

Mediation Service

Annual Report

April 2021 to March 2022

A background image showing two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or mediation. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The top-left and bottom-right corners of the page are yellow, creating a diagonal split.

**catch
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“Catch22 Mediation Services are contracted to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils during which time they have succeeded, and surpassed, in meeting with our expectations on managing high profile challenging cases. In addition, it is noted the professionalism provided reflects well for all parties and has laid strong foundations for our continued relationship in the future”

**Peter Watson, Community Safety Project Manager
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council**

What We Do

Working with the Police, Local Authorities and Housing Associations, we provide a skilled, practical, flexible service focused on resolving community conflict, unhampered by the constraints the referring professionals face.

Referrers can waste large amounts of time on disputes where evidence is short and enforcement action is impractical or inappropriate and expensive. Referrers are rarely seen as impartial because of their enforcement role and they seldom have the time available that's needed to effectively resolve conflict. Having access to a skilled and independent mediation service allows them to offer the people they serve, a way out of their situation that is voluntary, independent, confidential and solution focused.

We aim to help service users to communicate safely and to facilitate the best possible conversation between them and their neighbours, directly or indirectly. We try to find ways they can manage conflicts differently in the future and, where possible, to help those whose neighbours can't or won't mediate.

Challenges

This year, over 100 of our service users have told us they have a mental health condition that they consider a disability. While the pandemic restrictions have been lifted, the impact on mental health is still evident as is the stress on the services they need to access. While we can sometimes help to connect people to appropriate services, we can not replace mental health professionals. But we can do our absolute best to make sure people do not have to live with the added pressure of conflict with their neighbours.

Mediation should always be, by definition, a person-centred process that begins with listening and empathy. Our mediators don't expect a person to take into consideration another person's point of view if no one understands theirs. We work alongside service users to help them identify and then communicate their needs and concerns effectively. We work carefully, ensuring participants are comfortable with the information they want to share. Effective communication about mental health needs can really help to increase understanding and change how people respond.

We strive to be as accessible as possible, working over the phone or meeting where people feel comfortable, offering face to face or shuttle mediations and individual support to help people navigate conflict. We have the freedom to continue working with people until they feel confident to manage the situation themselves. This allows people to access our service who may not have felt able to cope with a conventional mediation. The service helps people with diverse needs, to find ways out of conflict that they cannot find alone - applying the skills and allowing the time that conflicts need to resolve well.

"Even after the resolution [the mediator] made himself available to us to help navigate and access support and agencies we weren't aware of. I'm eternally grateful for all his help and support" **Ipswich Resident**

All Outcomes Recorded 2021-22



This year we have received **215 new referrals** and worked on a total of **294 cases**



We have worked with **463 households** comprising of nearly **800 people**



We have conducted over **1700 phone calls** and made **45 home visits** to help people find solutions

Impact

While not always straightforward, the outcomes of community mediation can be lifechanging. Home should be a sanctuary from the outside world. Neighbours in dispute can feel unsafe in their homes, nervous to go in their gardens or leave the house. Mediation can allow everyone to be heard and understood and helps people to make practical plans to avoid conflict in the future, reducing stress and allowing people to move on.



70% of respondents said that their issue had been **resolved** by working with Catch22



93% of respondents said that their issue had been **improved** by working with Catch22



94% of those who felt it relevant to them, felt their **mental health had improved** and felt **less stressed** when their case closed



93% of those who felt it relevant to them, felt **safer** when their case closed



87% of those who felt it relevant to them, felt more **confident to cope** with future conflict when their case closed



96% of those who felt it relevant to them, felt more able to enjoy life after their case closed

“[the mediator] was brilliant, and made a huge difference to us. Just having her to help and talk to made more of a difference than she may have realised. We were at our wits end when we contacted her ... It transformed our situation and made us feel stronger again, and safer” **Norwich Resident**

Our feedback showed the impact for referrers was also significant:

100%

of referrers
said we
saved them
time

97%

said our
intervention
stopped the
situation
escalating

92%

said they no
longer needed
to take
enforcement
action

Working in Partnership

After many years of working with **Norwich City Council**, our innovative Self-Referral Community Conflict service, co-designed with the City's Community Safety team, is now well established as part of the toolkit Norwich residents can access to address neighbourhood conflict issues. They can refer themselves directly via the council website, which presents a diverse set of problems that we work with the service user to find solutions to. This could lead to mediation, just exchanging information, working with only one party to manage the situation or connecting them to other agencies that can help them. Alongside this, we continue to provide a traditional mediation service to the ASB team.

"[The mediator] was excellent at keeping in contact and giving me updates as the case progressed and continued to make further contact with the involved parties after the problems had initially subsided to make sure things remained calm"

Anti Social Behaviour Officer, Norwich City Council

The Suffolk Police service, now funded directly by the OPCC allows officers to refer antisocial behaviour and neighbour dispute cases to us. We have built up good relations with the police over the last 7 years with feedback showing, irrespective of the outcome of a mediation referral, the service has saved officers time and been a very useful resource.

"[The mediator] was a great person to work in conjunction with. The problem was a neighbourly issue that had been on going for some time. With the assistance of the service, the problem has been solved and neither party has made any contact to Police since initially reporting it"

Suffolk Police Officer

We have a longstanding relationship with **Clarion Housing** who have been referring neighbour dispute cases to us for over 9 years to give their tenants access to a constructive way to tackle antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood conflict.

"I have always found Catch22 to be very helpful in resolving cases, [they] have always been very good in communicating with me, and it has been a great help to be able to pass on cases which otherwise have proved very time-consuming"

Neighbourhood Response Officer, Clarion Housing

We are entering our fourth year of working with **Ipswich Borough Council**, which means that Ipswich Housing Officers can refer mediation and individual support cases when tenants are having issues with their neighbours. We participated in their Antisocial Behaviour Awareness week this year, showcasing our service as a method of early intervention their officers can access.

“I believe it is very beneficial for both parties to be able to openly discuss their complaints, feelings and anxiety to an independent person. As a Housing Officer ... I am also the person who may have to instigate enforcement action. Catch 22 mediation service is an excellent option for an H.O to consider in resolving disputes and encouraging a degree of tolerance between parties where enforcement action is unlikely to be an option” Ipswich Housing Officer

During the last year, we have begun working with **Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils** and have been working on cases ranging from complex multi party issues to single party support.

“Brilliant communication from [the mediator] - regular updates, excellent communication and after he took on the case the calls to me stopped and we didn't receive any further complaints from either party. I received information from one of the parties to the mediation to compliment [the mediator's] work/involvement”

Babergh Mid Suffolk Housing Officer

We also work with other local authorities and housing associations on a **spot purchase** basis, providing mediation work and conflict resolution training.

We work together with each commissioner in a way that best suits the needs of their organisation, in order to make the service easy to use and supplying commissioners with the information they need. We attend multi agency meetings, Housing Officer team meetings and Police Safer Neighbourhood Team meetings to raise awareness of the service and help people to use it as effectively as possible. This year our referring officers providing feedback gave us an average of 4.97/5



For more information please visit
our website:

www.catch-22.org.uk/services/mediation-service/

To get in touch with us, please contact:

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"I just felt I was spinning round in circles until I talked to you. You made me feel better and I know now how to respond without making things worse. You stayed in touch for a long time and knew when things might be sensitive so that was really helpful"

Ipswich Borough Council Tenant

"Thankfully, your magic has done the trick!"

Antisocial Behaviour Officer, Norwich City Council

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