

# Annual Report 2020-21



**Time to Transform  
Community  
Conflict**



[www.mediationherts.org.uk](http://www.mediationherts.org.uk)

# How We Work

Mediation Hertfordshire's success lies in our ability to resolve conflict and rebuild relationships. We are a not-for-profit organisation offering an independent and impartial lifeline to those experiencing conflict in the community, within a family, in a school or in a workplace environment.

Our team of more than 40 fully trained mediators come from a wide ranging background of experience. They help us to deliver a professional, skilled mediation service all year round. We also provide bespoke mediation training programmes to partners, schools, universities and other client facing organisations.



COMMUNITY



TRAINING



FAMILY



WORKPLACE



CONFLICT COACHING



PEER MEDIATION

# Our Partners

We would like to thank the following organisations and funders for supporting our work this year:-



CLARION HOUSING

the Tudor trust



thrive homes

settle.



WELWYN HATFIELD



watford community housing



St Albans City & District Council



Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire



Network Homes

trestle 1981



HCF Hertfordshire Community Foundation

Hightown



relate the relationship people

love every drop anlianwater

University of Hertfordshire UH

NHS Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group



Ministry of Justice

# Chair's Report

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**This is my fifth annual report as Chair of Mediation Hertfordshire. Our constitution prevents any further term in office, so I am passing the responsibility to our new chair elect Chris Mills, who will take over after our AGM in October. However, I will not be leaving Mediation Hertfordshire and will remain as both a trustee and volunteer mediator.**

So, in my final report, I thought I would review the last five years. We have seen significant growth of our case work, both in terms of numbers and types of dispute. In my first year as Chair, Mediation Hertfordshire supported 76 mediation cases. The last year saw us deliver 191 cases, a significant increase in demand for our service. We have also increased our volunteer numbers from 30 to 49 in the past five years and have achieved full geographical coverage for our service across the county. During this period we have also strengthened our financial resilience and I believe we have a strong future in supporting the Hertfordshire community, although we must not rest on our laurels.

‘**Transforming Community Conflict**’ is a project that we started working on during this year. It will lead to a report with recommendations, being presented to our AGM in October 2021. Our CEO, Victoria Harris has led this project and should be highly commended for her sterling work. The report will evidence the many ways that community mediation can be utilised to support individuals as well as the systems of health, housing and community safety. It will also analyse the current state of community mediation in the UK, looking at the drastic reduction of community mediation services over the past 15 years. The report will conclude with recommendations to support the community mediation sector and to reverse the declining trend. The report contains ground breaking data and conclusions that we hope will influence new thinking and a reprioritization of community mediation services throughout the country. We would like to thank all those who have contributed.

We do however, consider that this report is just the beginning. If upon reading the final report, you want to engage in the discussion, please do contact us and let us work together to raise the voice of Transforming Community Conflict.

No Annual Report would be complete without recording my most sincere thanks to all of the team, both in the office and our Volunteers. They have kept our organisation going throughout a global pandemic. They are all truly exceptional and deserve our most sincere congratulations and thanks.

I would also like to place on record, my sincere thanks to all the trustees who have been part of this great Team, they are:

*Fernando Da Leal*: Our longest serving Trustee and an Accountant who commits a significant amount of time to our organisation to keep our books in order.

*Andy Michaels*: Trustee and Volunteer Mediator. *Ian Tottman*: Trustee and Volunteer Mediator

*Ketan Varia*: Trustee and Volunteer Mediator. *Andrew Brown*: Trustee and Volunteer mediator

*Christopher Mills*: Trustee and Volunteer Mediator, my replacement as chair post our AGM in October.

*Julie Still*: Trustee and Volunteer Mediator. Julie is our second longest serving trustee, who is on her second term with Mediation Hertfordshire.

*Sarah Davies*: Trustee and Volunteer Mediator. Sarah has guided and supported us to develop our policies and business plans. She is moving on to new challenges this year.

We have new Trustees who will be joining us at this year's AGM. You are all very welcome and we wish you every success in your new roles. Thank you. May I also take this opportunity to mention a few trustees who have moved on but have had a significant influence over the last five years:

*Arran Elkeles*, *Stephen Lambert*, *Sandra Marshall* and *Abi Agbaje-Williams*

In conclusion, every member of Mediation Hertfordshire, Volunteers, Staff and Trustees make up an incredibly special team that I am humbled to be a small part of. Thank you to you all. You are doing a great job and every day you make a difference in our community.

