

**MEDIATION AND HOMELESSNESS
PREVENTION IN SCOTLAND:
A DECADE OF MEDIATION BETWEEN
YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES
THE SHAPE OF SERVICES IN SCOTLAND**

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THE SHAPE OF SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

Local Authority (L.A.)	Dates	Service name	Organisation	Commissioned by L.A.		L.A. service	Funding		
				Yes	No		L.A.	Independent	None
Aberdeen City	2011 -	Prevention team (mediation inputs)	Homeless Dept.			✓			
Aberdeen-shire	2010	Community mediation	Sacro	✓			✓		
Angus	2004	RS Tayside and Fife	RS	✓			Spot purchase		
	2007 - 2008	PSEM project	Restorative Justice	✓			✓		
	2011 -	Young People's Housing Options Project	Homeless and Social work dept.			✓			
Argyll and Bute	2008 -	RS Argyll and Bute	RS	✓			Spot purchase		
Dumfries and Galloway	2007 -	RS Dumfries and Galloway	RS		✓				✓
	2010	RS Dumfries and Galloway	RS		✓			✓	
Dundee	2009 - 2010	Community mediation	Sacro	✓					✓
East Ayrshire	2005	Community mediation	Sacro	✓					✓
E.Dunbartonshire	2005 - 2011	Community mediation	Sacro	✓			✓		
East Lothian	2001 - 2008	Community mediation	Sacro	✓			✓		
	2009 -	Amber	Edinburgh Cyrenians/Sacro		✓			✓	
	2011	Amber	Edinburgh Cyrenians	✓			✓		
East Renfrew.	2003 - 2007	Community mediation	Sacro		✓				
Edinburgh	2006 -	Amber	Edinburgh Cyrenians/Sacro	✓			✓	✓	
	2010 - 2011	Networks Project	Rock Trust		✓			✓	
	2011 -	Compass Project	Rock trust		✓			✓	
Falkirk	2009 -	RS Forth Valley	RS	✓					✓
Fife	2005	Community mediation	Sacro	✓			✓		
Fife, Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross	c. 2005 -	RS Tayside and Fife	RS		✓				✓

Local Authority (L.A.)	Dates	Service name	Organisation	Commissioned by L.A.		L.A. service	Funding		
				Yes	No		L.A.	Independent	None
Glasgow	2008 - 2010	Mediation service	Glasgow Community and Safety Services	✓					✓
Highland	2005 - 2006	Volunteer mediation service	Range of homeless orgs	✓			✓		
	2011	RS Highland	RS	✓			Spot purchase		
Inverclyde	2009	Community mediation	Community safety services			✓			✓
	c. 2009 -	Homeless Officers	Homeless dept.			✓			
Moray	2005 - 2006	Volunteer mediation service	Range of homeless orgs	✓			✓		
	2010 -	Prevention team	Homeless dept.			✓			
North Ayrshire	2003 - 2009	Community mediation	Sacro	✓			✓		
	2005 -	Homeless officers	Homeless dept.			✓			
North Lanarkshire	2010 -	Housing mediation	Housing dept.			✓			
Orkney Islands	2009 -	RS Orkney	RS	✓			✓		
Perth and Kinross	2009, 2010 - 2011	Community mediation	Sacro	✓					✓
Renfrewshire	2004 -	Time 2 Mend	Community mediation/ homeless dep.			✓			
Scottish Borders	2009 - 2011	Family liaison officer	Homeless dept.			✓			
	2011	Prevention officer	Homeless dept.			✓			
Shetland Islands	2011 -	Family mediation Shetland	RS	✓			✓		
South Ayrshire	2002 -	Throughcare support	Social Work			✓			
South Lanarkshire	2003 -	Mediation service	Housing/ technical services dept.			✓			
Stirling	2004 - 2009	Homeless mediation officers	Homeless dept.			✓			
West Dunbarton.	2009 -	Youth Justice	Sacro		✓				✓
West Lothian	2009 - 2011	Amber	Edinburgh Cyrenians/ Sacro		✓				✓
Western Isles		Informal mediation work	Foyer/ Social work						✓
Total				20	9	13	15	4	10

Table 1 – Funding and Commissioning

Key

Family mediation



Community mediation



Vol sector homeless organisation



Local authority, dedicated post



Local authority, mediation skills as part of prevention role

RS = Relationships Scotland

Situation of project		Number of projects since 2001	Number of projects at 11/2011
Family mediation (Relationships Scotland)		9	7
Community mediation (Sacro)		10	1
Voluntary sector homeless organisations		10	5
Local authority	Homeless dept. staff using 'Mediation skills'	5	5
	Dedicated mediation staff	9	5
Total		43	23

Table 2 – Situation of Services

Family Mediation. Some family mediation services, whose work is usually with separating couples, have been delivering intergenerational mediation for a few years, which sometimes includes housing issues, unfunded and uncommissioned. The services that were interviewed all had found that families were approaching them on an ad-hoc basis. Since around 2009, more services have formalised this work, either through commissioning by local authorities or accessing project specific trust funds. Three family mediation services established spot-purchase arrangements with local authority homeless departments, one of which has worked with a number of cases since 2008, one was not utilised by the homeless department staff and so ended after 12 months and the other is very new at the time of going to print.

Community Mediation. Community mediation services, all run by Sacro with the exception of Glasgow Community and Safety Services, have been commissioned by local authority homeless services to deliver homeless mediation services as an addition to their core work, particularly around 2005 – 2007. Often community mediation services have been the obvious choice for local authority commissioners as there is already a relationship with the housing department. Some services that were interviewed had found that families were approaching them on an ad-hoc basis, or issues within families were occurring as part of their community mediation caseload prior to the work being formalised. For some, Service Level Agreements specified a certain number of hours or cases, for others cases were just taken on as they arose. Sacro's West Dunbartonshire restorative justice service has been receiving referrals from Social Work on a non – commissioned, non-funded basis since 2009.

Voluntary Sector Homeless Organisations. From 2005, five voluntary sector organisations have run mediation projects. Some of these have been closely tied to the local authority and some have been entirely independent. Three organisations have trained staff in mediation and took on cases as they were referred alongside their normal work. The two other organisations employed

already trained mediators to work within projects that also offer support to young people, or young people and their families.

