Annual Report 2025 - 2026

Mediation Hertfordshire

Resolving Today, Protecting Tomorrow



www.mediationherts.org.uk

OUR PARTNERS









































CHAIR'S REPORT

This is my fifth and final AGM as Chair and I will step down as both Chair and Trustee following this meeting.

When I became Chair in October 2021, several personnel changes followed within months of my appointment. The transition was remarkably smooth, demonstrating Mediation Herts' stability and resilience.

During my tenure, we have experienced a series of significant global and national events. The lingering effect of the Covid-19 (2020/2021), the pandemic continued to shape society and our way of working. The Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 triggered a major energy shock, contributing to rising utility costs and wider economic pressure, Brent crude oil price peaking at $133 per barrel in March of that year (the BBC reporting recently that the utilities energy sector costs are 70% higher than before the invasion), the political turmoil in the UK including the rapid succession of Conversative Prime Ministers and the brief premiership of Liz Truss, contributed to the cost of living crisis, with inflation reaching a 41 year high of 11.1% (October 2022).

The 2024 general election landslide victory brought an end to 14 years of Conservative Government. While conflict in the Middle East including the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023 and the subsequent regional tensions have continued to affect global energy markets, which increased with the USA attack on Iran (February 2026). Collectively, these events have contributed to sustained increases in the cost of living across the UK and Europe.

What of Mediation Herts; it has continued to thrive, we are supporting more Hertfordshire residents than we were in 2021, a success made possible by our dedicated volunteers and Office staff whose enthusiasm remains exceptional.

As this is my last AGM, I would like to reflect on some of the key achievements over the last 5 years; our volunteer mediator numbers have increased from 40 to 63, we were Awarded the National Mediator of the Year, we implemented regular CPD training programmes for our volunteers.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Following our strategic review, we agreed a clear set of objectives for the Society's future, including a major digital transformation programme, which included, a review from referral through to case closure, operational processes, lifecycle mapping, identifying operational inefficiencies and improvements, redesigning workflows and digital forms. We also implemented cloud-based storage using SharePoint, establishing appropriate security and access controls and improving members access through our website. Digital transformation is recognised by The Charity Commission as a significant risk and challenge for many small organisations, Mediation Herts has achieved this objective pretty much seamlessly and this is a tribute to our volunteers, Office staff and IT consultant, who have all played their part in it is success.

We also updated our financial processes, moving to a cloud-based system and implementing new finance software. This transition has improved transparency, accuracy and financial management which has been support throughout by our accountants.

Following our objective to further develop Peer Mediation in Hertfordshire. We engaged with a leading trainer, Ben Harper to deliver his programme to a number of our mediators allowing Mediation Herts to offer a broader programme to school sector.

Over the last 12 months we have applied to establish a charitable foundation as part of our grant funding strategy, the migrated our email platform to Microsoft 365, this has strengthened our cyber security and increased our resilience. We have developed a series of volunteer 'How to guides', reviewed the functionality of our current case management platform, including many other enhancements across the business. Our CPD programme has provided training in the following areas; conflict coaching, mental health, community mediation, family mediation and boundary disputes, which focused specific training on recent interpretation of the law and he impact on community agreements where parties agree changes to their boundaries.

CHAIR'S REPORT

What of the future, we will appoint 5 new trustees from within our volunteer mediator community, to sit on the Board of Trustees – it brings additional diverse range of skills, new energy and enthusiasm to support the incoming Chair in the next phase of Mediation Herts' development – This includes opportunities arising from our proposed charitable foundation and the pursuit of new funding streams.

These changes will help to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by local government re-organisation in Hertfordshire. Under the proposals the County's 10 districts will be consolidated into 4 unitary authorities. Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans City & District Council will become North West Hertfordshire with a resident population of approximately 312,000 people. The shadow elections are scheduled for May 2027, with a go-live date of 1st April 2028. The scale of the re-organisation is likely to raise important questions about continuity and service delivery within local communities. However, recently this project is subject to a legal challenge and has currently stalled.

