with other training providers, we have been able to access part-funding via the national Train to Gain scheme. This has been a valuable source of funding, enabling us to run training that might not otherwise be viable.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue finding ways of working in partnership, to our mutual benefit. We also hope to develop our own accredited Workplace Mediation Skills course.

It's been a year of successes, challenges and enjoyment. In this difficult financial climate, we look forward to the challenge of offering high quality, enjoyable, and profitable training.

Phil Green

Training Development and Quality Manager

Key training undertaken by staff this year included Housing Benefit (to support the service we provide to Leeds Housing Options), The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations, and Accredited Workplace Mediation Skills, all essential to enable us to provide quality mediation and training services. The latter was supported by funding from the Enhancement Fund (Train to Gain).

Mediation Leeds Volunteer Mediators 2009/10

Our thanks are conveyed to our dedicated team of volunteer mediators, who continued to give their free time and professional skills to resolving dispute in the community throughout 2009-10.

Barbara	Jannat	Oretha
Brett	Jenna	Rachel
Chris	Judy	Ricarda
Emma	Julie	Sandra
Elinor	Karen	Sarah
Geoff	Kay	Susan
Georgie	Lesley	Tania
Gerry	Margaret	Valerie
Helen	Mark	Virginia
Jacqueline	Mark	Walter
James	Matt	Yaakov

Board of Directors

Mediation Leeds continues to benefit from the volunteered skill, expertise and dedication of its directors. We should like to welcome Ian Adderley, who joined the Board in December 2009.

Chair - Simon Williams

Vice-Chair - Tony Waterfield

Treasurer - Susan Betts

Director - John Pickles

Secretary - Marianne Tharby

Director - Ian Adderley

Director - Tony Spice

Staff

Director of Services - Julia Edmunds

Mediation Managers – Irene Crawshaw & Steve Edwards

Finance & Monitoring Manager – Dawn Rodgers

Training & Development Manager – Phil Green

Admin & Communications Officer – Jane Johnston

Thanks to all Mediation Leeds Supporters

Many thanks to the ALMOs and Housing Associations who have recognised the need in the community for a professional yet informal alternative to dispute resolution by continuing with or embarking upon contracts with Mediation Leeds.



Thanks to Leeds City Council for its continued support through Environment and Neighbourhoods Housing Strategy, Health and Environmental Services and Anti Social Behaviour Unit.

Thanks are also extended to:

The Big Lottery, Capacity Builders Modernisation Fund, the Arnold James Burton 1956 Charitable Settlement, Paristamen Foundation and Future Jobs Fund for their welcome donations.

Thank you to the following for Mice Money donations:

Cllr Bernard Atha	Cllr Richard Brett	Cllr Andrew Carter
Cllr Ruth Feldman	Cllr Ronald Feldman	Cllr David Hollingworth
Cllr John Illingworth	Cllr Valerie Kendall	Cllr Matthew Lobley
Cllr Ralph Pryke	Cllr Frank Robinson	
Cllr Keith Wakefield	Cllr Lucinda Yeadon	

Councillor Paul Wadsworth (Conservative, Roundhay ward)

"I'm delighted that I can help Mediation Leeds continue to provide their valuable service to the people of Leeds. In 2009 they dealt with 310 enquiries which resulted in a positive outcome in 67% of cases, relieving pressure on the courts and helping people to come to amicable solutions agreeable to everyone."

Mediation Leeds offers the following services:

-  Consultancy
-  Homelessness Prevention
-  Mediation between groups and
Community Facilitation
-  Neighbourhood Mediation
-  NHS Complaints Conciliation
-  Training in a range of mediation &
conflict resolution
-  Workplace Mediation

Donations

Your donation ensures that we can continue to help make a positive difference to the lives of many people across the city each year, placing the power back in their hands as we assist them in finding a peaceful way out of a conflict.

It costs £1,000 to train a mediator.

Donations of all sizes are welcome as part or total payment towards the above.

Please make your cheque payable to Mediation Leeds.

Gift Aid forms are available upon request.



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