Local Authority. Local authority delivery of mediation can be split into two distinct categories.

1) Homeless department staff, often with a remit for prevention, using 'mediation skills' in their work with young people and their families when a young person attends a housing options or homeless presentation interview. This is a model initially used in Scotland by North Ayrshire who have widely published the success of their prevention workers in preventing young people from becoming homeless. In recent years this model has been taken on by other councils.

2) Since 2002 local authorities have employed dedicated mediation staff to deliver mediation. These have been situated in different departments: social work, community/ housing mediation and homeless departments. Three projects have shown very successful close working between the homeless department and another department to deliver a combination of mediation and support. Across the country, these have been the projects with the greatest longevity.

LOCAL AUTHORITY MEDIATION SERVICES - SUMMARY

The local authority summaries contain information provided by survey participants and local authority homeless departments.

Aberdeen City

Aberdeen City do not currently provide a mediation service and are not aware of anything in the past. Mediation/ conciliation inputs are now utilized by their new Homelessness Prevention Team.

Aberdeenshire

Delivery: Sacro's Aberdeenshire Community Mediation Service

Staffing: Dedicated part-time mediation worker (17.5 hours per week)

Timescale/ Location: January 2010 - July 2010, extended to September 2010. The pilot was initially run in Peterhead and Fraserburgh, the areas in which most young people were presenting as homeless. This was extended to include Banff as there were lots of young people presenting.

History: Prior to the pilot, there was no official mediation for young people and their families in Aberdeenshire.

Commissioning/ Funding: The pilot was commissioned and funded by Aberdeenshire Council's Homeless Department

Age range: 16- 25

Referral process: When a young person presented as homeless they were offered mediation by a Housing Options Officer. The homeless assessment went ahead and they would be offered temporary accommodation. In order to increase referrals after the first 6 weeks of the project, any young person in temporary accommodation was sent a letter telling them about the mediation service. They had to 'opt out' within a week; otherwise their details would be passed on to the mediation worker who would contact them to discuss the service. Only once the mediation worker had met with a young person could they access the families' details through asking the young person for them.

Delivery model: Community mediation model was used. Having assessed the risk, the mediation worker would usually go out alone to visit both parties separately. When a case reached a face-to-face meeting, the mediation worker would co-mediate with someone from the community mediation team. Community mediation paperwork was adapted to suit this type of mediation.

Reflections: Due to the structure of the model, the pilot received 55 referrals during the 9 month period. However, only 4 of these became mediation cases. The staff felt that when someone has presented as homeless, or is in temporary accommodation, it is not the best time to offer mediation.

Interviewed 17th November 2010,
Aberdeenshire Community Mediation Offices

Angus

Delivery: Angus Restorative Justice Service

Staffing: 4 members of staff taking on cases as they arose.

Timescale/ Location: August 2007 –August 2008, across Angus

History: 2004 - Relationships Scotland Relationships Scotland Tayside and Fife (then Family Mediation Tayside) carried out a pilot with Angus Council following an approach from the service manager to the council. Referrals were to come from the homelessness team at the point of presentation or during the process. Mediation would be paid for on a spot-purchase basis. The management were on board and training about the project was given to the frontline homelessness staff, and a number of joint planning meetings held. Front-line staff did not make any referrals throughout the lifetime of the pilot.

Commissioning/ Funding: The pilot was commissioned by Angus Council's Housing Division, Angus Council Social Work & Health and Angus Restorative Justice Service and funded by Housing, Social Work & Health

Age range: 18 - 25

Referral process: Referrals were in the main from the Assessment Officer Team, but a referral procedure was in place for other agencies.

Delivery model: The mediation work was part of a wider Peer Support, Education and Mediation (PSEM) Project, delivered by 2 local voluntary sector agencies. The staff would co-mediate. Additional support needs were quickly identified and signposted on or met by other agency staff.

Reflections: It is not unusual for a new Project to take a year or more to 'bed down'. The service received 20 referrals, resulting in 4 young people remaining at home and 4 others having positive outcomes. There was a proposal for continuation funding for the project, to allow for 2 part-time dedicated mediators, but this did not materialise.

2011 – Young People's Housing Options Project

At the end of the summer Angus council will launch a new young people's homeless prevention project that will be staffed by 2 homelessness staff and 2 social work and health staff. They will work with young people and their families to take the heat out of the crisis situation. Mediation between young people and their families will be an element of what they are offering.

Argyll and Bute

Delivery: Family Mediation Argyll and Bute

Staffing: Sessional

Timescale/ Location: Since 2008, across Argyll and Bute

History: No known history of mediation between young people and their families.

Commissioning/ funding: Commissioned by the Homeless Team, funded by the Homeless Team pre referral on a case by case basis. If the case progresses further than referral and correspondence the Homeless Team are invoiced per mediation session. Contract renewed annually.

Age range: 16+

Referral process: When a young person presents as homeless they are offered mediation. On some occasions a referral is made before presentation occurs by a voluntary agency or as a self-referral.

Delivery model: The mediator mediates alone due to the large geographical area.

Reflections: The service is trying to work with more early intervention cases through advertising.

Questionnaire returned by email

Clackmannanshire

There have been no mediation services working with young people at risk of homelessness in the past or currently.

City of Edinburgh

Delivery: Amber Mediation Service, Partnership between Edinburgh Cyrenian Trust (providing support work and leading the partnership) and Sacro's Edinburgh Community Mediation service (providing mediators). The partnership between Cyrenians and Sacro concluded in August 2011. The Amber Mediation Service is now solely run by Edinburgh Cyrenians.

Staffing: Dedicated part time mediation worker (20 hours per week), Personal Advisers (2 x 18.5 hours)

Timescale/ Location: 2006 onwards, across Edinburgh.

History: Prior to the Amber service, there was no official mediation for young people and their families in Edinburgh. Homeless officers may have been doing something like mediation on an informal basis but there was no identity of them being a mediation service.

