

SEN Mediation Newsletter

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

Autumn Term Telephone 08450529487; e: info@wessexmediation.co.uk

Mediation Skills Training 4th March 2010.

Wessex Mediation is running a Training event that will take place in the Dorchester area on 4th March 2010 1.00pm–4.30 pm
The training will explore; the role of the mediator, the process of mediation and the personal skills necessary to maintain neutrality. Target audience - those who seek to develop their personal skills and have an interest in disagreement resolution. Application for a place should be made before 31 January 2010 on a form that can be downloaded from the website www.wessexmediation.co.uk please then send to Colin on info@wessexmediation.co.uk

Wessex Disagreement Resolution Service Annual Report 2008–2009

The Annual Report was presented to Advisory Group members who met at Bishops Hull House, Taunton on 12 October 2009, a summary is included in this newsletter. The full report is available to download from www.wessexmediation.co.uk.

The service, now in its 8th year obtained valuable feedback from participants who indicated that the service meets a need to provide a helpful independent vehicle for the resolution of SEN disagreements.

Participants to mediation will often only relate to the “outcome” they have been able to achieve to the effectiveness of the mediation process. Therefore it is pleasing for us to note from the survey that there was such a positive view of the service .

Statistics relate to survey replies received for cases listed during the year ending 31st August 2009. A total of 29 replies were received,—12 from Parents, 14 from LA representatives and 3 from School representatives The survey shows that 96% of all respondents Agreed or Strongly Agreed that; Staff were approachable and helpful; they were given a clear explanation of what mediation was about and the mediator dealt with everyone fairly:

93% told us that they agreed or agreed strongly that they were kept informed: 89% said they thought the venue was satisfactory and that mediation had helped to improve communication: 65% of respondents stated that they agreed or strongly agreed that mediation helped to resolve areas of disagreement , 17% were undecided and 13% stated that mediation did not help resolve the disagreement.

As alluded to above in all fields of mediation participants relate the worth of the process to the outcome that they were able to achieve. For example the person may go away with a better understanding, able to communicate more effectively and have sorted some issues but— human nature being what it is if the main issue did not go their way they can still be of the opinion that mediation was not worthwhile. However in our survey 19 (70%) respondents reported that mediation helped, 5 (18%) were undecided and 4 (15%) disagreed.

During 2008/09 Wessex Mediation changed its operational structure, the service is now managed by one Service Coordinator . This change does not impact upon service users as two intake workers continue to receive telephone calls and assist service users on a daily basis. I would like to thank you all for your cooperation throughout the service year this has been invaluable in assisting us carry out our duties in a timely manner. We look forward to delivering the type of service that you are entitled to expect over the coming months.

Colin Gould Coordinator—Wessex Mediation DD 01823 352210

When is the right time to suggest mediation?

The short answer is whenever communication has broken down. If parties are still able to communicate effectively , there is no point in mediation.

The SEN Code of Practice clearly sets out its intentions with regard to disagreement resolution. — Preventing and Resolving disagreements is covered in section 2.22–2.31 pages 22–26.

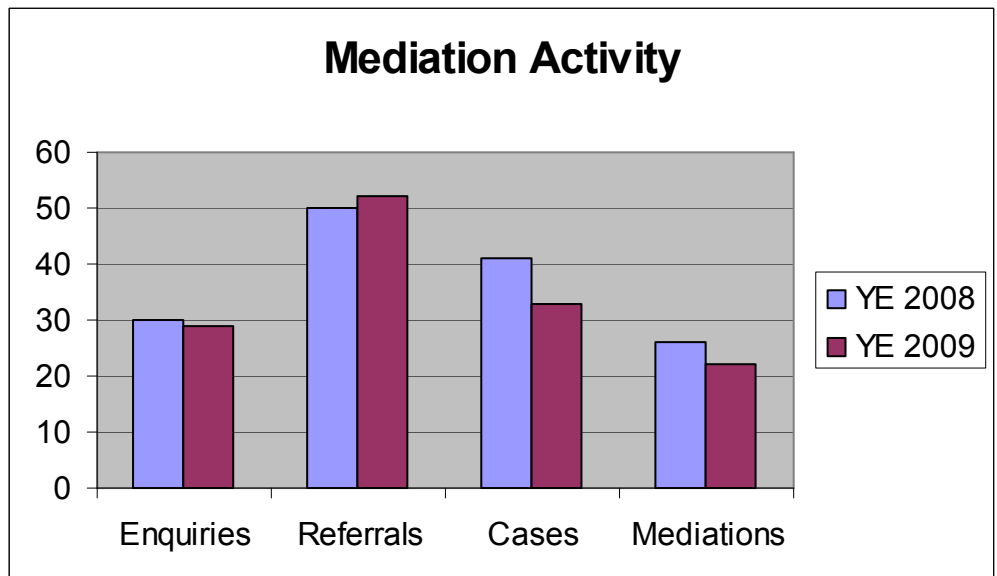
Mediation Activity (definitions)

Enquiries; A discussion with one party, normally a parent.

