

MEDIATION SURREY – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Mediation Surrey CIO was formed in July 2019 to implement the proposed merger of West Surrey Mediation (previously funded by Woking Borough Council), East Surrey Community Mediation (ESCM), Mid-Surrey Mediation, Mediation North Surrey and the Alliance of Surrey Mediation Services. Between July and December 2019 each organisation merged into Mediation Surrey CIO, with the Group fully operational as one organisation from January 2020 onwards.

The Service aims to help neighbours find solutions to difficulties which suit all the parties involved without the need for the involvement of statutory services or enforcement agencies. Disagreements can be sorted out quickly and confidentially, without the expense and trouble of going to Court. The mediators are impartial and have no formal or legal authority and represent no official body. They are well trained and experienced, and willing to attend lectures and extra training to support work with specific members of the community, younger or older people, and those with mental health issues.

The main areas of dispute are in relation to noise and anti-social behaviour and over the past year the referrals for community mediation and support coaching have significantly increased. During 2020/21, there were 257 referrals for community mediation assisting an estimated 770 users County-wide, of which 120 resided within the Borough. There were also 390 referrals for Support Coaching and 45 referrals for intergenerational mediation. The Charity states that overall at least 140 people from Woking would have benefitted from the work of the Charity over the past year.

This service has been essential during the pandemic. With more people working from home, having to shield or isolate, the borough has seen an increase in reports of neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour, in line with the national experience. This can have a significant impact for an individual or household as well as potentially for the community. People’s tolerances have been tested and Mediation Surrey offers both mediation services and coaching, when mediation may not be suitable. This can provide the necessary solution to complicated and entrenched problems, which at times cannot be addressed by statutory interventions. It supports priorities in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Woking’s Corporate Plan 2021-22 and the Safer Woking Partnership.

In view of the Council’s financial situation, it is recommended that a grant be awarded at a reduction of 10% from last year, equating to £3,600 for 2022/23.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That, subject to the outcome of the Council’s budgetary process, a grant of £3,600 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget towards the running costs of the mediation service provided to residents of the Borough of Woking.

Reason for Decision

To enable the mediation service to be available for residents of the Borough.

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| Confirmation of funding | <p>This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council's budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council's overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 10 February 2022. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council's support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan for the 2022/23 funding until this confirmation has been received.</p> |
| Conditions | <p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on websites and literature / leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in April. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Joint Working. WBC expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the Council expects the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations are expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively may put their Council support at risk.</p> |
| Performance Indicators | <p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p> |
| Future Support | <p>The financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2022/23 does not imply that a similar application in 2023/24 would be supported. In</p> |

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particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2022/23 levels.

In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2023/24 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2023. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2022/23 Application Form.

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Date Published:

30 November 2021

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| 1.0 Summary of Application | |
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| 1.1 Status and Aims | <p>Mediation Surrey CIO was formed in July 2019 to implement the proposed merger of West Surrey Mediation (previously funded by Woking BC), East Surrey Community Mediation (ESCM), Mid-Surrey Mediation, Mediation North Surrey and the Alliance of Surrey Mediation Services. The Group has been operational as one organisation from January 2020 onwards.</p> <p>The aims and objectives of Mediation Surrey CIO are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the provision of mediation, coaching, conciliation, dispute resolution, reconciliation and resilience services as between persons, organisations, authorities, family members or groups involved or likely to be involved in dispute or interpersonal conflict, including but not limited to any situation where that dispute or conflict results from or may lead to acts of violence, nuisance, vandalism, racial abuse, sexual abuse, unlawful activity or breakdown of public order; and - to advance to the public benefit the education of the public in the purposes, techniques and processes of such mediation, coaching, conciliation, dispute resolution, reconciliation and resilience and, in particular, the understanding of the nature and causes of any such disputes or conflicts and of all means of managing them for purposes of peaceful resolution in the interests of good citizenship and interpersonal relationships. <p>The merger into one Organisation has enabled the provision of services across the whole of Surrey including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community mediation – neighbour dispute resolution • Support coaching – one-to-one coaching for people suffering the effects of ASB and neighbour disputes • Intergenerational Mediation – disputes within families (other than couples separating) <p>There is also a Family Mediation service for couples separating. This is a low-cost fee-paying service which is fully self-funding and not covered by grant funding.</p> |
| 1.2 Employees | 7, comprising Director of Services, Secretary and 5 x Casework Co-ordinators. |
| 1.3 Volunteers | <p>64, including 9 Board members who are responsible for the management of the Charity, meeting quarterly to discuss strategy, governance and the managing of the charity.</p> <p>The volunteers have completed training as community mediators and provide the mediation service to clients referred to the Group. Many have completed additional specialist training in coaching and intergenerational mediation and volunteer within coaching and mediation services.</p> |
| 1.4 Clients/Users | During 2020/21, there were 257 referrals for community mediation, most involving two to four individuals and so the estimated number of users is 770 across the County, of which 120 resided within the Borough. There were also 390 referrals for Support Coaching, with |