Commissioning/ Funding: Service for young people age 16 - 24 is commissioned and funded by the City of Edinburgh Council's Homeless department. Under 16's work is funded through independent Trust Funds.

Age range: 14 - 24

Referral process: The service has no restrictions on where referrals come from. Most frequent referrers are schools, social work and self-referral. They will work with anyone at risk, or potential risk, of homelessness, and with young people who have already left home.

Delivery model: The team respond to a referral within 2 working days and aim to have met with the parties within a working week. Personal Advisers provide support for both the young people and their families. When both parties are ready, the case is passed on to the mediator. Support is available at all times during or after the mediation process.

Reflections: The service in Edinburgh receives around 85 cases each year, with about 80% becoming cases. The service was cited as best practice in the Scottish Government Guide to the Prevention of Homelessness 2009. In the future, the team hopes the service will continue to improve and expand.

Interviewed 23rd November 2010,
Amber Edinburgh Offices

Edinburgh (Rock Trust)

Delivery: Rock Trust- Youth Development- Networks- Mediation

Staffing: Networks Mediator, 18hrs per week

Timescale/ Location: May 2010 – January 2011, extended until April 2011. Across Edinburgh.

History: Scottish Social Networks is based at the Rock Trust and has been promoting mediation as a tool for building social networks since 2005.

Commissioning/ Funding: Initiative of Rock Trust, funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Age range: 16 – 25

Referral process: Referrals were predominately received from other Rock Trust services. In particular, the mediation service was designed to receive referrals from Rock Trust's "Nightstop", which provides a 3 night stay with a volunteer host family for young people in housing need. The mediator could only access parental details through the young person, because of being situated within a youth service.

Delivery model: At the stage of referral there is a detailed chat during which young people are asked to examine whether any additional issues that are putting pressure on the relationship are being addressed through support or signposting. He "turns the referrers into temporary PAs" (reference Amber PAs). In this way, the mediator remained impartial because someone else was doing the support work. When he works with parents, the mediator does the signposting. The mediator mediated alone.

Reflections: The Cyrenians and the Rock Trust agreed prior to the establishment of the service that the mediator would only work with internal (Rock Trust) referrals or with crisis/ very chaotic cases. This was a challenge, but not necessarily a limitation: one of the main aims of this pilot project was to determine whether it is feasible to mediate in these cases. Most cases stopped at pre-mediation, leaving the door open whilst the young person rides out the worst of the chaos before deciding whether to proceed. Sometimes mediation in the middle of a crisis can work. This is affected by the service's capacity to respond to a crisis, and whether the young person is prioritising the issue of addressing their relationship.

The Rock Trust's Compass Project supports young people, aged 16-25, who are experiencing (or have experienced) homelessness or have a care or offending

background. As part of this support, the Compass Project offers a mediation service for young people experiencing conflict in their relationships with, for example, parents, carers, flatmates and landlords.

Interview 5th October 2010
Edinburgh

Dumfries and Galloway

Delivery: Relationships Scotland Dumfries and Galloway

Staffing: Sessional

Timescale/ Location: Since 2007, across Dumfries and Galloway. July – December 2010, rural Dumfries and Galloway.

History: Not aware of any other work in this area.

Commissioning/ funding: Initiative of Relationships Scotland Dumfries and Galloway, not funded except July – December 2010 microgrant from the Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice

Age range: The target client is 14 – 16 years old, but this is flexible.

Referral process: The intergenerational work grew naturally, with a handful of people approaching the family mediation service and then later developed into a service they 'officially' provide. The short-term microgrant was for work targeted in rural areas. The focus was triggered by the presence of special needs in these areas, indicated by high rates of suicide amongst young males.

Delivery model: Mediator works alone. Mediation may be between young people and their parents, but also may include other family members.

Reflections: They have found a large amount of crossover with the family mediation work they were already regularly carrying out. This service has found that when referrals have come from professionals, such as educational psychologists or social work, there has been significantly less uptake of the service than with self-referrals. The service would like funding in order to be able to publicise itself more.

Interviewed 1st February 2011,
Relationship Scotland Dumfries and Galloway offices

Dundee

Delivery: Sacro Dundee Community Mediation

Staffing: 2 community mediators undertaking cases as they arose

Timescale/ Location: June to December 2009, extended until the end of March 2010, across Dundee.

History: No formal projects have operated in this area but Family Mediation Tayside have been carrying out such work informally for a number of years as part of their normal case load.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned by Dundee City Council but not funded

Age range: 16- 21

Referral process: The service was set up for referrals to be from Action for Children and the Lily Walker Centre, which is the main homeless unit in Dundee. They worked with young people who were already homeless or had recently become homeless. Parental details were only gained through the young people, and very few parents engaged with the service.

Delivery model: A mediator working alone would meet parties in local venues.

Reflections: Staff feel that there is a need for this type of work. It would be best if organisations worked together co-operatively to share knowledge, skills and opportunities. In the light of the pilot, there was consensus among referrers and mediators that benefit could be gained by finding a way of referring young people and their parents at an earlier stage or a younger age (around 14), before they present as homeless/ are given a house. With only 7 referrals, it was felt that there was low understanding of the benefits of mediation by referrers. None of these progressed to a full mediation. However, working with the young person on conflict resolution and communication skills was still very beneficial.

Interviewed 7th December 2010,
Sacro Dundee Community Mediation offices

East Ayrshire

SACRO provided a mediation service for East Ayrshire Council but they have been superseded by City of Glasgow Community Safety Services to whom the council refer requests for mediation including those involving young people and their families.

East Dunbartonshire

Delivery: Sacro East Dunbartonshire Community Mediation

Staffing: 2 part-time "Community and Homelessness mediators"

Timescale/ Location: 2005 – April 2011, across East Dunbartonshire

History: No formal projects operated in this area previously.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by East Dunbartonshire Housing Department as part of the larger Community Mediation contract.

Age range: 16- 25

Referral process: Local authority homeless team were the sole referrers of young people at risk of being made homeless. Referrals were generally received through the internal mail system with contact details for both parties and a short description of the dispute, and then the mediation team get in touch. The homeless team would process the young persons' application and grant temporary accommodation if needed, whilst going through the mediation process.

