

# Problems Next Door?

let mediation help to build a bridge



Scottish  
Community  
Mediation  
Centre



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# Let Mediation Help To Build A Bridge

Every year in Scotland, there are thousands of problems between neighbours. Most of these are settled quickly and in a friendly way, but sometimes things can get more difficult.

Modern life is stressful, soundproofing can be poor, parking is difficult, there are more noisy domestic appliances, and often we don't even know who our neighbours are.

So it's no surprise that every so often it's useful to get some help in sorting things out.



# How Can Mediation Help?

Mediation is a way of settling disputes informally without the expense, time and bad feeling often involved in using the law.

Mediation is practical, confidential, quick and usually free.

Scottish neighbour mediation services regularly help to resolve all sorts of neighbour difficulties, ranging from minor disagreements to very serious and long running disputes.





# Can Mediation Help To Resolve My Problem?



The chances are it can. Mediators are happy to deal with most issues that arise between neighbours.

Disputes over noise, children, boundaries, parking, abusive behaviour, common areas, pets and a whole range of other things are all commonly resolved by mediation. Often mediators are also able to help with disputes that affect whole tenements, areas or groups of people.



## Will My Neighbour



For mediation to work, it needs both sides to take part. All you need to do, though, is contact the mediators. It is part of their job to get your neighbours to agree to mediation,



## Agree To It?

and mostly they do agree!  
This is because just about everyone involved in a dispute wants it to stop, even though you feel they are trying their hardest to keep it going!

People often want a way out of situations without losing face or seeming to give in, and mediation is good at finding solutions everyone can live with.



## What Happens?

When you contact a mediation service they will discuss with you whether mediation is right for your situation. If it is, they will normally send one or two mediators to your home to talk about what has been happening and possible ways forward.

If you agree, they will contact your neighbour and visit them to talk about the situation as they see it.

The mediators are skilled in helping establish common areas of interest and in assisting everyone to find potential areas of agreement.



With the agreement of both sides, they will then arrange a meeting to work out a way forward. Mediation meetings are organised so that everyone has a chance to put forward their view, and it is the job of the mediators to ensure everything goes smoothly.



Nine out of ten mediation meetings end in agreement. If there are special reasons why people can't meet in person, the mediators can sometimes work with people to resolve their differences without a meeting.

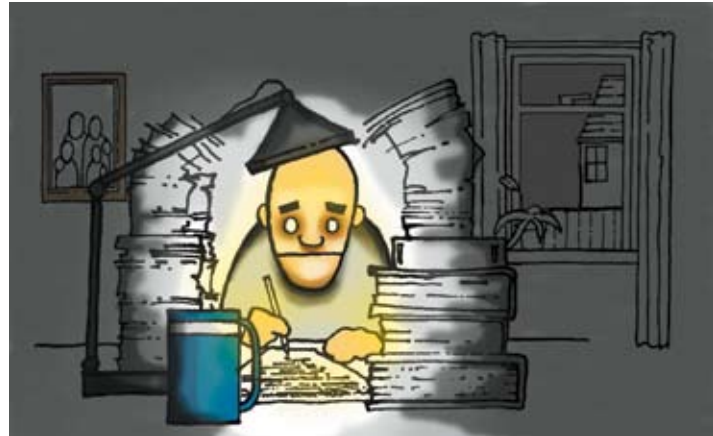


# Shouldn't I Do Things Formally?

For many neighbour disputes formal solutions are not appropriate. This can be because laws and regulations don't apply to your situation, because Housing Officers, Solicitors or Police don't feel they have enough evidence to act, or because using the law would only make things worse. Legal action to deal with neighbour issues can be lengthy and expensive, and even if you win, you will usually remain neighbours.

That's why mediation works so well - it offers solutions for the future that will be acceptable to everyone involved, and will often work where all other approaches have failed.

This is why a wide range of public organisations recommend that people use mediation.



## Does Mediation Always Work?

Like every other way of resolving disputes, mediation is not a guarantee of success. Even if mediation doesn't work you can still try a different approach such as the law.

In some situations mediators might decide it is not the best way forward. This is usually when the dispute has involved a lot of violence or racial hatred, or because someone is not able to take part effectively because of mental problems, drink or drugs. It is quite rare for mediators to decide a case isn't suitable, and if this happens they may be able to put you in touch with another organisation that might help.



# How Can I Find A Mediation Service?

There may be a mediation scheme running in your area.

You should ask your landlord or contact:

## **Scottish Community Mediation Centre**

21 Abercromby Place

Edinburgh EH3 6QE

Tel: 0131 624 9200

Email: [info@scmc.sacro.org.uk](mailto:info@scmc.sacro.org.uk)

Or visit the website at [www.scmc.sacro.org.uk](http://www.scmc.sacro.org.uk)





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