I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their support over the last 5 years including those who have recently stepped down; Ketan Varia, Gill Rogers and Julie Still, I would like particularly to highlight Julie's contribution. As one of the founding Trustees of Mediation Herts (it was called Dacorum then) in 1998 , Julie has dedicated 23 years of service to the Society, a truly remarkable contribution for which we are deeply grateful.

I would also like to thank our volunteer mediators without whom Mediation Herts would not be able to provide the service to the residents of Hertfordshire, my sincere thanks also go to our Office team, Sherril, Della, John and Lesley for their unwavering support, professionalism and patience especially during our transformation programme.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the continued support of our funders and partners, whose contribution allows us to do what we do.

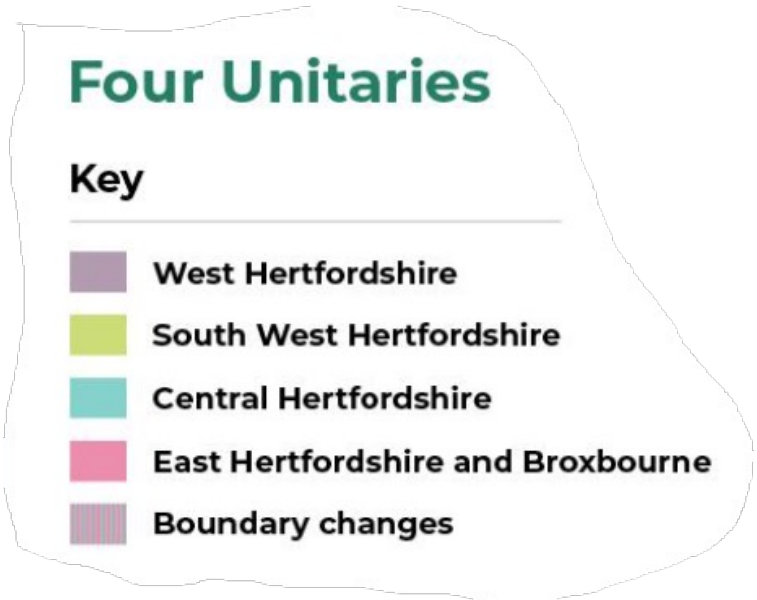
I look forward to watching the next chapter of Mediation Herts unfold and seeing the organisation continue to grow and succeed.

Chris Mills | Chair

Local Government Reorganisation

Government decision





TREASURER'S REPORT

Summary

- In the current year (2026-2027) secured income is about the same as last year with our team identifying funders and applying for the balance of funding required for the year.
- We continue to be in good financial health. Our team continues to seek out new funders and the ability to apply for corporate funding when Charitable Status is achieved will enhance our opportunity to secure adequate funding.
- The strategic investment of reserves in digitising significant elements of our processes is increasing efficiency and reporting capability.
- Any further investment of reserves will be dependent on the flow of income into the organisation.

Results

- The results of the financial year 2025-2026 are detailed on the Financial Statements page.
- Income attributable to the year decreased by 18% from 2024-2025 to £108,200. This was due to a higher number of cases carried over to 2026-2027 as deferred income and slightly less income than target.
- Expenditure increased by 17% from 2024-2025 to £137,901 as we had full team of four staff, rented space in the Hub, and continued to utilise a consultant to drive digitisation.
- As a small business we continued to benefit from Employer's National Insurance Allowance whereby we did not have to pay the first £5,000 of Employer's National Insurance contributions.
- As a result of income exceeding expenditure our Reserves/surplus funds decreased by £29,701, the principle reasons being:-
- Increased general costs
- Strategic use of reserves to fund consultant (£16,500)

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Our reserves/surplus funds are allocated as follows:
- £60,000 held as reserves representing 6 months running costs.
- A substantial proportion of the balance is allocated by trustees to the 2024-2026 Strategic Investment Plan to invest in initiatives to grow the business, continue to increase its efficiency and delivery for our clients and funders. As noted use of the balance will be subject to funding secured.
- Procedural and Background
- 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, in the year 2025/2026, the society was managed by the Operations Manager, who reports to the Board of Management, and is supported by three part time workers employed by Mediation Hertfordshire.
- Financial systems are in place to manage income and expenditure on a monthly cycle. Information is reviewed at quarterly board meetings and accounts are compiled by an external accountant and reviewed by an external Independent Examiner. Annual returns and accounts are filed with the Financial Conduct Authority which is the regulatory body for Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies.
- Accountants for Good continue to provide accounts, Independent Examination and book keeping services. This has worked very well with regular book-keeping reports to trustees.