Delivery model: The team co-mediate.

Reflections: The homeless mediation aspect always felt to staff like an 'add-on' to the community mediation service, but it was quite different and interesting work. Frustrations around low numbers of referrals imply that there was work to do around confidence in the benefits of mediation by referrers.

Interviewed 16th November 2010,
Sacro East Dunbartonshire Community Mediation offices

East Lothian

Delivery: Sacro's East Lothian Community Mediation Service (ELCMS)

Staffing:

2001 - 2003 ELCMS Community mediators took cases as additional sessional hours
2005 – 2008 2 specific Community mediation staff took on the cases

Location: Across East Lothian.

History:

2000 East Lothian Council commissioned a scoping study
2001-2002 A handful of referrals taken on by East Lothian Community Mediation
2003 One year Homeless mediation pilot project
2004-2005 Restructuring within ELC homelessness team
10/2005 Homeless mediation service launched, which started properly in
2006
2006-2008 East Lothian Community Mediation Homeless mediation service

Commissioning and funding:

2003, 2005 – 2008 Commissioned and funded by East Lothian Council Homeless Department

Age range: 16- 21 initially but extended later to 16- 24 later on for vulnerable young adults.

Referral process: All referrals had to be for people that had been assessed by the Homeless Department Central Assessment Team.

Delivery model: The cases were co-mediated. If a young person identified an area that they needed support with, with the young person's permission, the mediator referred this back to the CAT worker who acted as the 'case manager' who would then signpost so that this need was met. If the other party had clear support needs, the mediation team would signpost on. The young person could choose to mediate with *whoever* they wanted to establish a relationship with and would want to support them when they moved into temporary or supported accommodation. This could be either immediate family or a significant person from the extended family.

Reflections: Whilst a single referral point had advantages there were disadvantages also. The service prepared interim and final reports recommending early intervention and proactive prevention work, also recommending an open referral route. The service received a small number of referrals (27 across 8

years). Where there were referrals the service had good outcomes and felt that they learnt a lot through the period.

Interviews 2nd November 2010,
ELCMS offices

East Lothian - Amber

Delivery: Amber Mediation service, partnership between Edinburgh Cyrenian Trust (providing support work and leading the partnership) and Sacro's Edinburgh Community Mediation service (providing mediators). The partnership between Cyrenians and Sacro concluded in August 2011. The Amber Mediation Service is now solely run by Edinburgh Cyrenians.

Staffing: Dedicated part time mediation worker (8.5 hours per week), Personal Adviser (18.5 hours).

Timescale/ Location: September 2009 onwards, across East Lothian

History: See above

Commissioning/ Funding: Amber Mediation Service initiative, Fairer Scotland Funding.

Age range: 14 - 24

Referral process: As with other Amber services, the current service has no restrictions on where referrals come from. Most frequent referrers in East Lothian are schools, integration team and homeless team. They will work with anyone at risk, or potential risk, of homelessness, and with young people who have already left home.

Delivery model: Personal Advisers provide support for both the young people and their families. When both parties are ready, the case is passed on to the mediator. Support is available at all times during or after the mediation process.

Reflections: Amber East Lothian has benefited from sharing offices with ELCMS and learning from their experiences. Due to the familiarity of the concept of mediation in East Lothian, the service has become well established within the first 18 months and receives regular, appropriate referrals. Amber East Lothian was commissioned by East Lothian Council's Homelessness Department to attach a dedicated full time mediator to the Homelessness Team from August 2011 for 12 months. The mediator attends housing options

interviews with young people to offer mediation where appropriate. Support is provided to the young person and their family by Homeless Department staff, who have received Amber training.

Interview 23rd November 2010,
Amber Edinburgh Offices

East Renfrewshire

There was a SACRO mediation worker in East Renfrewshire from 2003 – 2007, who was responsible for community mediation but also able to take on young people and families mediation. The mediator only recalls taking on one of these cases. The SACRO service closed due to lack of funding and currently there is no dedicated mediation work. On occasion, however, mediation-type skills are occasionally used by the anti-social investigation team, young person's supported accommodation outreach work unit and tenancy enforcement officers.

Falkirk

Delivery: Relationships Scotland Forth Valley

Staffing: Sessional volunteers

Timescale/ Location: June 2009 onwards, across Falkirk.

History: Nothing until now – the community housing officers do some mediation which strays sometimes into family disputes.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned by Falkirk Homelessness Department, no additional funding provided for the project.

Age range: 14 – 25 but wouldn't actively exclude anyone.

Referral process: Referrals taken from any professional agency for young people at risk of homelessness. Initial awareness raising was targeted at housing officers, the Accommodation Resource Centre (where people present as homeless), hostels, and housing associations. In light a lack of referrals, the service is now targeting awareness raising at agencies that work with people before the problems progress e.g. schools. ARC staff received a steer to make direct referrals automatically for young people, and an 'opt out' box is included on the homeless assessment form for contact details being passed on.

Delivery model: The volunteers co-mediate and will go out to visit young people in their localities.

Reflections: The response on visiting the initial services was that "the service sounds great, but for the people we work with it is too late". So far, no referrals have progressed to full mediations.

Interviewed 2nd February 2011,
Relationships Scotland Forth Valley offices

Fife

Delivery: Sacro Fife Community Mediation

Staffing: 35 hours per week split across two part-time workers from the community mediation team.

Timescale/ Location: 2005, commissioned for a year but terminated prior to end of contract. Across Fife.

History: No history of this kind of mediation in Fife prior to 2005.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by the Homelessness and Special Needs Unit within Fife Housing Service.

Age range: Initially 16 – 17 but due to lack of referrals this was expanded up to 24.

Referral process: Initially the referral route was to be solely through homelessness officers who had engaged with young people at the point of presentation. Having explained mediation they would pass on name, contact details and a brief history of any young people that wanted to take up the service. After about 6 months this was opened up to include all agencies in Fife in order to generate more referrals. In addition, the mediators went to the homeless offices and to homeless hostels to offer the service to people as they came through the door.

Delivery model: The mediators worked by themselves.