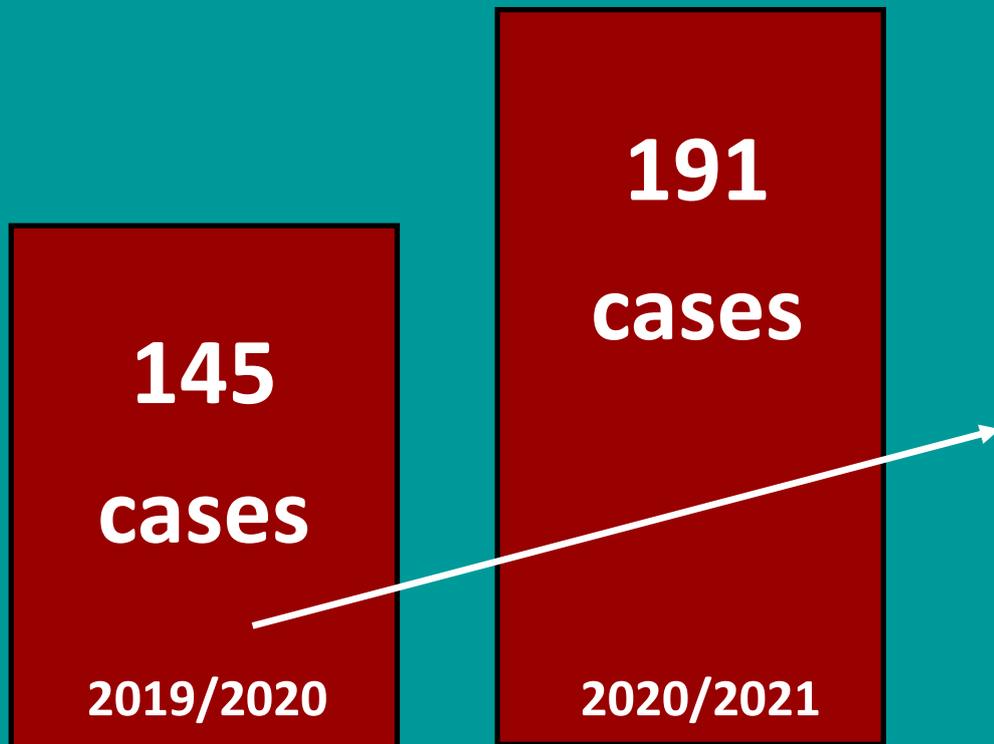


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**Duncan Jarrett OBE**  
Chair

# Our Impact in 2020/21

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The need for community mediation is rising. Our case load increased by 35% this year, and there is no indication that this need is levelling off as the community starts to open up again and we learn to live with Covid-19.

Our new report, 'Transforming Community Conflict' demonstrates that many Community Mediation organisations across the UK have experienced similar increased demand. The 15 community mediation organisations who responded to our research survey told us:

- 86% utilise volunteer mediators, using an average of 35 mediators per organisation.
- In the last year, 93% adapted to using online dispute resolution.
- Mediation cases commonly involved noise, anti-social behaviour, child contact, lifestyle differences and inter-generational issues.
- The top three referrers of disputes to community mediation services came from local authorities, housing associations and the police.
- 73% have experienced an increase in case numbers over the last 5 years.

# CEO's Report

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**The opportunity provided by The Tudor Trust to illuminate the benefits of community mediation and look to the future, via our research report, 'Transforming Community Conflict' is timely in view of the increasing demand for conflict resolution services. In writing the report, it was a pleasure to work with individuals and organisations across the UK to discuss the shared challenges and aspirations that exist within the community mediation sector.**

One recommendation from the research report is the founding of a National Community Mediation Service, to enable all individuals to access support with conflict resolution. This recommendation recognises that local delivery should be an overriding objective and that the value of local connections must not be underestimated. We hope that our report leads to more sustained support for existing organisations who are doing so much to support their local communities.

We also hope that the report contributes to the wider conversation about how we as individuals choose to resolve disputes; not least as how we live and work and the condition of our wider networks are all social determinants of health. Community mediation has to date been under-utilised in the health sector, but the advent of social prescribing provides new opportunities to help individuals who are experiencing dark days due to conflict.

The value of community mediation to the housing and community safety sector is better known but the potential for this to be expanded, to help prevent homelessness and reduce hate crime for example, is also identified within the report.

This work that is being delivered across the UK by individuals and organisations makes a major contribution to our collective wellbeing and warrants greater recognition. I hope that when you have had a chance to read the report, you will engage with us to help take the conversation forward.

