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**CROYDON  
COUNCIL**

# **CROYDON COMMUNITY MEDIATION**



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2004-2005**

*Community  
Legal Service*



Investing in Volunteers



MEDIATION UK





## **COMPANY INFORMATION**

### **TRUSTEES**

David Rees – Treasurer  
Alan Whiting – Company Secretary  
Graham Owen  
Barbara Ottaway  
Cathy Pleasance  
Philip Webb  
David Bowen

### **STAFF**

Françoise Grimshaw – Co-ordinator  
Geraldine Pirdue – Administrator

### **SESSIONAL WORKERS**

Yvonne  
Christopher

### **OFFICE VOLUNTEERS**

Daphne  
Irene  
CETS Administration Students

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Website: [www.croydonmediation.org.uk](http://www.croydonmediation.org.uk)

**COMPANY NUMBER**  
3973287

**CHARITY NUMBER**  
1088222

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT 2004/5



GRAHAM OWEN -

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CROYDON HOUSING DEPARTMENT.

This is fifth annual report of Croydon Community Mediation.

The year has been a difficult one financially with the service having to tightly control its expenditure in the last quarter of the year and receive extra support from the Croydon Housing Department to ensure that a balanced budget was achieved. The Trustees and the Service Manager have worked hard to ensure that budgeting for the new financial year is robust and reflects changes to projected income and known spending commitments.

The service has also been successful in attracting funding amounting to £24,000 over two years for a project to work with young people in Croydon.

The importance of mediation as an alternative way of resolving disputes is being recognised more and more widely. However during the year this was not reflected by the way mediation was used by the housing sector, as the service experienced a reduction in demand from a number of organisations, and a decrease in income from this source.

But during this past 12 months the service has continued to build a network of contacts in the Housing department and with Housing Associations which will lead to a more diverse source of referrals next year.

Neighbour mediation remains the service's prime focus. It offers tenants and their families a challenging alternative to resolving disputes, leading to a decrease in stress and anxiety and improved quality of life.

However, the challenge of working with young people to help them deal with difficult relationships with parents, authority figures, peers etc. is something the service is looking forward to addressing this coming year and the next through the MEDYP project.

During the past year the service's offices in Church Street have been repainted and re-carpeted making them a safer and more pleasant place to work.

Thanks are due to the hard working volunteer mediators, staff, trustees and other supporters who contributed to all these improvements.



## **REPORT FROM ALAN WHITING** **COMPANY SECRETARY**

We have not had a Chair of our organisation for some time so I am writing this report on behalf of the Trustees.

### **Trustee news**

I am sad to record the death, earlier this year, of John Flouch, a member of the initial Steering Committee which got our service off the ground and which eventually became the Board of Trustees. John retired in 2003 having made a huge contribution to the service through sound advice, wise council and good humour.

I am pleased to tell you that we have welcomed a new Trustee, David Bowen, a mediator with the service at our last AGM. We need 9 Trustees, but currently we only have 7. I am retiring at our next July AGM, Philip Webb and David Rees will be retiring at the following AGM. This means that we are still very short of Trustees and we urgently need to attract those who can bring a vision of the future to the service and help in the planning and the decision making needed to realise that vision.

Your Trustees have worked hard year after year to keep the ship afloat and moving forward. Without a Chair, they have taken it in turns to Chair our meetings and they have also contributed to various sub-committees, some Trustees serving on more than one committee. This year we decided to rationalise the format of our sub-committees by merging some of them and reviewing their terms of reference, making the structure more efficient. I would like to make special mention of our Treasurer, David Rees, who faithfully and meticulously kept the accounts and provided feedback and reports to the Board.

### **Funding**

During the year we attracted funding over two years for the development of mediation for young people but the level of our overall funding gives us cause for concern. As a service that generates no income from most of its activities, we are heavily dependent on grants and donations. We are grateful for Croydon Council and the Housing department support, but you will no doubt be aware of the pressures that there are on the Council finances and you will not be surprised to hear that, they are unable to give us as much as we want or need. We are thus forced to find moneys from elsewhere. This is very time consuming, some times disappointing and diverts our attention from our core work.