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| | <p>one individual per referral. In addition there were 45 referrals for intergenerational mediation, with most families including three individuals and so the estimated users were 135.</p> <p>The Charity states that overall at least 140 people from Woking would have benefitted from the work of the Charity.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.5 Members | <p>The Board is currently working on a membership policy in time for its next AGM, likely to give membership to anyone who volunteers for the organisation and wishes to be a member.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.6 Sum Requested | <p>£4,000 (Revenue)</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7 Project | <p>The funding would contribute towards salaries, office and volunteer expenses, hall hire for meetings, insurance and training.</p> | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.8 Cost breakdown: | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Salaries</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£113,354</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Staff Expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£10,600</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Volunteer Expenses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£21,170</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Office Costs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£21,046</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£166,170</td> </tr> </table> | Salaries | £113,354 | Staff Expenses | £10,600 | Volunteer Expenses | £21,170 | Office Costs | £21,046 | Total | £166,170 |
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| Office Costs | £21,046 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | £166,170 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.9 Community Benefit | <p>The merger of the Surrey Mediation Services has allowed the Group to offer services more efficiently and cost-effectively through an integrated staff team, a cloud-based case management system. The need for support in Woking would not be reduced because of the merger, but would indeed allow the Group to be in a position to deliver a higher level of service with the support given.</p> <p>Not only are those who contact the Charity benefitting from its services, but also the wider community by mediating an issue that has an impact on other residents, particularly if the dispute has been longstanding. For example, mediating a parking matter might also ease an anti-social behaviour and noise issue in the surrounding area.</p> <p>The Applicant has stated that a high number of referrals are from Woking Borough Council and that their services reduce demands on the Council and Surrey Police. The Group note the high demand for services is shown through the increase in referrals for all services in 2021-22:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;">Community mediation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">257 compared with 137 in 2019-20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Support coaching</td> <td style="text-align: right;">390 compared with 224 in 2019-20)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intergenerational</td> <td style="text-align: right;">45 compared with 64 in 2019-20</td> </tr> </table> <p>The services offered can have a deep and lasting positive impact on residents that have been supported after long-standing disputes.</p> <p>Some mediations may only involve two or three people but may have a deep and lasting consequence for a person involved, for example an elderly person feeling vulnerable and threatened in their home may feel happier and supported after mediation and able to stay in their own home and community for longer. Not all the cases can be resolved successfully if one party refuses to mediate or there is no agreement established.</p> | Community mediation | 257 compared with 137 in 2019-20 | Support coaching | 390 compared with 224 in 2019-20) | Intergenerational | 45 compared with 64 in 2019-20 | | | | |
| Community mediation | 257 compared with 137 in 2019-20 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Support coaching | 390 compared with 224 in 2019-20) | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 1.10 Covid-19 Impact | <p>Volunteers have worked hard to assist clients via Zoom with two licences purchased with Covid funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This has included coaching sessions, initial meetings for community and intergenerational mediation, and (from July 2020 onwards) joint mediation meetings, mediator peer support and training sessions, referrer briefings and some internal meetings.</p> <p>As lockdown eased guidance was prepared on providing Covid-safe face-to-face joint meetings, including liaising with venues as they reopened. A small number of these meetings have taken place, and it is useful to be able to use both virtual and face-to-face options as appropriate.</p> <p>Its services became especially relevant in the Covid-19 lockdown periods with people forced to spend more time in their homes. This caused and exacerbated stressful situations between neighbours and within families.</p> <p>Demand for the coaching service is stated to have increased significantly. There has been an increased impact of Anti-Social Behaviour and neighbour disputes on mental health, exacerbated by the pandemic.</p> |
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| 2.0 Financial Background | |
| 2.1 Budget | <p>At the time of the application, the Group held £257,848 in the bank. The sum of £162,814 is reserved for seven months' expenditure, winding up costs and new projects.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a break-even budget for 2022/23 which shows an anticipated income and expenditure of £166,170, as set out in paragraph 1.8.</p> <p>Income is expected to be received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (£95,000, service level agreement to March 2023 subject to annual review), Boroughs and Housing Associations (£35,000), leaving funds to be raised (£36,170).</p> |
| 2.2 Accounts | <p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2020/21 which show an income of £164,117 against expenditure of £144,529, resulting in a surplus of £19,588. The sum of £228,532 was carried forward at the end of the 2020/21 year.</p> |
| 2.3 Support over the past five years | <p>2021/22 – £4,000 2020/21 – £4,000 2019/20 – £4,000 2018/19 – £4,000 2017/18 – £4,000</p> |

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| 3.0 Assessment of Application | | | |
| 3.1 Key Information | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">○ Constitution</td> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; text-align: right;">Yes</td> </tr> </table> | ○ Constitution | Yes |
| ○ Constitution | Yes | | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No Yes Yes Yes No Yes No Yes N/A Yes |
| <p>3.2 Assessment</p> | <p>This service has been essential during the pandemic. With more people working from home, having to shield or isolate, the borough has seen an increase in reports of neighbourhood disputes and anti-social behaviour, in line with the national experience. This can have a significant impact for an individual or household as well as potentially for the community. People’s tolerances have been tested and Mediation Surrey offers both mediation services and coaching, when mediation may not be suitable. This can provide the necessary solution to complicated and entrenched problems, which at times cannot be addressed by statutory interventions. It supports priorities in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Woking’s Corporate Plan 2021-22 and the Safer Woking Partnership.</p> <p>In view of the Council’s financial situation, it is recommended that a grant be awarded at a reduction of 10% from last year, equating to £3,600 for 2022/23.</p> | |

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