John Henke | Treasurer

Financial Statements for 2025/2026

Mediation Hertfordshire Limited

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March 2026

	2025/2026	2024/2025
INCOME	**£**	**£**
Income secured inc deferred		
Income from 2024/2025	**134,771**	
Less deferred income*	**30,339**	
Grants and Earned Income	**104,433**	**127,699**
Attributable to year		
Interest Receivable	**3,767**	**4,767**
Donations	**0**	**0**
	108,200	**132,466**
EXPENDITURE		
Society Expenses	**133,581**	**111,504**
Legal and Professional Fees	**4,320**	**6,035**
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	**0**	**0**
Depreciation	**0**	**140**
	137,901	**117,679**
(DEFICIT) SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	**-29,701**	**4,787**
GENERAL RESERVE		
Total assets less current Liabilities inc share capital	**114,716**	**144,416**

*** Convention for outstanding referrals. When funders have paid for referrals but not made them by the end of the year the income is deferred into the following year**

MANAGER'S REPORT

Overview

Mediation Hertfordshire continues to play a vital role in supporting individuals, families, and communities across the county by providing accessible, impartial, and effective conflict-resolution services. Over the past year, the organisation has strengthened its position as a trusted provider of mediation, expanded its reach, and adapted its services to meet emerging needs within Hertfordshire's diverse communities.

This report outlines key achievements, service developments, performance highlights, and priorities for the year ahead.

Service Activity and Impact

Case Volume and Trends

The past year saw a steady and meaningful increase in referrals across all service areas. Demand for mediation continues to grow as public awareness improves and partner agencies increasingly recognise mediation as a cost-effective and constructive alternative to formal legal processes.

Key trends include:

Neighbourhood and community disputes remain the most common referral type, particularly involving noise complaints, boundary disagreements, and anti-social behaviour.

Family mediation saw notable growth, driven by both relationship breakdowns and the need for structured conversations around co-parenting.

Workplace mediation requests increased as organisations sought early intervention to prevent escalation of internal conflicts.

Intergenerational mediation continues to be an important area, supporting families navigating communication breakdowns. In an aging society we are seeing the issues of how siblings are unable to agree about how to manage the care of elderly parents

MANAGER'S REPORT

Across all categories, Mediation Hertfordshire maintained strong resolution rates, with the majority of cases achieving either full or partial agreement or significant progress toward improved communication.

Outcomes and Benefits

The organisation's work continues to deliver measurable social value. Key outcomes include:

- Reduced pressure on statutory services, including local authorities, police, and courts.
- Improved wellbeing for individuals experiencing conflict-related stress.
- Strengthened community cohesion, particularly in areas experiencing persistent neighbour disputes.
- Enhanced communication skills among participants, enabling longer-term conflict prevention.
- Feedback from clients remains overwhelmingly positive, with many highlighting the professionalism, empathy, and neutrality of the mediators.

Organisational Development

Team and Training

Mediation Hertfordshire's team of mediators remains one of its greatest strengths. Over the past year:

- Several mediators completed accredited professional development, including advanced family mediation, SEND training and restorative practice training.
- New volunteers were recruited and onboarded, expanding capacity and ensuring a diverse skill set within the team.
- The organisation continues to invest in high-quality training to maintain professional standards and uphold best practice.
- One of our very own, Polly Walker, trained a number of our volunteers in conflict coaching. Polly herself received a National

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mediation Awards Trainer of the Year in 2024 and has been asked to sit on the Panel of Judges for the 2026 Awards.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Strong partnerships remain central to Mediation Hertfordshire's effectiveness. This year saw continued collaboration with:
- Local councils, particularly housing and community safety teams. Police and community support officers, who frequently refer cases involving neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour.
- Family support services, including children's centres and social care teams.
- Local employers, who increasingly recognise mediation as a tool for improving workplace culture and reducing HR pressures.
- Other voluntary organisations with whom we are able to collaborate, particularly Community Action Dacorum who are always there to turn to for advice.
- These partnerships not only increase referrals but also help embed mediation as a mainstream conflict-resolution option across Hertfordshire.

