



Annual Report 2007-08

Mediation Leeds - positive resolution for all



Chair's Report

Goodbye 'LCMS', hello 'Mediation Leeds'! After 19 years as Leeds Community Mediation Service, one of the more significant changes undertaken this year was our formal change in name to refresh the image of the organisation. Clearly stating what the organisation does and where it does it in our branding is part of the long-term plan instigated by the Board in 2004/2005 to change the focus of the organisation away from a traditional grant funded charity model to an income generating social business. As part of the re-branding process, the updating of our website has given a significant boost to promoting our 'shop window' to potential contracting organisations and service users alike.

Despite the recognition that Leeds provides our core business, we have in fact taken more referrals this year from locations dispersed around the Yorkshire region than in any previous year. This reflects the number of contracts we have with organisations such as housing associations who may own properties as far north as Knaresborough or as far south as Barnsley. Our memorandum and articles were formally changed this year to acknowledge this changing market, allowing us to operate outside of Leeds.

A significant amount of work has also been achieved to introduce improvements behind the scenes.

Policies and procedures have continued to be reviewed and updated to ensure best working practice and provide a more effective framework for service delivery. Improvements in our IT reporting system have also enabled us to provide more detailed performance reporting information to better meet the needs of our partner organisations.

Whilst 2007/08 has seen year on year growth in our contracts, the continuation of the trend has been slower than anticipated. Increasing income generation therefore remains the primary objective for Mediation Leeds throughout 2008/09, and work continues to achieve this by maximising prospects in current markets whilst tailoring and adapting our service to meet new opportunities.

The staff and volunteer teams provide a key asset to meet this challenge head on. Highly skilled, knowledgeable and passionately motivated, they remain the means by which the high standards of service are delivered and the means by which the organisation will successfully move forward – forward to achieving our long-term goal of being an independent income-generating social business and remaining at the forefront as one of the lead organisations providing community orientated mediation and dispute resolution services in Leeds.

Simon Williams

Simon Williams, Chair

Director of Services Report

Since coming into post in January 2007, I have had a challenging, interesting and rewarding year!

The challenge has been to develop a sustainable longer term approach to funding. We are making progress in the right direction and much of the year was spent in re-securing existing service level agreements and entering into new ones. We also successfully secured some small amounts of grant funding that enabled us to undertake additional work. This included Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (Empowering Communities) to deliver some awareness raising in parts of East and South Leeds, resulting in more referrals to mediation; and Sustainable Futures Funding (ERDF) to pay for the rebranding of the organisation. We changed our name to Mediation Leeds to better reflect the diversity of the

work we do and this grant enabled us to ensure our publicity was up to date with a brand new look.

As we look towards 2008 – 2009, funding becomes tighter for ourselves, in common with many other organisations in the voluntary and community sector, and we plan how to weather this period. We are likely to see a contraction of the service as we focus on delivery to organisations and areas from which we receive funding and for the first time in our 19 year history no longer provide a free service to all the residents of Leeds.

The reward has been to work with an excellent staff team who are committed to both mediation and Mediation Leeds.

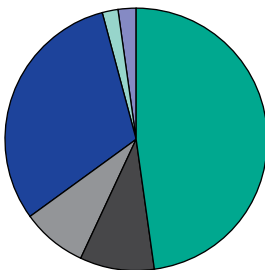
Julia Edmunds

Director of Services

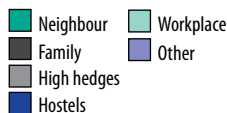
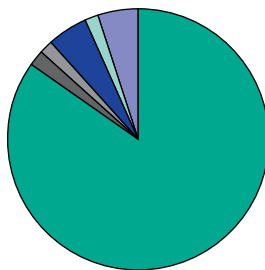
Statistics

Of the 279 Enquiries the service received in this period, 123 were converted to case. 33% of these cases reached a joint meeting between disputants, generating a 90% success rate. The basic success rate across all cases was 57%.