So you see, it has been a difficult year but we shall continue to do all we can to keep offering a viable and effective mediation service to the people of Croydon.

## USERS and PROVIDERS

Part-time staff and volunteer mediators enjoying a training day in Newham, with Dr. Marshall Rosenberg (in the middle). Dr. Rosenberg is world famous for his approach to violence, called 'Non violent Communication.'



★★★★★

When our clients are desperate, because they are caught in situations that seem hopeless and have lasted much too long, this is what they say:

'...both mediators were wonderful to me...it is difficult for the situation to improve greatly without the willingness and co-operation of all four people involved, but it is definitely better.... We are OK at present but if things become difficult, we will contact you.'

'...I would like to say thank you to the two supportive mediators that came to my home, they were there when I needed someone to hear my cry for help, even though the situation got worst after, I am still grateful.'

A lady whose arthritis prevented her from writing rang to say 'how much I was helped by the mediators who visited me, they were kind, listened carefully and I am grateful'.



## **SERVICE MANAGER'S REPORT -Françoise Grimshaw**

The past year can be described as a year of trials and changes, with some success and setbacks.

In April 2004, for the first time, we had a spending surplus which we used wisely to help meet our strategic aims, though not always in a predictable way. We wanted to improve and consolidate our ability to offer a broader service to the local communities, including parents and children. To do so, we needed funding to maintain and improve our ability to manage the casework coming in, to pay for the supervision of mediators and to fund a new post. The trustees agreed to invest in external fundraising expertise to try to attract extra funds.

### **Fundraising**

During this year, much more of my time has been directed towards raising funds, with the help of funds raisers Lee and Claire Derrick. Claire especially helped me put together many letters, produce budgets and fill forms. Her advice and knowledge of the field was invaluable. However, funding organisations have their own priorities, and mediation related work never seemed to be what they wanted to fund, with one exception, the Tudor Trust. The Trust offered the substantial sum of £12,000 per year for two years, which was enough to allow us to plan the re-start our MEDYP project. The funding was offered in November 2004, and by January we had found a promising candidate to co-ordinate the project part-time. Unfortunately, she needed a working visa, which did not materialise so, by the end of March, we had to decide to re-advertise the post and appoint someone else.

### **Redecorating our Premises**

In June, the lease to our premises had to be renewed for a further 5 years, with a large increase in our rent. At the same time, we needed to address the state of the accommodation, which in terms of carpeting was creating a safety risk. The summer was spent re-furbishing the office. I am especially thankful for the cooperative spirit in which the office team and some of the mediators (and husbands) picked up scrapers, paintbrushes etc. It was a hot, laborious, painful but also very rewarding time, especially when carpets were finally laid down to replace the decaying ones we had endured for the previous years.

### **Service Management**

Elsewhere in the Annual Report the issue of our financial health has been explained. In December 2004, we were facing a critical time with the surplus funds spent – paying for extra casework help and fund-raising – and with an impending deficit because expected income was lower than anticipated. In January, we had to stop all sessional paid work: supervisors, caseworkers and funds raisers. The last quarter of the financial year was therefore spent re-appraising the situation, finding more funding for MEDYP, and analysing the reasons behind a very substantial drop in enquiries and referrals.

## **Lessons Learned**

What we have learnt during the past year is that we must budget and check accounts much more often and much more tightly. We also learnt that whatever plan we may have which looks promising, unless other bodies who hold the purse strings think they want it too, we must not let hope lead us into believing that we can actually do it.

Looking back over the last 5 years of delivering a service, I can see that we have always been at the forefront of problems arising, in complex situations where provision was not always what it should have been. The service's role has been, and always will be, to gently pinpoint the problem areas which influence what our clients are going through and what they can do about it. As soon as enough people notice a problem, it gets resolved in a big way, with major funding allocated. Mediation is then left to deal with the next issue arising, using the flexibility, tact and creativity for which mediators are renowned.

