





## What is Mediation?

Mediation is a flexible process that is used in a number of different situations. The service aims to resolve disputes using a mediator to negotiate agreement between disputing parties.

## How Can Mediation Help?

It allows people to be heard. In many cases, a simple apology from either or both sides is all that is required to put the situation right.

It is an empowering process that encourages people to put forward their own suggestions and ideas.

It is less intimidating than legal procedures, and people represent themselves rather than having someone speak for them.

It provides solutions that the parties themselves have decided on, giving them all a sense of ownership of any agreement. As a result, agreements reached in this way last much better than solutions handed down by the courts or an arbitrator.

It can be organised quickly. When disagreements are not addressed, they can escalate. Mediation is easy to arrange and can be completed within weeks.

By giving everyone the opportunity to explain their side of the story, and to talk without being interrupted, mediation can be very helpful when a situation is stuck.

It is not an 'easy option' - when people are honest and are encouraged to say what they feel, the situation can provoke strong emotions - but once people have had a chance to express their feelings, they are more likely to let their hostility go.



## When Can Mediation Be Used?

Neighbour Mediation is a way of resolving disputes between those who live in the same locality or Neighbourhood. Disputes can cover a wide range of issues, including noise, anti-social behaviour, dogs, parking, boundary problems or verbal abuse.

Neighbour Mediation is often the best option when:

- You need to stay on good terms because you're living near to each other
- It is in both your interests to sort things out, the dispute is becoming a strain on both of you, calling in the authorities or going to court may make the problem worse and cost a lot of money and heartache.

## What Happens In Neighbour Mediation?

Once Mediation has been requested and set up, trained mediators visit the person or persons who have made contact to find out more about the problem. Anything said at the meeting is confidential. The other party is then contacted to see if they would like to take part. If so, they also receive a visit from the mediators.

If both parties recognise that the problem needs to be resolved, and agree to a joint meeting, the mediator's chances of success are high.

Joint meetings usually take place on neutral ground, and the mediators ensure that everyone has a chance to put their side of the story without interruption. Those involved are encouraged to think up solutions to their difficulties, and the mediators help them to explore the suggestions that are made.

If the parties have met once and have not been able to reach a solution but want to continue negotiating, mediators may offer 'shuttle mediation'. This process involves the mediators talking separately to those involved and conveying their wants and suggestions to the other party until a solution is found that is acceptable to all. This technique is sometimes used when the parties are reluctant to meet at all, although it is not as effective in rebuilding relationships as joint meetings.