

Peaceworks Clients' Quarterly Newsletter – Spring 2010

Welcome to our Spring newsletter for agency professionals, designed to keep you up to date with the services we provide and how to access them.



What is Peaceworks?

We are a social enterprise based on the South Coast providing training, a mediation service, and peer mediation schemes for businesses, schools and colleges. We have been providing mediation interventions on organisational, workplace, community and family issues for the last 10 years, and in the last 6 months have sought to build on these years of experience by establishing a commercial mediation service. Our senior mediators are trained and accredited by CEDR (Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution), CIArb (Chartered Institute of Arbitrators), Consensio (Workplace Mediation Specialists) and Birkbeck College (University of London).

Changing HR culture

One of our clients is a medium-sized health care charity working in the Home Counties with a turnover of £3-4million and 700 staff. They are successful and well-liked in their region and the 'charity of choice' for a large part of the donating public locally. However, their organisation sometimes experiences an internal clash of cultures as individuals working there hail from a diversity of backgrounds: commercial, the caring professions, statutory sector management, voluntary sector, etc. Despite the good work being done and their positive reputation in the community, there was quite a lot of unhappiness in the workplace, with consequent loss of productivity and a relatively high level of grievance proceedings. The then HR manager decided to call in Peaceworks in 2007 to deliver training on conflict management to all the senior and middle managers in the organisation. This was well-received and in the following year Peaceworks was called in to undertake three mediation cases that all produced positive outcomes. Since 2009 five members of the HR team and two members of the Exec Board have undertaken or are booked onto our 5-day Mediation Skills Training course. We have undertaken another two mediation cases for the charity in the past year, and the HR Manager told us in March;

"Working with Peaceworks has totally changed the HR climate in our organisation. We have gone from bucket-loads of grievances to zero in the past year. It has totally changed the way we look at our job in HR – from thinking 'legals first' to thinking about how to help everyone hear each other and get a positive outcome."

Anti-bullying mediations

Bullying, whether in the school, home or workplace has negative repercussions that go far beyond the identified 'victim' and 'perpetrator', and this is why the government has given anti-bullying preventative measures such high priority in recent times. At the start of this year, West Sussex County Council approached Peaceworks to enable their community safety teams to provide a much needed mediation interventions service for dissatisfied parents and frustrated schools, in cases where bullying is not resolved satisfactorily or successfully. We are providing mediation interventions on behalf of the council through a service level agreement for 2010/11.



Additionally, 5 anti-bullying caseworkers from Sussex took our January Mediation Skills Training course. One of these delegates has recently told us that the training was “*indispensable with excellent resources and brilliant theory. I am putting the skills I learnt to use every day.*”

Peaceworks Mediation Skills Training for 2010/11

The new ‘Advanced Unit’ of our Mediation Skills Training was run in February with glowing feedback from delegates who took the 1-day course that followed our highly regarded 5-day training Foundation and Intermediate Units. We be running it again in October and February, and would encourage past delegates to consider taking it to boost their current skills.

We will run our Mediation Skills Training as a 5-day residential course in a stunning country house (www.crogenestate.com) in North Wales this summer:

14 – 18 June 2010

And we will run the same training as 2/3 separate units in Bognor Regis this autumn and new year on the following dates:

20 – 22 September 2010 (Foundation Unit)

28 - 29 September 2010 (Intermediate Unit)

16 October 2010 (Advanced Unit)

25 - 27 January 2011 (Foundation Unit)

2 - 3 February 2011 (Intermediate Unit)

12 February 2011 (Advanced Unit)

Please see our website for further details.

You may be eligible for a Leadership & Management Grant of £500 towards our Mediation Skills Training course from Train to Gain. Call Train to Gain on 0845 751 2288 for more information.



Positive Relationships in Schools

We enjoy a very productive collaboration with our colleagues in W Sussex County Council’s *Healthy Schools Team* and have been doing so for almost seven years. As well as contributing to funds for the our *Peer Mediation in Schools Programme*, they have also provided us with quality control for our materials and accessed us to schools where our inputs have been most needed and appreciated. In Summer 2009 Darren Kirkham from *Healthy Schools* and Chris Seaton started work on an intervention Peaceworks could provide to schools which were placed in a category to improve by Ofsted and where one of the reasons for this status was the quality of the relationships in the school. In October 2009, Peaceworks was approached by the County Council to work on a 4-term contract working with staff and pupils of a school that Ofsted deemed to be unsatisfactory. We have so far enjoyed positive results from this work. Not least from undertaking a whole-school audit of each of the stakeholder groups: from local authority support teams and school leaders right through to pupils with challenging behaviours, midday meal staff and parents.

How do I access Peaceworks’ services?

If you would like to access our mediation services, the Mediation Skills Training courses, or would like to find out more about the work we do, please get in touch by visiting our website: www.peaceworks.org.uk or contact us directly on: 01243 820604 and info@peaceworks.org.uk

With thanks and best wishes,

Chris Seaton for Peaceworks Staff & Trustees

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