

SEN Mediation Newsletter

Wessex Mediation working with parents, schools and LA's to resolve conflict about SEN

Spring term 2009

Telephone 08450529487; www.wessexmediation.co.uk e: info@wessexmediation.co.uk

National Evaluation of Mediation Provision.

A summary of the Survey findings – commissioned by the department for children, schools and families, was presented to the SW Mediator Conference held at North Petherton, Bridgwater by Nick Knapman.

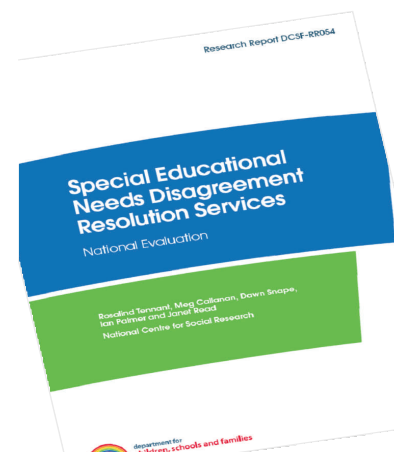
A summary of the presentation is set out below, see panel for more information.

Parents identified that mediation helped to:

- equalise power differentials between parents and the LA or the school;
- improve parents understanding of the process and disagreement ;
- facilitate access to relevant people / decision makers:
- make the process feel more supportive and less daunting
- contribute to valued outcomes

From the perspective of LA officers, mediation enabled a clear focus on a particular disagreement that had perhaps been missing or not fully effective up to that point. They perceived that mediation helped to.

- provide an extra pair of hands;
- increase parents' awareness;
- provide an opportunity for LA staff to speak directly to parents;
- provide a hearing of evidence for decision makers
- provide an opportunity to speak directly with other decision makers
- contribute to valued outcomes



Re SEN Mediation, National Evaluation

More information on the SEN Disagreement Resolution, National Evaluation can be found at DCSF Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ.

Email dcsf@prolog.uk.com

Please quote DCSF- RR054

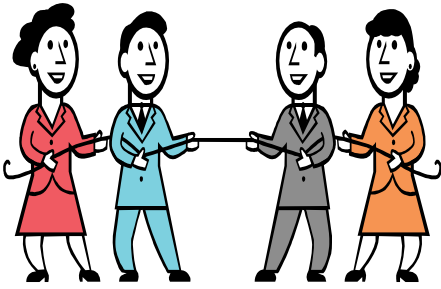
Included in this issue

National Evaluation	1
Referral volume update	1
Why mediation?	2
Training News	2

Referral volume and case status by L.A. 01/09/08 – 31/12/08

Local Authority	Summary				Cases Used	Current case status		
	Pre purchased Cases	Total number of referrals	Ongoing	Total closed		Seeking willingness for mediation	Initial visits	Joint meetings taken place
Bath & North East Somerset	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bournemouth	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	
Bristol	6	1	1	0	1	1	0	
Cornwall	6	1	1	0	1	0	1	
Devon	6	2	1	1	1	1	0	
Dorset	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Gloucestershire	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Isles of Scilly	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
North Somerset	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Plymouth	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Poole	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	
Somerset	6	3	0	0	1	0	3	
South Gloucestershire	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Swindon	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	
Torbay	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Wiltshire	6	3	0	0	3	0	3	
All LEAs	59	14	0	3	9	4	7	

Wessex Mediation working with parents, schools and LA's to resolve conflict about SEN provision.



Did you receive what you expected from the service?

A parent responded; " Yes, I wanted the chance to explain why I felt so strongly and needed the chance to do that uninterrupted. I was listened to and I felt like I was heard and understood"

The first Wessex skills training sessions to take place in Dorchester on 23rd February 2009

Further events to be arranged in Bristol and Exeter or Plymouth



LA's requested that training should include ;

- Mediation skills for Case Officers
- Mediation awareness
- Case sharing
- Mediation skills for Support Workers

Why SEN Disagreement Resolution?

Mediation gives parents, schools and Local Authorities the opportunity to set aside a more formal process in favour of one that is considered less adversarial and more appropriate for long term relationships.

Mediation takes the focus away from processes, policies and positions previously adopted. The focus returns to "needs", understanding and unpicking of previously held perceptions and expectations.

The Local Authority has a difficult task when trying to balance the financial needs of the many whilst meeting the expectations of parents whose children have special educational needs.

Because a parent naturally wants only the very best for their child, this can sometimes result in a conflict with the authorities statutory obligation to

provide a *satisfactory* standard of education for all of the children it is responsible for.

As conflict escalates the parties stop providing each other information that could be helpful because they want to have the upper hand at a later date. Personal communication deteriorates and letters become more formal, particularly when third parties are involved.

The parents desire for the "best" sometimes overstates their realistic expectations. Communication inevitably breaks down, relationships can move to an adversarial footing .

Mediation provides an opportunity for parties to communicate directly with other in a safe confidential environment. An environment that encourages and protects openness and honesty. A place where a parent has an

opportunity to listen to the rationale for decision making. A place where the SEN manager and parent can work cooperatively on solutions rather than defending each others corner.

Mediation works and leads to resolution only if the parties want it to! Sure it is helped by the mediator but the success or otherwise of the mediation is purely down to the parties.

Mediation is but one of the many approaches that can be used by the LA. or parents.

However mediation works best however when selected for what can be achieved rather than as a last resort!.

The process is owned by the parties, so why not be pro active and make it work for you?

Training News

The first workshop will take place in Dorchester on 23 rd February 2009

Dorset County Council have kindly offered to arrange a training room, so there will not be any charge for the event. The workshop will be able to cater for 20 delegates with priority being given to Dorset , Bournemouth and Poole authorities. Joining instructions will follow in due course, it is intended to be an early afternoon start that will run for 3 hours.

The event will cover

- The concept of mediation
- Hooks and triggers
- Skills of a mediator

The training objective is that;

- a) participants will be able to describe the objectives of the mediation process
- b) have a basic understanding of how personal influences can affect communication
- c) to be able to describe the communication skills used by a mediator

Feedback will be sought and reported after the event — further workshops will be arranged in Bristol and Exeter or Plymouth for the authorities not included in the first session. Please feel free to contact me to discuss what you would like the training to cover.

SEN Mediation Newsletter NewsResolving Conflict

Primary Business Address
Your Address Line 2
Your Address Line 3
Your Address Line 4

Phone: 555-555-5555
Fax: 555-555-5555
E-mail: someone@example.com

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

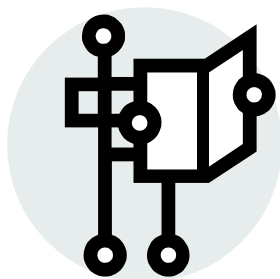
It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.



Your business tag line here.



Back Page Story Headline



Caption describing picture or graphic.

This story can fit 175-225 words.

If your newsletter is folded and mailed, this story will appear on the back. So, it's a good idea to make it easy to read at a glance.

A question and answer session is a good way to quickly capture the attention of readers. You can either compile questions that you've received since the last edition or you can summarize some generic questions that are frequently asked about your organization.

A listing of names and titles of managers in your organization is a good way to give your newsletter a personal

touch. If your organization is small, you may want to list the names of all employees.

If you have any prices of standard products or services, you can include a listing of those here. You may want to refer your readers to any other forms of communication that you've created for your organization.

You can also use this space to remind readers to mark their calendars for a regular event, such as a breakfast meeting for vendors every third Tuesday of the month, or a biannual charity auction.

If space is available, this is a good place to insert a clip art image or some other graphic.