Financial Overview

Mediation Hertfordshire has maintained a stable financial position throughout the year. Details of our funders can be found in this report.

Prudent financial management has ensured sustainability while allowing for growth in service capacity. Continued diversification of funding remains a priority to safeguard long-term resilience.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

While the organisation has had a successful year, several challenges remain:

- Increasing complexity of cases, particularly those involving mental health, safeguarding concerns, or multi-agency involvement

MANAGER'S REPORT

Opportunities

- Looking ahead, several opportunities can strengthen Mediation Hertfordshire's impact:
- Expanding early-intervention programmes with schools and youth services.
- Increasing digital mediation options, which have proven effective and accessible for many clients.
- Strengthening partnerships with health services, particularly where conflict intersects with wellbeing. Priorities for the Coming Year The organisation's strategic priorities for the next 12 months include:
- Enhancing service accessibility, ensuring mediation is available to all communities across Hertfordshire.
- Increasing mediator capacity, through both recruitment and training.
- Improving data collection and reporting, to better demonstrate impact and support funding applications.
- Expanding outreach, raising awareness of mediation as a positive, proactive option for resolving conflict.
- Strengthening financial sustainability, through diversified funding and new partnership opportunities.

Conclusion

Mediation Hertfordshire continues to deliver essential, high-quality services that make a tangible difference to individuals, families, and communities. The organisation has demonstrated resilience, professionalism, and innovation throughout the year, responding effectively to rising demand and increasingly complex cases.

MANAGER'S REPORT

- Rising demand, which places pressure on mediator availability and administrative capacity.
- Funding uncertainty, a common issue across the voluntary and community sector.

The Future

As we look ahead, Mediation Hertfordshire is well-positioned to build on its achievements, deepen its community impact, and continue providing a vital service that promotes understanding, communication, and peaceful resolution across Hertfordshire.

Chris Mills has been the driving force behind taking the organisation to greater heights and it is sad that after 5 years of being Chair of Trustees he now has completed his tenure. We look forward to welcoming our new Chair who, no doubt, will be able to continue down the path that Chris has so expertly laid out for us. We will miss him.

Finally, I would like to thank Liz Green, OBE MStJDL for her continued support of our organisation, it is always a pleasure to have her attend our AGMs and for her to be able to see and hear about the work that we do to make the lives of people in Hertfordshire safer and happier. We truly value that support and, of course, the support of The Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss, CBE CStJ whose vision of a Charity Hub at the Warner Brothers Studios has given many charities and not for profit organisations an affordable space in which we are able to collaborate and share information and knowledge. We are also thankful to Warner Brothers for providing the space.