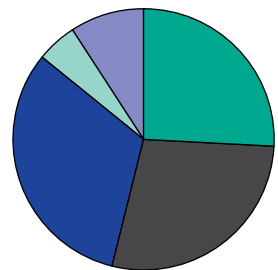
Case Outcomes:



Nature of disputes mediated:



Funding of Mediation Services 2007-08:



Statement of Financial Activities

(incorporating the income and expenditure account) Year ended 31 March 2008

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2008 £	Total Funds 2007 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	2	24,482	32,243	56,725	63,480
Activities for generating funds	3	97,860	-	97,860	84,028
Investment income	4	2,974	-	2,974	2,413
Total Incoming Resources		125,316	32,243	157,559	149,921
Resources Expended					
Charitable activities	5/6	(172,560)	(22,243)	(194,803)	(193,266)
Governance costs	7	(4,645)	-	(4,645)	(5,103)
Other resources expended	8	(310)	-	(310)	-
Total Resources Expended		(177,515)	(22,243)	(199,758)	(199,369)
Net Outgoing Resources for the year/Net Expenditure for the year					
	10	(52,199)	10,000	(42,199)	(49,448)
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward		(15,380)	-	(15,380)	34,068
Total Funds Carried Forward		(67,579)	10,000	(57,579)	(15,380)

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 2008

		2008	2007
	Note	£	£
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	13	9,893	12,803
Current Assets			
Debtors	14	2,746	18,016
Cash at bank and in hand	15	102,126	58,876
		104,872	76,892
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	16	(43,438)	(20,700)
Net Current Assets		61,434	56,192
Total Assets less current liabilities		71,327	68,995
Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year	17	(128,906)	(84,375)
Net Liabilities		(57,579)	(15,380)
Funds			
Restricted income funds	18	10,000	-
Unrestricted income funds	19	(67,579)	(15,380)
Total Funds		(57,579)	(15,380)

The trustees are satisfied that the charity is entitled to exemption the provisions of the Companies Act 1985 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 249A(1), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 249B(2) of the Act. The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the charity keeps proper accounting records which comply with section 221 of the Act, and
- (ii) 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 226, 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.

Signed on their behalf by: S. Betts Miss S Betts

Treasurer's Report

During 2007-08 Mediation Leeds has continued to make further progress with its main financial aim which was to reduce reliance on grant funding and diversify its sources of income.

Between 2006-07 and 2007-08 grant income has fallen from 42% of total income to 32% of total income. Total incoming resources increased by 5% from £149,921 in 2006-07 to £157,559 in 2007-08. The number of contracts in place with different organisations has increased over the year and this trend is expected to grow over the coming year.

As part of an ongoing investment package with Futurebuilders, Mediation Leeds obtained an additional loan of £60,000 in year and began making repayments on the loan. Over the last three years the loan has given Mediation Leeds an opportunity to work towards becoming financially sustainable in the long term. Although significant progress has been made Mediation Leeds has yet to reach a position of being fully sustainable and is therefore likely to be reliant on a significant proportion of its income being obtained from grants for the foreseeable future.

In 2007-08 there were net outgoing resources for the year of £52,199 funded through the use of the loan.

Outlook for 2008 and beyond

Even though significant progress has been made over the last year, there continues to be a substantial financial risk for the organisation while it moves towards becoming financially sustainable.

Mediation Leeds must ensure that its main aim for the coming year is to make significant progress moving towards a full cost recovery model for the services that it provides to the community.

Susan Betts

Sue Betts
Treasurer

Neighbour Mediation

Funding from Leeds City Council enabled Mediation Leeds to provide a mediation service in two local hostels.

Case study, concerning a young person living in one of the hostels:

Situation

Family dynamics changed just prior to the young adult being asked to leave home. A new step-parent made an accusation leaving the young person feeling concerned about the natural parent's unwillingness to consider an alternative version of events. Previous attempts to phone home had been fruitless and eventually resources had dwindled to the extent that there were no longer resources for further phone calls.

The process

The mediator explored the young person's wants, needs and expectations:

- Permanent accommodation
- Maintain contact with natural parent and siblings
- Probabilities of nonreturn to family home.

With the young person's permission, the natural parent was contacted. The mediator was able to relate back to the young person the parent's distress around:

- The offspring being asked to leave home
- Unawareness of attempts to phone home and lack of funds to do so

- Relief... offspring had acknowledged likely difficulties of a return to the family home.
- Eagerness to maintain regular contact.