Referrals; possible casework, personal details taken and process commenced.

Cases; work carried out with the parties by the coordinator or mediator.

Mediations; mediator appointed and cost incurred by LA.



Case Outcome (definitions)

Acted as a catalyst; change of position following intervention.

Resolved following visit; mediator appointed and parties visited.

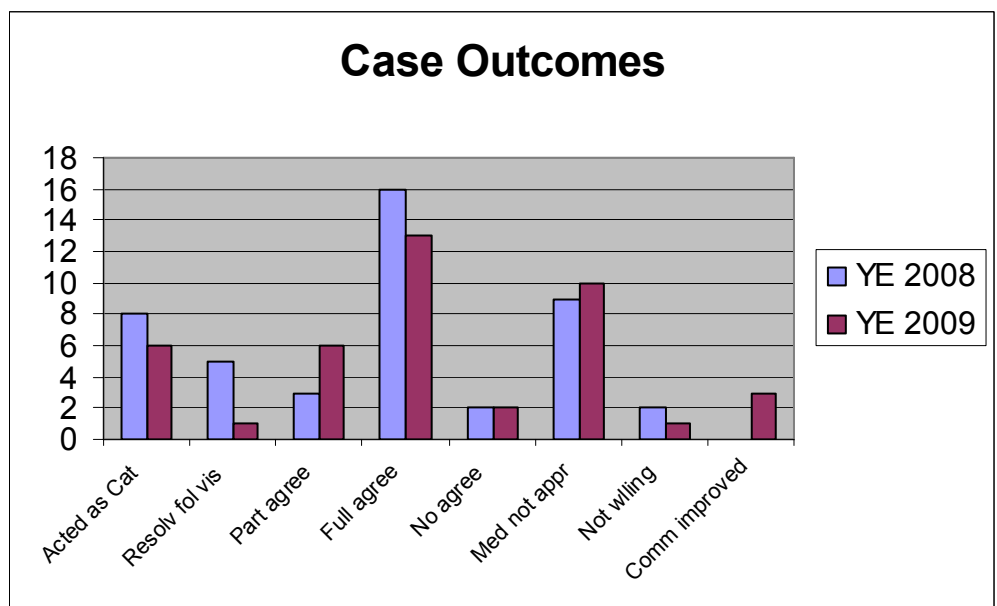
Part agreement; mediation meeting held - agreement on some issues.

Full agreement; mediation meeting held - agreement on all issues.

No agreement; mediation meeting held - no agreement reached.

Mediation not appropriate - discovered following appointment of mediator.

Communication improved —not



Referrals received from			Parties involved in mediation		
Parents	LA	PPS	Parents	Schools	LAs
36 (42)	6 (6)	10 (2)	52 (50)	10 (8)	42 (43)

The adjacent table relates to the where the number of referrals were received from and who the parties were. Last years numbers are included in brackets.

Mediator Profile Mags Fisk



My career background is working in social housing. I started in London Borough of Southwark as a Housing Trainee and have worked in Somerset for the past 20 years firstly at Taunton Deane, then at Mendip.

I think this work has drawn me to mediation as much of housing work involves neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour and is so time consuming and stressful to deal with via Court Procedures.

I have been a mediator since 1996 when I first did my training in

community mediation. I enjoyed the work and when in 2001 the opportunity arose I attended an SEN Disagreement resolution training module. This then enabled me to mediate in this speciality.

I find the process totally compelling and it is always a surprise and joy to me to see people who are in conflict come together with understanding and sometimes reconciliation.

I also work as an Advocate for Age Concern and skills developed here have helped me in work-

ing with parents and the Local Authorities to make sure that needs of the child and parents are clearly specified and understood. As I do not come from an educational background the SEN process was quite a surprise to me and I have nothing but admiration for parents and officers who work hard to juggle needs and resources.

I gain a great deal of satisfaction from any form of mediation work and feel very privileged to be involved and to make a real difference.