Sherril Franklin | Manager

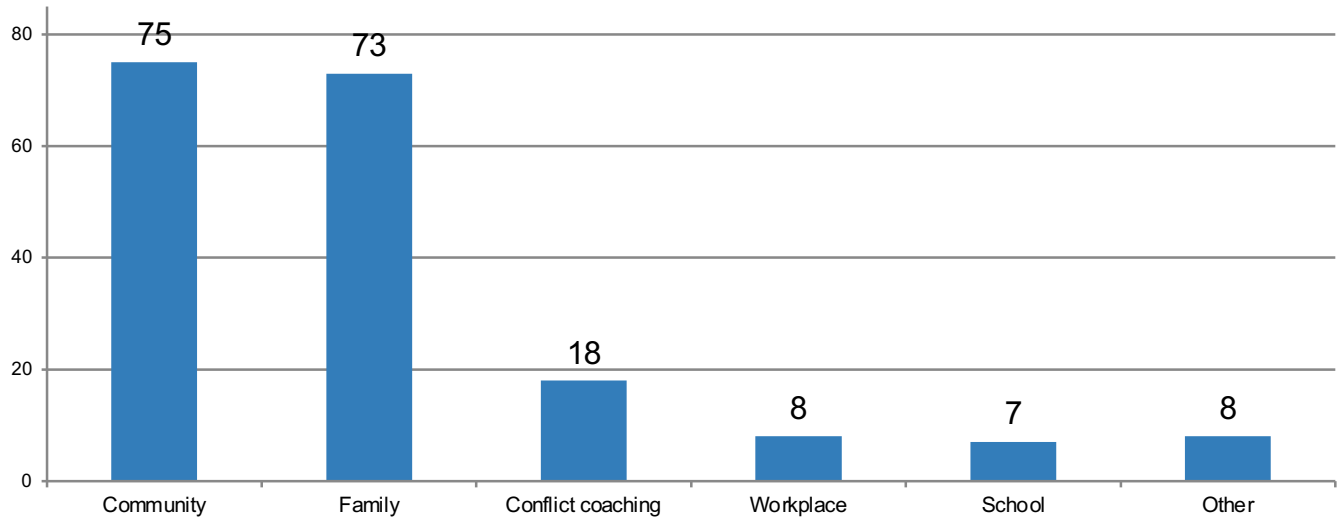
2025/26 AT A GLANCE

Our work involved 374 people during 2025/26

A clear view of the people reached, the main areas of work and how the service was accessed during the year.

CASES RECEIVED	PEOPLE RECORDED	CORE SERVICES	SELF-REFERRALS
189	374	78.3%	54
Year to 31 March 2026	Across the year's cases	Community and family	Largest referral route

The work we delivered



A broad service for people across Hertfordshire

During 2025/26, Mediation Hertfordshire received 189 cases involving 374 people. Community and family mediation continued to make up most of our work, while conflict coaching, workplace mediation and school-related cases also formed part of the service. The figures reflect the range of situations in which mediation can help people find a constructive way forward.

Community and family mediation accounted for almost four in every five cases.

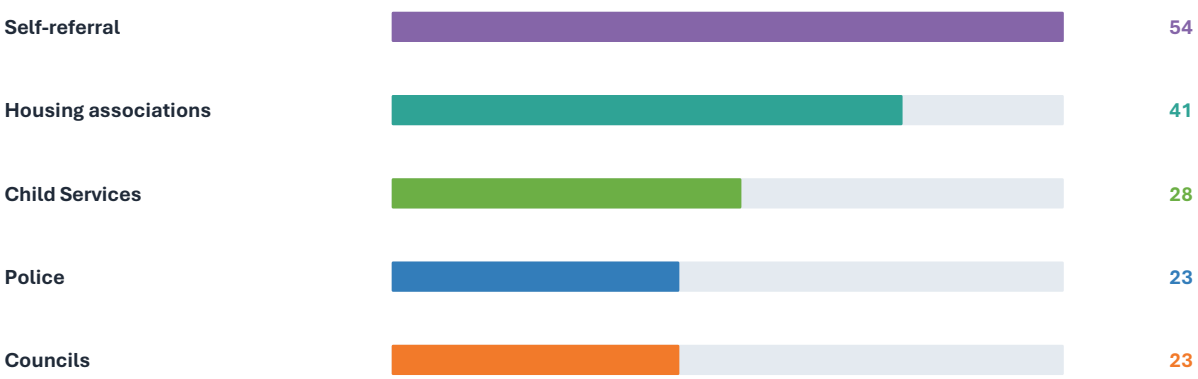
ACCESS AND PARTNERSHIPS

People reached us through direct access and trusted local partners

The service remained easy to approach directly, while established partnerships continued to connect people with mediation.