### **Moving on and changing focus**

With hindsight, this seems to have been a storm in a tea cup. Government, Council, statutory bodies and large organisations have all been engaged in major changes, consultations were ongoing and strategies put together. Everyone seems to have focused on tackling anti-social behaviour through the use of tough new procedures and tools such as ASBOs. This pushed early or preventive work such as ours to the back of everyone's mind.

By March, we had been awarded funding by the Council to cover our forthcoming increased rent, and to maintain practice standards, which will help us bring back some casework support and supervision for the MEDYP project and for neighbour mediation.

The funds raising efforts in January have been successful, and we now have received small amounts of funding from the London Metropolitan Police, the Community Chest Fund and Croydon Relief in Need Charities, all for our young people and family work.

During the year, we have looked at our accessibility and our public image too, and mapped what could be improved. With the skilled help of one of our mediators, Darren, we now have a very accessible website which will provide information for a wider public, and help us keep in touch with young people. Darren has also taken over the technical preparation of the in-house newsletter, which now includes more visual material and looks much more professional.

Geraldine our Administrator has improved her skills in all directions too, we have better procedures than ever before, and she has also been studying for a qualification in accountancy.

At the time of writing this report, matters are settling. Referrals and enquiries are building up again, and the financial position of the service is being addressed. We are part of the local crime prevention strategy and will be included in much of the joint working partnerships, in time.

For a while I had thought that we would have to abandon every thought of training, but we can now look to building and delivering our training courses by the Autumn, and to include young people in our training efforts.

### **The Value of Mediators**

Mediators are our most important asset. Those who trained during the year and stayed with us are now becoming expert at their job, and accumulating credits for their national open network final qualification.

Mediators who trained before that are achieving recognition too. Two mediators, Christopher and Irene, received their Mediation UK national Mediation UK Competency during the year, and one more Competency (now acquired) was pending in March.

### **Client work**

A summary of our annual statistics is on the next page, with comparisons with previous years. During the year, we have had decreasing referrals and enquiries, for reasons already mentioned above.

We also received very difficult referrals, because the situations in which our client group are entangled have become more complex, with a sense of hopelessness. We must question why these problems have been on-going for so long, thus allowed to fester and escalate well beyond the original problems.

Despite this, our overall results are not suffering, but still improving, due to the growing expertise of mediators.

### **To conclude**

I must say how grateful I am for the support I have had from everyone in order to steer the service through much muddle. I could not have done so without mediators taking responsibility for their mediation cases, without the advice of supervisors (Rosemary, Irene and Greta), without the thoughtfulness and practical skills of caseworkers (Christopher and Yvonne), and of course without the guidance of Trustees and sub-committees.

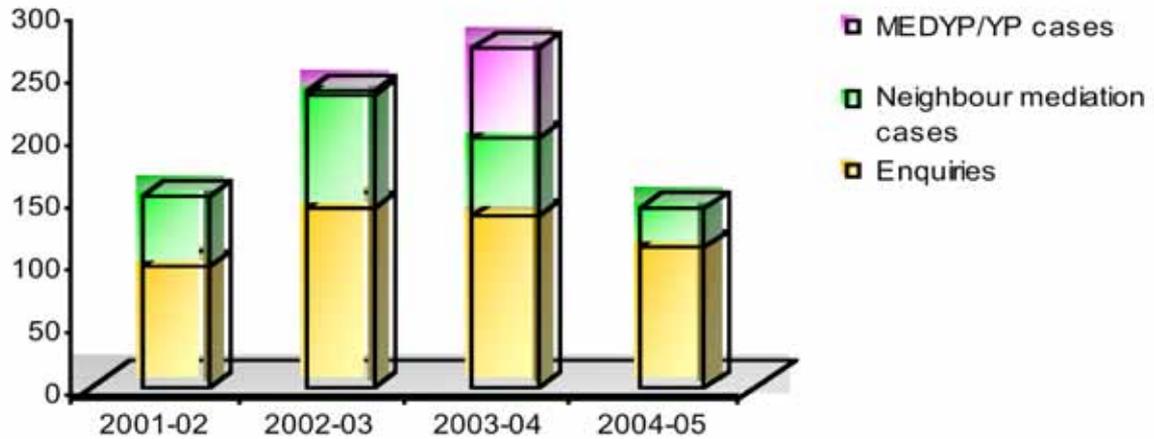
None of the above, and the benefits mediators experience from learning new skills, could be achieved without the constant financial support of Croydon Council and Housing Department, and the ever changing group of Housing Associations –which this year were: Beaver Housing Society, Broomleigh H.A., Croydon Churches H.A., Hexagon H.A., Hyde H.A., Kelsey H.A., Orbit H.A., South London Family H.A., Roundshaw Homes, Wandle H.A., Warden H.A.

