

Council Housing Services

Mediation

How we can help

Tackling anti-social behaviour

This information can be made available in large print, braille, audio and other languages.
For further details please contact us on (011524) 582929.

www.lancaster.gov.uk

Mediation

What is mediation?

Mediation is a way of resolving disputes between those who live in the same locality or neighbourhood. Disputes can cover a wide range of issues, including noise, anti-social behaviour, dogs, parking, boundary problems or verbal abuse.

Essentially mediation services provide help to people who are in dispute, to resolve their differences themselves rather than have a solution imposed on them by their landlord or the courts.

Mediation is usually only appropriate when both sides voluntarily chose it. It is not normally appropriate in cases that involve violence, harassment, or intimidation.

Mediation is a process where a neutral third party enables two or more parties in dispute to seek a mutually acceptable resolution to their difficulties without recourse to formal or legal procedures.

Who will mediate and is there a charge?

Council Housing Services has an arrangement with **ACTIVEMEDIATION**, a Preston based organisation, for mediation services.

If you feel mediation is appropriate ask for help - contact your Estate Manager to make a referral to **ACTIVEMEDIATION**.

The mediation service is free of charge to the user, and is carried out by specially trained volunteers who normally work in pairs.

You can ask for the help of a mediator even if the neighbour has not yet agreed to take part.

What happens next?

Once mediation has been requested and set up, trained mediators visit the person or persons who have made contact to find out more about the problem. Anything said at the meeting is confidential. The other party is then contacted to see if they would like to take part. If so, they also receive a visit from the mediators.

If both parties recognise that the problem needs to be resolved, and agree to a joint meeting, the mediation's chances of success are high.

Joint meetings usually take place on neutral ground, and the mediators ensure that everyone has a chance to put forward their side of the story without interruption. Those involved are encouraged to think up solutions to their difficulties, and the mediators help them to explore the suggestions that are made.

If the parties have met once and have not been able to reach a solution but want to continue negotiating, mediators may offer 'shuttle mediation'. This process involves the mediators talking separately to those involved and conveying their wants and suggestions to the other party/ies until a solution is found that is acceptable to all. This technique is sometimes used when the parties are reluctant to meet at all, although it is not as effective in rebuilding relationships as joint meetings.

When the parties find a solution which they all feel happy with, they are asked to sign an agreement. This is not a legal contract but allows the parties to focus on what has been decided and what individual responsibilities have been agreed on. The parties' legal rights are not affected at any time and they are free to pursue a legal course of action if they so wish.

How much time does it take?

The home visits for each party will take about an hour to an hour and a half. A joint meeting normally takes between 2-3 hours. One meeting is usually all that is necessary, although very occasionally a further meeting may be recommended. Mediation is not like counselling, which may require a series of attendances.

Remember mediation is:

- Independent
- Impartial
- Confidential
- Non-judgemental

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Contact Information

Council Housing Services

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Our office hours are 9.00 am to 5.00 pm weekdays
(10.00 am to 5.00 pm Wednesdays)

In an emergency ring the Council's Central Control Centre,
which is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The number to call is  01524 67099

Calls may be recorded to help improve our standard of service and accuracy
of information