Reflections: Despite targeted awareness raising there were a lack of referrals to the service, and the team reflected that the chaotic lifestyle of the target client did not lend itself to the standard model of mediation. The service would like local authorities to be required to offer mediation between young people and their families, but for the service to be offered at an earlier stage. The team continue to take on ad-hoc cases.

Interviewed 10th December 2010,
Sacro Fife Community Mediation offices

Glasgow

Delivery: Glasgow Community and Safety Services Mediation Service

Staffing: Spring 2008 - Comm. mediators taking cases into caseload.
January – June 2010 - 2 dedicated mediators, one afternoon per week

Timescale/ Location : Spring 2008 - Across Glasgow
January – June 2010 - Residents of the James Maclean Project

History: Prior to the pilot project, there were only ad-hoc referrals to the team. Otherwise not aware of any homelessness mediation activity.

Commissioning/ Funding:

Spring 2008 Commissioned by the Homelessness Department,
not funded.

January – June 2010 Commissioned by JMP

Age range: 16 – 25

Referral process:

Spring 2008 - Referrals were from the Hamish Allan Centre which is the Local Authority (social work and housing) homeless hub in city centre Glasgow at which people come to present as homeless. Young people could be offered mediation and referrals were sent via email.

JMP - When working at JMP, a homeless hostel for young people, all residents were told about the mediators and contact was made with the young people through a weekly drop-in session. The team did not have access to parental details other than through the young person.

Delivery model:

JMP - At the drop-in workers would discuss with a young person whether they wanted mediation and it was suitable. Due to the nature of the situation it evolved at one stage into a kind of sounding group. However, it was decided that it would be better to ensure conversations with young people were happening on an individual basis.

Reflections: The team would like a resource dedicated to this type of mediation. In the first stage of the pilot, a minority went to a joint meeting. At the JMP no cases reached a face-to-face meeting but good work was done on an individual basis.

Interviewed 23rd November 2010,
Glasgow Community Safety Services offices

Highland

2005/ 2006 - Volunteer Mediators

A pilot scheme was run jointly with Moray council, for working with 16 – 25 year olds at risk of homelessness.

Funding was given to the Calman Trust for volunteers who were already working in the homeless sector (non- council) to receive Sacro's 5 day community mediation training. About 6 volunteers were trained who were geographically spread across the Highlands/ Moray. Their managers agreed that they would be able to take time out of their normal employment activity to work cases. The practitioner explained that they only wanted to mediate in cases that they were not already involved in, in order to operate independently and ensure impartiality.

Referrals were supposed to come through a central person. There were maybe 5 referrals in all and the project fizzled out without an official end. Those who received training are still using the skills they gained. This was more about enhancing the skills of workers who were already engaged with vulnerable and homeless teenagers than running a mediation service.

Difficulties identified include:

- The practitioner interviewed identified that the process of the community mediation model was not wholly suited to work with young people at risk of homelessness; significant adjustments were needed. For example, SACRO train people in pairs. This provided a big problem for Highlands because the areas are so huge that it is impossible to work in pairs.
- The distance also incurred the expense of time and money spent travelling, which had to be taken from Supporting People money.
- Another barrier was that they found someone would agree to mediation when you were face-to-face with them but later would change their mind.
- As they were resolute that the mediation was entirely separate from the homeless assessment, they were unable to enforce the use of mediation.

2011 - Homeless Prevention Team

As of May 2011 Highland Council have established a Homeless Prevention Team. They buy in mediation between young people and their parents for Relationships Scotland – Family Mediation Highland. Cases are paid for on a spot purchase basis.

Inverclyde

In 2009 there was a full time Community mediator within Community Safety Services who took on 3 or 4 cases as part of his workload.

For some time Homeless Officers have been informally using mediation skills in their work with young people at risk of homelessness. In addition the department has strong links with voluntary sector organisations in the area that adopt a similar approach. The Homeless Department are restructuring in 2011, to include a Prevention Team. Prevention team staff will be trained in mediation, which will invigorate their skills and encourage them to use the process in the prevention of homelessness.

Midlothian

To date there has been no mediation between young people and their parents in Midlothian. However, the council has volunteer mediators that currently work with the Community Safety Team. There are plans to engage these volunteer mediators in mediating between young people and their parents where there is risk of homelessness. It is anticipated that they will work out of Midlothian's one-stop advice centre, 'The Point', in Dalkeith.

One member of homelessness staff was trained in homelessness mediation in 2011 as part of training purchased through the Housing Options Hub.

Moray

2005/2006 – Voluntary Mediators

In October 2005, in conjunction with Highland Council we had six people undertake Mediation training. The six people came from different agencies – two members from our Housing Needs Team and four from other support agencies. After the training it was intended that we would provide mediation from the pool of trainees with a view to preventing homelessness. Problems identified included:

- Mediation has to be undertaken within a short timescale and it was very difficult to identify any two people who had the flexibility within their workload to provide the mediation at short notice.
- Because of the tight timescale, often the client had already been placed in temporary accommodation and was focusing on living independently. All we could achieve in those circumstances was rebuilding family relationships rather than prevent homelessness.

Ultimately, the mediation project failed.

2010 onwards – Prevention Team

A Prevention Team has been in place in Moray since October 2010 and the initial focus of their work has been to work with young people who have been asked to leave the family home. The team work with the client and their family to resolve problems with the aim of keeping them in their accommodation. They have received training in Conflict Resolution, which includes mediation skills. In the future, the council hope that they can expand this service to include resolving problems between landlords and tenants.

The prevention team has now been renamed the Housing Options Team as this is more all-encompassing. In the past six months there has been an increase in the number of approaches from the 25-60 year old age group, in comparison to the under 24 age group.

North Ayrshire

Delivery: Sacro North Ayrshire Community Mediation

Staffing: Community mediation team leader and worker taking on cases as they arose.

Timescale/ Location: 2003 – 2009, across North Ayrshire.

History: No formal mediation work had been undertaken prior to 2003

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by the Homeless Department

Age range: 16- 25

Referral process: The service model was established such that referrals for young people would only come from the homeless team. Referrals would come through from the tenancy support officers via phone or fax and the team would contact both parties within 5 working days. Referrals included the details of both parties.

