

MEDIATION

Mediation Plus, Southview, Western Road, Hailsham BN27 3DN
T: 01323 442781 F: 01323 449505 E: info@mediation-plus.org.uk
www.mediation-plus.org.uk

MEDIATION CASE REFERRAL: GUIDE FOR REFERRING AGENCIES

These guidance notes have been designed to help agencies wishing to refer a mediation case to us complete our referral form easily and accurately so delays in actioning and allocating cases 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**. Urgent referrals can be taken over the phone if one of our office team is available to complete the form with you, so please ensure you have all the information we will need to hand. 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** details on the form are complete. The declaration that both parties have consented to mediation **must** be signed by the referring agency. We **cannot** commence a case where only one party has agreed to the process. Full details about our service can be found on our website. Incomplete forms will be **returned** and cases not commenced until the additional information is provided.

CASE FUNDING

Mediation Plus can **only** accept cases where a funding stream to cover our costs is in place. If we **do not** have a Service Level Agreement in place with you or costs are not covered by another funder, one must be completed **before** the case commences. 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 the 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.

CASE OPENING

Your case will be allocated a number prefixed by **MPE** (Eastbourne), **MPW** (Wealden), or **MPL** (Lewes) or **T2T** (all Time 2 Talk cases) depending on the local authority the parties are located in. Please use the case number in **all** communication sent to the parties or ourselves.

CASE 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 or behavioural issues relating to the party), 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 phone numbers to parties involved in cases and all messages should be relayed via our office. Mediators usually work by **first name only** but are issued with photo ID cards if required or requested to confirm their affiliation with Mediation Plus.

CASE UPDATES/PARTY VISITS

Mediators will find out the facts, feelings and issues of the dispute and whether shuttle mediation or a joint meeting between the parties is most appropriate. After each meeting with either party, mediators will 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. We are happy to keep referring agencies updated with progress on the case but will **not** provide or report on the confidential discussions taking place or provide copies of meeting reports.

JOINT MEETINGS

If both parties agree to a joint meeting then mediators will need to find out the best available dates/times for each party to attend a joint meeting and also mediators' availability. If your organisation has a suitable venue for such a meeting to take place, please let our office know.

MEDIATION 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 will also be provided to the referring agency. If a **verbal** agreement only is reached, mediators will include details in their subsequent report. Our office will then write letters to both parties and the referring agency with details included.

CASE CLOSURE/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 to take a different approach. Parties will be informed in writing by email or post if the case is being suspended or closed. We will provide a case feedback form to the referring agency at the end of each case.

CASE EVALUATION

Mediation Plus will send out evaluation forms to the referring agency and 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 form. We actively seek to receive feedback from referring agencies and parties 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. 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.