The arrival of Covid 19 in March 2020 heralded major changes for Mediation Hertfordshire. Ensuring that we remained operational to support our local community was key and this meant the adoption of new working practices enabled by Online Dispute Resolution (ODR). Many factors needed to be considered, not least offering training in ODR to our volunteer mediators and ensuring that there were safe working practices to enable our small staff team to continue working. The Pandemic speeded the adoption of tech options and the ease with which they were embedded, was matched by an equality of outcomes enjoyed by face-to-face interventions. The digital divide that we feared was not realised and more mediations than ever before in the history of Mediation Hertfordshire took place in 2020-2021. There is no doubt that ODR will be a key delivery method for community mediation in the future.

That Mediation Hertfordshire was able to continue operating when the Pandemic arrived, is down to the willingness of volunteer mediators to adapt to the new online way of working and be present to support others; notwithstanding the personal challenges that the virus presented to them as individuals. As ever I would like to express my personal thanks to those amazing volunteers, our small staff team and our volunteer trustees who give so much of themselves to this organisation.

An extra-special thank-you from all at Mediation Hertfordshire is extended to our Chair of Trustees Duncan Jarrett OBE, who has just completed his 5 year tenure as Chair. Duncan's contribution to our Organisation has been as fundamental to our development, as it is to our future. Thank-you for your kindness and for your commitment and for all that you intend to continue to do, to support those who are experiencing the adverse effects of conflict.



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**Victoria Harris LL.M.**  
CEO

# Accounts for 2020/21



## Mediation Hertfordshire Limited

### Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March 2021

	2020/21	2019/20
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Grants and Earned Income	000	95,301
Interest Receivable	000	524
Covid-19 Small Business Grant Fund	000	
Donations	000	5,580
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	000	111,405
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Society Expenses	000	93,025
Legal and Professional Fees	000	2,095
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	-	-
Depreciation	000	3,518
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	000	98,638
 <b>(DEFICIT) SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	 <b>000</b>	 <b>12,767</b>
 <b>GENERAL RESERVE</b>		
Total assets less current liabilities		
	<u>000</u>	<u>79,925</u>

# Treasurer's Report

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**Mediation Hertfordshire is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 registered with charitable objectives, registration number 28695R.**

**Our charitable objectives are the promotion, facilitation and provision of mediation and other conflict resolution services.**

Mediation Hertfordshire is governed by the Rules of the Society and by the Board of Management, who receive no remuneration for their services other than reasonable expenses. Operationally, the organisation is managed by the CEO who reports to the Board of Management. There are three additional part time workers employed by Mediation Hertfordshire.

Financial systems are in place to manage income and expenditure on a monthly basis. Information is reviewed at quarterly board meetings and accounts are audited annually by external auditors. Annual returns and accounts are also filed with the Financial Conduct Authority which is the regulatory body for Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies.

The results of the financial year 2020-2021 are detailed in the Accounts page. Our income increased by 14% over the previous year to £126,935. This included grants from:

- The Ministry of Justice via the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner for £18,050.
- The NHS Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group for £9,660
- The Herts Community Foundation for £7,500 which related to emergency funding arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our Reserves increased by 20% to £96,104 which will provide a sound foundation for future development and to withstand any downturn in funding due to any future adverse economic situations.



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**Fernando da Franca Leal**  
Treasurer



# Transforming Community Conflict...What if?

*If 2020 saw 1462 cases being delivered by about one third of known community mediation organisations, then possibly we can speculate that almost 4500 cases took place in that year.*

*To have mediation you need to have at least two parties, albeit there are often two people representing each party and there are sometimes multi party disputes involving entire streets. So if we ventured that there were 3.5 participants to each dispute, that would provide a direct annual benefit to 15,750 people. And if we acknowledge that for each party, there may be 5 people in their wider circle who indirectly suffer the impact of conflict, to include children whose life chances are affected, then we could say that 78,750 people benefited from having access to a conflict resolution service.*

*That figure relates to the shadow of the sector that is left, represented by some 40-50 organisations that we know are currently in operation. Imagine if there were 250 organisations, as there were at the high point in 2005. We are talking about supporting almost 400,000 people.*

*Now imagine that we at least double the awareness of mediation for individuals and referrers and provide a publicised community mediation service. Community mediation could be supporting almost a million people each year.*

*How many GP appointments would that avert? How many evictions would no longer take place? How much homelessness could be avoided? How many crimes would not be committed? How many victims of crime would that save? How many suicides would that prevent?*

*How much happier, safer and healthier would people feel?*



**Mediation Hertfordshire**  
3 Halsey Drive, Gadebridge,  
Hemel Hempstead HP1 3SE

A registered society under the  
Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014  
No: 28695R



CMC Organisation  
Member 2021