SELF-REFERRALS	HOUSING	CHILD SERVICES	PUBLIC SERVICES
54	41	28	46
28.6% of cases	Association referrals	Referrals received	Police and councils

Leading referral routes



Local connections help people find support

People came to Mediation Hertfordshire through a broad mix of referral routes. Self-referral was the largest single source, showing that many people felt able to approach the service directly. Referrals from housing associations, Child Services, councils and the police also show the value of local relationships in helping people reach mediation when it may be useful.

Three in ten cases came through self-referral, alongside 115 referrals from four major partner routes.

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Responding to a wider range of needs

Community and family mediation remained central, supported by specialist work and better information about the service.

COMMUNITY CASES	FAMILY CASES	CONFLICT COACHING	WORK AND SCHOOL
75	73	18	15
Largest service area	A major area of work	Individual support	Combined cases

A service shaped around different needs

Community and family mediation remained central to our work, alongside conflict coaching, workplace mediation and support for schools. This range allows Mediation Hertfordshire to work with different types of conflict and offer support in a way that suits the circumstances of each case.

Better information about our work

Digital working	Digital forms and Microsoft 365 support more consistent and accessible ways of working.
Clearer reporting	A fuller view of 2025/26 activity makes it easier to explain where demand came from.
Service insight	Case information is helping us understand the mix of work and the people reached.

The service combined established strengths with a broader range of support during the year.

Mediation HERTFORDSHIRE

Resolving Today. Protecting Tomorrow.



Your feedback makes a difference

We are grateful to everyone who has shared their experience of mediation and conflict coaching. Your feedback helps us to improve our service and continue supporting individuals, families and communities across Hertfordshire.

> *The session was valuable in finding a solution moving forwards. Professional and impartial. Thank you.*

> *It was a very helpful platform to have a discussion with the other party which help kept the tone and communication calm and balanced. Therefore good progress was made.*

> *Mediation really helped it helped all parties come to a mutual agreement and gave me the chance to be heard.*

> *Honestly the team was absolutely amazing and helpful and caring! I was so lucky to have got it sorted with their help and I will always be thankful to them.*

> *Thank you for your support and flexibility.*

> *The caseworkers were so lovely and made me feel at ease every time I spoke with them. Even though mediation is typically about resolving parenting issues, I feel as my experience with mediation has actually helped me stand my ground on decisions I had previously made regarding my ex partner's relationship with our child.*

> *Was great to be able to talk through without judgement.*

> *Speaking to the conflict coach really helped us understand our options and how to deal with the conflict in hand.*

> *Conflict coaching helped me look at all angles to try and understand everyone's viewpoint.*

> I would like to thank both mediators. They were brilliant throughout the session, very supportive, understanding of my vulnerabilities, and ensured I felt able to participate fully. I left the mediation feeling positive that we had agreed a simple plan for moving forward, with clear expectations around communication and timescales. *I would also like to reiterate how positive the mediation itself* was and thank both mediators for the professionalism, empathy and support they showed throughout.

Real people. Real impact.

Every conversation matters. Every agreement reached helps to build better relationships, stronger communities and a more respectful Hertfordshire.

189
cases involving 374 people in 2025/26

78.3%
of cases were community or family work

54
self-referrals during the year

Wide range of partners who refer and support our work

Helping people have constructive conversations and move forward

Mediation HERTFORDSHIRE

Resolving Today. Protecting Tomorrow.



Our people make mediation possible

63
Volunteer mediators

+23
Increase since 2021

5
Training areas highlighted

Our volunteer mediators are at the heart of Mediation Hertfordshire. Their time, experience and commitment allow us to support people across the county with professionalism, care and impartiality.

During the past five years, the number of volunteer mediators has increased from 40 to 63. Continued professional development has also strengthened the service, with training covering conflict coaching, mental health, community mediation, family mediation and boundary disputes.

Developing skills and maintaining quality

- Conflict coaching
- Mental health
- Community mediation
- Family mediation
- Boundary disputes

> ***Thank you to every volunteer, trustee and member of the office team who contributed to our work during 2025/26.***
>
> Your dedication and professionalism make a real difference to people and communities across Hertfordshire.

Mediation Hertfordshire

If you require any help, please contact us at :

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