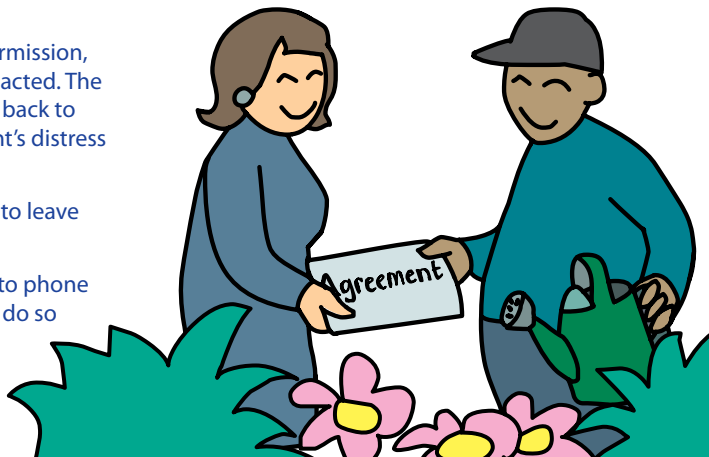
Agreement

Via the mediator, the parties agreed to phone each other, alternately, at a specific time each week. They also agreed to meet at a fixed neutral venue on a regular basis. Additionally, the parent would transfer the young person's belongings to the 'neutral venue' for safe keeping until new accommodation was found.

To honour the agreement, the parent invested in a mobile phone as a precaution against future calls being intercepted. A top-up card was sent for the young person with a request for a text if money was needed.

Outcome

The mediator aided the parent and offspring to learn the importance of establishing facts, rather than relying on supposition, and that keeping the communication lines open is the only way to achieve this.



Workplace Mediation - Case Study

Participants

Following a re-structure in their workplace, a recently appointed manager [Party 1] and an experienced manager [Party 2] found themselves at loggerheads... and catapulted into the early stages of their employer's grievance procedure.

Situation

A particular incident was the catalyst for the dispute. This led to a confrontation, and left each party questioning each other's professionalism.

Party 1 felt she was not being given room to develop: perceived 'interference' and 'checking up'. Badly worded emails were exchanged and communication broke down further between the two. Party 2 began to feel bullied.

That the parties came from different ethnic backgrounds presented an additional issue.

The process

Mediators were met with the usual challenges during individual meetings. One party was prepared to relate her experience at length, though an additional meeting was required before she was confident: a) to meet her colleague 'face to face' at a Joint Meeting; b) there was the possibility of a successful outcome and c) that dialogue exchanged throughout the process would remain confidential unless agreed otherwise. Though similarly not confident in the process, the other party required fewer reassurances before proceeding to Joint Meeting.

People are different and, for that reason, our mediators will use their skill and experience to find the most appropriate way to prepare any party to get the most out of mediation.

'The incident', referred to earlier, was a key issue discussed at Joint Meeting. As often is the case, both parties had different perceptions [truths] of what had happened. The mediators helped the parties to accept that they would never share one truth in relation to this incident but, instead, encouraged them to explore different ways to improve future communications: clarifying the remit of each others' roles and where procedures may, out of necessity, differ from the norm...

Moving on

Openness and honesty earned each party acknowledgement of: a) their capability and professionalism at work; b) the distress and upset that the other had experienced and c) an apology.

Agreement

Critically, there was an agreement that if disagreements arose in the future, there would be direct communication between the parties, [initially without using existing line management procedures], and to avoid reacting to the 'hearsay of others'. The implication of racism was addressed during the meeting and the parties were also able to depart without that particular cloud threatening to dampen their new determination to fix their professional relationship.

Result

4 weeks after Joint Meeting, both parties reported satisfaction with their new situation.

Training & Development

Our training serves many different needs. The accredited programme in Community Mediation Skills trains people to do a job, provides them with a qualification, and provides us with mediators! Training in Conflict Resolution for outside organisations helps them build capacity to manage their own conflicts better. And training for diverse communities supports people to identify and deal with conflict within and across their communities. It builds bridges, and helps develop community cohesion in Leeds.