The future of a caring society rests as much on the setting of boundaries, as on promoting respectful and considerate ways of living, for instance by implementing restorative measures when something has gone wrong.

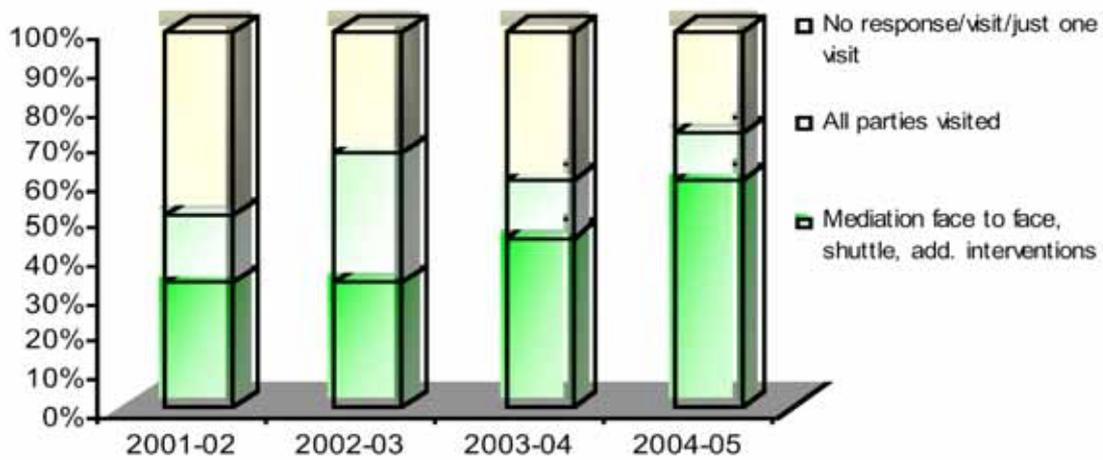
During the coming year we must devise new ways of developing mediation practice and foster a climate where trust can be invested in 'soft' measures, focusing on, and enabling social, rather than anti-social behaviour.

## **CROYDON COMMUNITY SERVICE STATISTICS OVERLEAF.**

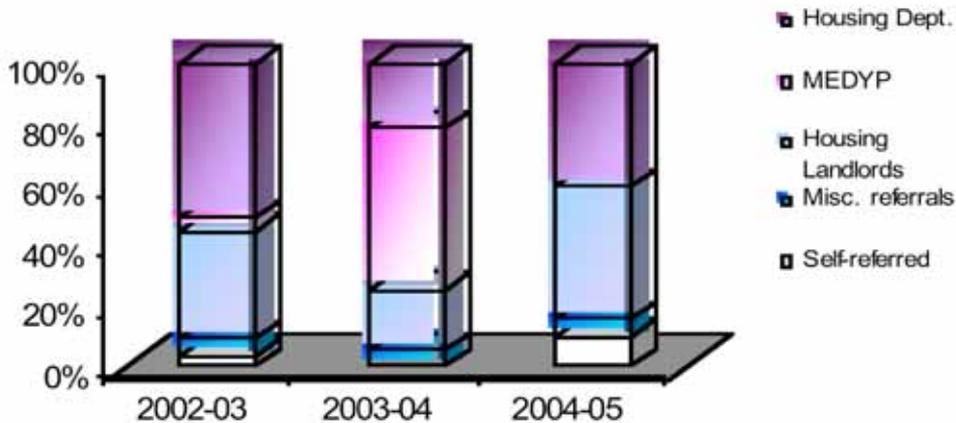
### ALL REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE



### RESULTS FOR CLOSED NEIGHBOUR MEDIATION CASES



### REFERERS INFORMATION





## **TREASURER'S REPORT -DAVID REES**

CCM started the year with high hopes. A general under spend in the previous year had enabled us to carry forward a surplus of just over £14k. We were thus able to re-engage self-employed sessional workers to make up for the serious shortage of voluntary assistance in the office on which the Service Manager, Francoise, had previously relied.

In addition, funds were allocated to carry out much needed redecoration of the premises and to invest in the potential for fund-raising in order to start developing the service and to increase the staff to run the service. We engaged a husband and wife team of consultants at the start of 2004. They had come with a strong recommendation, having completed a successful fund-raising assignment for another mediation service. Expenditure during the year was allowed to exceed income because our quarterly budget forecasts anticipated a successful outcome of our fund-raisers' assignment. They explored many avenues on our behalf, with one application proving to be fruitful. This was from the Tudor Trust to support a planned MEDYP project with £12,000 per annum funding over a 2 year period. Being unsuccessful in receiving unrestricted or advance funding had an impact on the service's overall budget situation. The Council Housing Department's decision to reduce the annual service grant also had an adverse impact on the budget.

The result was that, by the beginning of February, the budget was projecting an overall deficit for the financial year. Urgent discussions considered a number of options, however the Housing Department, having satisfied themselves regarding the budget position, were able to put forward a package which allowed the service to continue through to the end of the financial year. Careful budget planning and additional monitoring arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the budget remains in balance each month during the new financial year.

**The following accounts are a summary of our audited annual accounts for this financial year, which are available separately and in more details.**

**Our Auditors, whose advice we value, are  
the King's Mill Partnership, 75 Park Lane, CR9 1XS**

**CROYDON COMMUNITY MEDIATION  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2005**

	<b>2005</b>		<b>2004</b>	
<b>INCOME</b>	£	£	£	£
Housing Department core funding	60,515		50,739	
MAGYC Grant	-		7,000	
MEDYP Grant	-		20,000	
Grant for rent	5,750		5,750	
Housing Landlord and other fees	6,410		8,370	
Donations	1,651		169	
Bank Interest	344	74,670	312	92,340
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Staff costs	45,686		44,400	
Self-employed sessional workers fees	10,745		15,427	
Office Expenses (print, post & stationery)	2,121		1,644	
Telephone	955		1,071	
Mediation Expenses	245		390	
Mediation Training Costs	1,717		1,255	
Supervision	2,000		500	
Resources & Equipment	42		1,234	
Premises maintenance with health & safety	2,340		1,072	
Rent	6,783		5,750	
Rates & Water	72		67	
Light & Heat	775		608	
Publicity	1,253		457	
Insurance & Membership	2,302		2,146	
Payroll & Audit fees	809		817	
Fundraising	5,422		750	
Cleaning & General Expenses	973		757	
Office Volunteers Expenses	452		490	
Depreciation	401	85,093	436	79,271
 <b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES</b>		 -10,423		 13,069
 Balance brought forward at 1st April 2004		 15,549		 2,480
 Balance carried forward at 31st March 2005		 5,126		 15,549

**BALANCE SHEET AT 31ST MARCH 2005**

<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible Assets		1,310	1,397
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	2,203		2,725
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>	14,946		12,046
<b>Total</b>	17,149		14,771
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Creditors	-13,333		-619
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		3,816	14,152
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>		5,126	15,549