

MEDIATION

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MEDIATION CASE REFERRAL: GUIDANCE FOR SELF-FUNDED CASES

These guidance notes have been designed to help individuals wishing to refer a mediation case to us complete our referral form easily and accurately so delays in assisting you are kept to a minimum. Please make sure you have read these before submitting the form.

RECEIVING A REFERRAL

Referrals should be sent to us by **email** with the completed form as an **attachment**. General mediation referrals (i.e.: neighbour disputes) should be sent to info@mediation-plus.org.uk and Time2Talk (intergenerational mediation) referrals to time2talk@mediation-plus.org.uk. **Please note there is a specific referral form for the Time2Talk service due to the information we require.**

REFERRAL FORM COMPLETION

Please ensure **all your** details on the form are complete. Incomplete forms will be returned and cases not commenced until the additional information is provided. Mediation is a voluntary process and we **cannot** commence the case until the other party has agreed to the process and we will contact them to confirm their agreement to mediate.

FUNDING AND COSTS

As a small charity that receives no statutory funding, Mediation Plus can **only** accept cases where funding to cover our costs is in place. If your case costs are not covered by one of our funders or agency partners, you will need to have **agreed in writing** to cover these **prior** to the case commencing. Please check with the Service Manager or Casework co-ordinator to confirm how your case is being funded. **Time 2 Talk** cases involving qualifying age young people are supported by funding from BBC Children in Need until December 2015.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR MEDIATORS

Mediation Plus **must** be made aware of **any** circumstances that may influence safe conduct of meetings in advance (access to premises, pets etc.), or any health or welfare issues that either party may have which may affect their ability to participate in the mediation process. Mediators **always** retain the right to cancel or move the location of meetings or terminate meetings if they feel there are any issues or circumstances that require them to do so. **Their safety and the safety of the parties are paramount.** Our mediators are advised **not** to provide personal phone numbers to those parties involved in a case, so all messages should be relayed via our office.

MEDIATOR VISITS

Mediators will find out the facts, feelings and issues of the dispute and whether shuttle mediation or a joint meeting between the parties involved is most appropriate. After each meeting with either party, mediators send in a **written report** to our office within a few days so that we can monitor the progress of the case and any issues arising. This information remains **entirely confidential** and is for our internal monitoring and evaluation purposes only, unless we have a duty of care to prevent harm, abuse or a criminal act occurring.

JOINT MEETINGS

If parties agree to a joint meeting then mediators will arrange the best available dates/times for each party to attend a joint meeting and a suitable agreed venue for the meeting to take place. If we are required to hire a meeting room or other venue for this, these will be passed on at cost.

MEDIATED AGREEMENTS

All mediated agreements are entered into **voluntarily** by both parties and are **not** legally binding. This is stated clearly on the mediation agreement template. If a **written** mediated agreement is reached, both parties and both mediators will sign it and a physical or electronic (scanned) copy provided to each party. If agreed by both parties, a copy may be provided to any third parties affected by the agreement. If a **verbal** agreement only is reached, mediators will include details in their subsequent report.

CASE CLOSURE OR SUSPENSION

Cases are deemed closed where a written or verbal agreement is reached (as above) or mediators report they can progress the case no further. Our office team will evaluate whether to formally close the case at this point, suspend it (if awaiting outcome of action by another agency etc.) or reallocate it to new mediators. Parties will be informed in writing by email or post if the case is being suspended or closed.

CASE EVALUATION

Mediation Plus will send out evaluation forms to both parties within two weeks of a case being closed. If this is not returned within one month, a follow-up telephone evaluation will be made by our office using the same format. We actively seek to receive feedback from all parties involved as to how we provide and can continue to improve our service, and so that our funders and potential service users can see the impact mediation has had. Evaluation forms should be sent to the Service Manager at info@mediation-plus.org.uk.

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact our central office team before you complete the referral form.