Delivery model: The cases tended to be complex. Each case would have a lead and a co-mediator. There would always be more than one initial visit and in a few cases this lead to a face-to-face meeting.

Reflections: There weren't that many cases over the years and very few reached mediation. This could be because the young people were at crisis point. Many people refused because it was not the right time for them.

Interviewed 10th November 2010
North Ayrshire mediation Service offices

Since 2003 North Ayrshire Council have had Youth homeless Prevention Workers as part of their Housing Support Team. Following a young person attending a Housing Options interview, a Prevention worker will visit the family home to determine any underlying issues which are preventing the young person returning. The prevention workers use mediation skills, but are clear that they do not offer mediation. Their aim is for the young person to stay at home, a needs assessment is undertaken and support provided as required. In addition a housing reality check is undertaken and young people are provided with realistic timescales for rehousing based on aspirational need. This approach has been highly successful in preventing young people from becoming homeless.

North Lanarkshire

Delivery: North Lanarkshire Housing Mediation, part of the Housing department of North Lanarkshire Council.

Staffing: Housing Mediation Officers respond to cases as they arise alongside community mediation cases.

Timescale/ Location: October 2010 onwards. Initially Bells Hill/ Viewpark, but to increase referrals, expanded to Wishaw/ Shotts. Now available across all areas.

History: In the past, housing tenancy support officers have been expected to do informal mediation-type activity. The Housing (formally Anti Social Task Force) mediation service took some cases for a while prior to 2010 through referrals related to anti-social behaviour reports.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned by the Housing Needs/ Your Services continuous improvement group, no additional funding.

Age range: 16 - 21

Referral process: Initially three times a week a member of staff went to the First Stop Shop between 2 and 4pm. Mediation is now offered to all young people attending a housing options interview where there has been a dispute within the family home that is non-violent. If a Mediation Officer is available they will attend the Housing Office immediately at this point to speak with the young person or if no-one is available they will arrange to meet the young person asap thereafter. Young people give consent for Parents to be contacted. Mediation can also be offered before the young person becomes homeless or if the young person is already homeless.

Delivery model: Housing Advisors (support) can attend any meetings between the young person and the Mediation Officers to provide support and reassurance to the young person. Mediators work alone.

Reflections: Mediation Officers being at the housing office for certain periods proved not to be time-efficient and was found to be confusing for the young person, so the model was adapted accordingly. During the initial 6 month period 10 referrals were received. Into the future, the aim is to focus on early intervention, working with groups/ agencies who work with young people and may be able to identify young people who are having problems at home before it reaches crisis point.

Interviewed 26th October 2010
North Lanarkshire Housing Mediation offices

Orkney

Delivery: Relationships Scotland Orkney

Staffing: Volunteer mediators

Timescale/ Location: 2009 onwards, across Orkney.

History: The family mediation service has sporadically taken on cases previously.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by Orkney Islands Housing Department

Age range: 16+

Referral process: In the majority of cases, a person has already been made homeless and presented to the council, but in some cases the family of a young person got in touch with the service independently. In both instances the referrer would just phone and talk over the potential case.

Delivery model: Using the family mediation process. The mediators looked at the power imbalance – might use advocates to address power imbalance, either for a young person or a vulnerable adult. The service is committed to intake housing clients within 48 hours or as soon as practical.

Reflections: The housing department's research showed that relationship breakdown was the major cause of homelessness in Orkney across the age ranges, not just young people. Therefore the mediation was for the general homelessness service, not just young people. The service received a small number of referrals (1 -3) for both young people and adults in the first year. For a new service to be successful there needs to be a lot of networking, getting name known and for referral to become habitual. Funding covers not only housing mediation but other family support services offered including individual or couple relationship counselling which might support people in relation to homelessness. Capacity issues within the voluntary sector mean that the service will endeavour to start mediation or any other support services as soon as a trained practitioner is available.

Perth and Kinross

Delivery: Sacro Perth and Kinross Community Mediation Team

Staffing: Community mediation workers taking on cases as they arise.

Timescale/ Location: February 2010 – April 2011, across Perth and Kinross.

History: 2009 - 6 month homeless mediation pilot between Sacro and the housing options team.

Commissioning/ Funding: Informally commissioned by Perth and Kinross Housing Department, not funded.

Age range: No limits, consider whether the two parties can function as equals in a mediation context.

Referral process: The team were informally commissioned to take on referrals from the housing advice team, but have received referrals from other sources. At the point of referral they had the contact details of both parties and check that the referrer has asked consent.

Delivery model: Both parties are contacted for an assessment and 2 mediators attend all meetings. After these preparatory meetings, the case will move to a face-to-face.

Reflections: The lack of funding for the work from the housing options departments resulted in a limitation on the awareness raising the team can conduct and the amount of training the team can attend to hone their skills towards homelessness and young people.

Interviewed 10th November 2010
Amber Mediation Service offices

Telephone interview 1st March 2011

Renfrewshire

Delivery: Renfrewshire Homeless Team and Renfrewshire Community Mediation Team

Staffing: 1 f/t "prevention and outreach officer" and 17.5 hours Mediator.

Timescale/Location: 2004 onwards, across Renfrewshire.

History: Homeless mediation was established in 2004 through strategy funding for 2 years, which was then renewed. One member of staff was given responsibility for mediation, part of the Homeless Prevention Team.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by Renfrewshire Housing Department

Age range: 16 – 25

Referral process: Referrals are received from the Homeless team's Youth Officer, Social care, the voluntary sector and schools.

Delivery model: In 2010 a member of staff was taken on from the Community Mediation Team in order to be an unbiased mediator. The original mediator continues to work on the project, as a support worker ("prevention and outreach officer"). They do an assessment with both parties, but always see the young person first as they are the ones threatened with homelessness. They need the permission of the young person to contact the parents as it is about their homelessness. Parents may be offered support in the form of signposting, but the young person is really the focus. When both parties are ready for mediation, the mediator meets for initial meetings with both parties, working towards a face-to-face meeting (solo mediation). During the mediation process the prevention and outreach officer will continue to provide support.