It has been a busy year. We've trained 15 new volunteer mediators. For our established team of mediators, we have run a wide-ranging programme of training and peer support. From housing and anti-social behaviour, to anti-discrimination (with Stop Hate UK) and mental health awareness (with Community Links), to conflict mapping and a screening of 'In one City' (with director Dave Tomalin, Hiatus Films), to a mystery walk organised by our own intrepid Steve!

Beyond the organisational needs of Mediation Leeds, we have delivered a number of training sessions for organisations: a 7-day accredited Mediation Skills programme to North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations; 3 mediation workshops at Sanctuary Housing Association Residents' Conference; and sessions on Conflict Resolution for Leeds Tenants Federation and Leeds Voice Forum Coordinators and staff team.

An exciting development this year has been working with diverse communities. We ran a 4-session Introduction to Conflict Resolution

programme for members of new and marginalised communities in Leeds. A second programme also attracted professionals supporting these communities. We also ran a day on Handling Conflict for Leeds Refugee Forum (representatives from communities in Leeds), and a 2-session Introduction to Conflict Resolution for Shantona Women's Centre.

As well as being valuable and successful in their own terms, these initiatives offer Mediation Leeds the potential to provide further training opportunities. So we look ahead to another year of interesting, challenging, enjoyable and profitable training.

Phil Green

Training Development and Quality Manager

Mediation Leeds supports the training and development of staff. £1,788 was spent on staff training and development. Mediation Managers Steve and Irene, successfully completed their portfolios and are now 'Competent Mediators'; Training Manager Phil attended the OCN AIMS course with a view to becoming an Internal Assessor; and Finance and Monitoring Manager Dawn completed part 1 of the AAT (Certificate in Accounting) course.

Julia Edmunds

Director of Services

Mediation Leeds Volunteer Mediators 2007-08

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 2007-08.

Andrea	Fidelis	Katrin	Sarah
Andrew	Georgie	Lorna	Satpal
Anne´	Gerry	Marc	Simon
Barbara	Gwen	Margaret	Steve
Beverley	Hayley	Mark	Stuart
Casey	Irene	Maryam	Susan
Cheryl	Jacqueline	Oretha	Ursula
Chris	Jenna	Phil	Valerie
Donna	Jeremy	Rachel	Virginia
Dorothee´	John	Ricarda	Wendy
Edward	Judy	Ronald	Yaakov

Board of Directors

All working in a voluntary capacity, Mediation Leeds has benefited greatly from their skill, expertise and dedication during a period that required much input in further development of our Business Plan to ensure the future survival of the service.

Chair - Simon Williams

Vice-Chair - Tony Waterfield

Treasurer - Susan Betts

Director - John Pickles

Secretary - Marianne Tharby

Director - Sarah Hill

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 Anne Oddy, [Income Generation Officer], who left in May 2007 for a job at West Yorkshire Trading Standards.

Thanks to all Mediation Leeds Supporters

Thanks to Futurebuilders England for their continuing financial support to bridge the gap during the Mediation Leeds transition from total grant dependency to self sufficiency.

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 also to Leeds City Council for its continued support through Neighbourhoods and Housing, Health and Environmental Services, Area Committee Well-being funds (inner North East, Outer North West and Outer West), and grants from Safer and Stronger Communities (Empowering Communities) and Sustainable Futures.



Thanks are also extended to:

The Rayne Foundation and The Co-operative Foundation (grants received in 2007-2008 for 2008-2009), the Arnold James Burton 1956 Charitable Settlement, the Denton Charitable Trust, the N & P Hartley Memorial Fund, the Paristamen Foundation and previous clients for their welcome donations.


Finally thank you to the following for Mice Money donations:

Cllr Bernard Atha
Cllr Ruth Feldman
Cllr John Illingworth
Cllr Alison Lowe
Cllr Keith Wakefield

Cllr Colin Campbell
Cllr Ronald Feldman
Cllr Valerie Kendall
Cllr James McKenna

Cllr Ryk Downes
Cllr Janet Harper
Cllr Matthew Lobley
Cllr Paul Wadsworth

Mediation Leeds offers the following services:

-  Neighbour Mediation
-  Workplace Mediation
-  NHS Complaints Conciliation
-  Training in a range of mediation and conflict resolution skills
-  Mediation between groups and Community Facilitation

Donations

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

It costs £750 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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