



Guidance to referral agencies:

Mediation*first* is a registered charity covering the Boroughs of Waverley and East Hants. We are governed by a Board of Trustees and operate on a voluntary basis with a Chair, Coordinator and approximately 13 volunteer mediators, all professionally trained and qualified. Our referrals come from the Council, Housing Associations, the Police, other voluntary organisations and from private enquiries.

The purpose of the mediation*first* service is to seek the resolution of actual or potential conflict between individuals, groups or organisations through a neutral third party intervention so that different perspectives on a problem and opposing positions may be heard and where possible reconciled. We are not counsellors and for the main are not therapeutically trained, and so aim to support participants to focus on the present and future rather than the past.

The service is free, impartial and completely confidential.

What are typical disputes?

- Noise
- Verbal abuse
- Rubbish
- Children's behaviour
- Pets
- Car parking
- Boundary disputes
- High hedges
- Community conflicts involving more than two households
- Issues involving residents and local businesses
- Homelessness and family disputes

Guidelines for potential referrers:

- See if the neighbours are willing and able to talk directly to each other before it becomes too big a problem
- Explain the purpose of mediation – helping them to find a solution to the difficulties that suits everyone involved. It's confidential and impartial; mediators are trained and experienced and will not take sides
- Check who is bothered by the situation and who needs to be involved. Sometimes young people need to be included in the conversation as it may be their behaviour that is causing problems. Our service includes trained family mediators who can help
- Contact the service sooner rather than later. Although the service is confidential, we are always happy to provide informal advice to neighbours directly or to referring agencies.
- We will be able to tell you whether or not the case has progressed to a face to face meeting, and whether an agreement has been reached but not the specifics of the agreement.

Family disputes:

While our main focus is on neighbourhood disputes, conflicts within neighbourhoods often arise when relationships within families have broken down or become challenging. Parents who find it difficult to manage their teenage children are an example of this, as are arguing parents. Some examples of the kinds of disputes where the mediation service might be able to help include: -

- Arguments between family members
- Differences of opinion on what is acceptable behaviour within the family
- Aggressive acts between parents and/or between parents and children
- 'Runaways' – where the child or parent wishes to repair relationships

How to make a referral:

You can contact us by telephone or email if you would like to consider making a referral to our service.