Reflections:

The team receive a regular stream of referrals and feel the model of support alongside mediation is successful. It gives the team the freedom to assess each case individually as to what is the best time to mediate. Sometimes it is good to let it settle for a few days before getting in touch. The team would like there to be an option of short stay "cool off" accommodation to get young people out of a volatile situation until things have cooled down.

Interview 25th October 2010
Time to Mend Offices

Scottish Borders

Delivery: Scottish Borders Homelessness Team, as part of the Social Work Department

Staffing: 'Family liaison officer' 35 hours

Timescale/ Location: April 2009 – April 2011, across Scottish Borders.

History: For 5 years homelessness mediation was included in the job description of one of the two community mediators who worked within the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, but until 2009 there wasn't really any homelessness mediation unless it was part of a neighbourhood case.

Commissioning/ Funding: Within Scottish Borders Homelessness Department

Age range: 16- 25

Referral process: Referrals were from the homeless team.

Delivery model: When a young person contacts the homeless team to tell them they may be homeless, they would speak first to the Family Liaison Officer to determine whether a homeless assessment is necessary or if a housing options interview is more appropriate alongside mediation. Outreach appointments were available. If it is decided that a homeless assessment should go ahead, or the young person doesn't want to speak to the Family Liaison Officer initially, then mediation is still available to them and does not affect their assessment being processed. The Family Liaison Officer would talk to the young person and then, with their consent, to the family. Usually this was followed by another visit with the young person and so on. Most often there was shuttle mediation, in some cases there was an informal family meet together, often in the family home due to convenience.

Reflections: Most young people did engage, resulting in about 10 cases a month. The work of the Family Liaison Officer was closely tied to the work and priorities of the Homeless Team, this often included giving young people a reality check about being homeless and living independently. Since April 2011 a homeless prevention officer does mediation with young people as part of his role.

Interview 18th November 2010
Scottish Borders

Shetland

Delivery: Family Mediation Shetland (RS affiliated)

Staffing: Family mediator, 1 day per week

Timescale/ Location: April 2011 for 12 months, across Shetland.

History: Previously in Shetland there have been no formal mediation services for young people and their families. The Family Mediation service has been delivering this type of intergenerational work on an ad-hoc basis due to a natural demand for it.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by Shetland Council Housing Department

Age range: 16- 17

Referral process: Young people ages 16 and 17 who present as homeless are encouraged to try mediation. When the housing officer visits the parents' home, they are also offered mediation. In addition, if mediation has been turned down a letter is sent after a "cooling off" period to both the young people and their parents to remind them that mediation is still available and may be beneficial for them.

Delivery model: If a young person agrees to mediation then the mediator will often meet them immediately or otherwise as soon as possible. The family mediator mediates alone.

Reflections: Receiving referrals at the point of crisis means that for most people it is too late, in the future the project would like to expand to incorporate young people from the age of 14 upwards for Early Intervention work.

Telephone interview,
August 2011

South Ayrshire

Delivery: South Ayrshire Throughcare Support Team, as part of mainstream Children's and Families social work.

Staffing: Full time Mediation Co-Ordinator and Throughcare support staff who are allocated mediation cases as they arise.

Timescale/ Location: 2002 onwards, across South Ayrshire.

History: Prior to the Throughcare mediation service, there was no mediation service offered to young people in housing need.

Commissioning and funding: Within South Ayrshire Throughcare Support Team

Age range: 16 - 18

Referral process: The mediation co-ordinator jointly interviews all 16- 18 year olds with a dedicated youth housing options officer when they present as experiencing housing need in South Ayrshire. The housing options officer asks questions and speaks about the housing side of things and the mediation co-ordinator assesses support needs. This is also when the mediation service is introduced and offered to young people and their parents.

Delivery model: The Mediation Co-ordinator interviews people individually after the initial interview, using the same questions for young people and their parents. This may then lead to a joint meeting at which the mediator helps people to share information that they are happy to and then they take the mediation forward. Mostly the mediator does lone working, although for more complex cases will do joint working. Through the process, parents will receive some level of support and signposting as well as the young person. Young people receive support through the Throughcare Support team and also all cases are brought to the multi-agency Youth Housing Support Group which meets fortnightly to review all of support plans for young people in housing need.

December 2007 – June 2008 money from the Alcohol And Drug Action Team funded more mediation hours. This allowed workers to knock on the doors of the parents of young people presenting and explained mediation, rather than it just being offered over the phone. This made a difference and saw an increase in uptake. Parents are now invited to the joint interview in order to establish links so that they can share information. This ensures that the young person is supported as best they can be by both their parents and professionals, and be offered mediation.

Reflections: This model is fairly unique as most Throughcare Teams focus solely on young people leaving care whereas this team offers holistic support. A parent being at the interview is effective in helping parents to look constructively at responding to their problems rather than asking their young person to leave because they don't know what else to do. The service faces competing priorities on caseload, as staff have to work in other areas of Throughcare. If there were dedicated workers they would be able to develop the service further.

Interview 30th November 2010
South Ayrshire Throughcare offices

South Lanarkshire

Delivery: South Lanarkshire Mediation Service, within South Lanarkshire Housing and Technical Resources Department.

Staffing: Delivered by full time community mediators as cases arise.

Timescale/ Location: Service became permanent in 2007, across South Lanarkshire.

History: 2003 – Local Authority Community Mediation team responded to the rising number of cases they were being approached with that involved disputes between teenagers and their parents. They called the service “Resolve” and the initial referral process was based around more informal procedures and this service was promoted internally.

2005 - The team received funding from the Scottish Executive via the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003, under the Building Safer and Stronger Communities program, to pilot a method of homeless prevention using the Mediation process to employ one full time mediator for 2 years to work on young people/ families cases in East Kilbride. This mediator was initially working in partnership with the Rough Sleepers Initiative. However, due to challenges in joint working regarding availability and response times this partnership was unable to continue and a new model of provision was developed in which a wider partnership group was established.

Commissioning/ Funding: Commissioned and funded by South Lanarkshire Housing and Technical Resources Department

Age range: 16 – 17 (18 year olds are referred at the discretion of the housing officer)

Referral process: Currently all 16- 17 year olds that are assessed for homelessness are automatically referred to the mediation team unless there has been a clear risk identified by the referrer or the Young Person has explicitly said that they don't want to be referred onto the Mediation Service. Their details are passed on to the mediation team who then get in contact and offer their service. In 2010 the team became involved in piloting Mediation within the Housing options process in the Clydesdale area of South Lanarkshire in which a mediator is present at the housing options interview of any young person and therefore can talk directly to them about the benefits of mediation. The team also receive referrals occasionally from social work and schools. These cases tend to be prior to the point of crisis.

Delivery model: The initial meeting is performed by a single mediator but subsequently 2 mediators work together.

Reflections: The service has worked hard to identify its position as within the council but as independent from it. To this end, the team do not wear the council uniform. To date the Service has been able to deliver both a Community Mediation and a Homeless Mediation service by both services operating closely alongside each other. To date there has been a high degree of successful outcomes with those YP who engage with the service. The team are trying to concentrate more on early intervention in Homelessness which links into the current Housing Options process being rolled out within South Lanarkshire

Interview 26th October 2010
South Lanarkshire Mediation Service Offices

Stirling

Between 2004 and 2009 there were 2 dedicated Homeless Mediation Officers trained by Sacro within the Homeless Team dealing specifically with young people and their parents. The posts finished because it was felt the approach was too focussed on listening and not producing the outcomes the team were looking for.

Currently Housing Options workers, alongside their partners at Loretto Care, work with young people and their families, often finding that giving both parties a reality check is helpful.

Tayside and Fife

Delivery: Relationships Scotland Tayside and Fife

Staffing: Sessional

Timescale/ Location: Emerging over recent years, across Perth and Kinross, Angus, Dundee, and Fife.

History: See LA summaries

Commissioning/ Funding: Not commissioned and not funded at present

Age range: 14+

Referral process: Although in theory the team would undertake work with young people who had already moved out, to date work has been preventative, when parents have reached the end of their tether. Most referrals are self referral.

Delivery model: A mediator meets with each individual party for an initial session to explain about mediation and hear what their circumstances and issues are. As long as both parties engage, they then facilitate joint meetings. The mediators generally co-work and are working towards building a mutually agreed way forward that is supportive of all parties, but particularly the younger, and which can either be a verbal or written agreement.

Reflections: The team have found this work to be a natural diversification of their normal caseload. They would like to receive more referrals from social work and maybe the homeless team, but there is the question of capacity as they are not currently funded for this work. Relationships Scotland Tayside and Fife have bid with Shelter to the Big Lottery fund to increase their service. In this partnership, Shelter would support people around issues of homelessness for example, accompanying them to meetings and providing advice and information. This would be a longer and more open process than the cases that they work at the moment to include follow up over a number of months.

Interview 17th January 2011
Relationships Scotland Tayside and Fife Offices

West Dunbartonshire

Delivery: Sacro West Dunbartonshire Youth Justice Service.

Staffing: Youth Justice Team take on cases as they arise.

Timescale/ Location: 2009 onwards, across West Dunbartonshire.

History: No homeless mediation provision before this service.

Commissioning/ Funding: Initiative of Youth Justice Service as an addition to core service, not separately funded.

Age range: Under 18

Referral process: All referrals come from the social work team for young people who are in conflict with their parent or carers and be at risk of leaving home or have left home already. Referrals come as a phone call from the social worker who also sends a completed referral form, which has been specifically designed for the mediation service. It includes the questions, 'Describe the situation and areas of concern' and 'What do you hope to achieve by making this referral?' People are encouraged to make referrals as early as possible.

Delivery model: Once a referral has been made sometimes there is a joint visit with the social worker to make introductions, although in other cases it is more appropriate to visit alone. Also, in some cases the worker meets the parents and young person together initially and sometimes separately, depending on the case. After this, visits are always separate until the point of a face-to-face meeting. Sometimes they co- and sometimes they lone- mediate, depending on availability and the nature of the case in hand.

Reflections: Around a third of cases to date have gone to face-to-face mediation meeting; it should be noted that each case is time-consuming. Although social workers are already providing some support for the children, parents and siblings can remain unsupported. There is also the added responsibility of working with under 16s, who are technically in your care when you're with them. Sometimes there is a fine line or overlap between mediation and restorative justice skills and techniques.

Interview 19th November 2010
West Dunbartonshire Youth Justice Office

West Lothian

Delivery: Amber Mediation Service, partnership between Edinburgh Cyrenian Trust (providing support work and leading the partnership) and Sacro's Edinburgh Community Mediation service (providing mediators). The partnership between Cyrenians and Sacro concluded in August 2011. The Amber Mediation Service is now solely run by Edinburgh Cyrenians.

Staffing: Dedicated part time mediation worker (6 hours per week), Personal Adviser (18.5 hours)

Timescale/ Location: Across West Lothian. October 2009 – April 2011.

History: In West Lothian, the homeless officers were all trained in mediation but this was not carried forward as a formal part of their practice with young people.

Commissioning/ Funding: Amber Mediation Service initiative, Fairer Scotland Funding.

Age range: 14 - 24

Referral process: As with other Amber services, this service has no restrictions on where referrals come from. Most frequent referrers in West Lothian are schools, social work and self-referral. They will work with anyone at risk, or potential risk, of homelessness, and with young people who have already left home.

Delivery model: The team respond to a referral within 2 working days and aim to have met with the parties within a working week. Personal Advisers provide support for both the young people and their families. When both parties are ready, the case is passed on to the mediator. Support is available at all times during or after the mediation process.

Reflections: The service in West Lothian received around 4 referrals a month, and got off to a slow start. The team recognise that establishing a service in a new area can take some time. As part of the Housing Options Hub, West Lothian Council commissioned mediation training for a member of their newly formed Homeless Prevention team.

Western Isles

Currently Social work and Foyer do informal mediation-type work with young people at risk of homelessness. The LA see introducing it as a prevention measure as a priority and are hoping that in the future an outside agency will deliver it in partnership with them.

Interviewed 23rd November 2010,
Amber Edinburgh Offices

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