

Let's Listen Let's Talk

September 2026

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What a summer so far, already we are into our 4th heatwave and hose pipe bans are coming into force all over the place.

So, I hope this newsletter finds you well and not too overheated. We have all the usual great sections in this edition, but I wanted to focus this time on the way we are changing how we engage in developing our service.

We have initiated four sub-groups to the board, these are the;

Volunteers and Training led by Dave and Darren

Business Development led by Mary

Fundraising led by Avril

Policy led by Jacqui

Part of the reason for starting these groups is to give more opportunities to all our volunteers to get involved in developing everything we do. We realise we have a lot of very talented, though busy, people amongst you all and if you can spare anytime to help in any of these groups, we would be very grateful. All you need to do is contact Fiona in the office and she will give you all the information you need to get involved. You can give whatever time you have as we want to make it as easy as possible to involve you all. We look forward to hearing from you.

We have our in-person AGM on the 3rd of October at 1.00pm at the Quaker meeting house in Croydon and it would be wonderful to see you there to celebrate all that has happened in the last year.

As I close, I want as always to pay a huge vote of thanks to all our mediators and trustees for their great work. Thank you as well to all of you who are supporting our newsletter.

If you would like to get in touch, meet for a coffee or if you have ideas about improving the service, my contact details are:

Neil@croydonmediation.org.uk or 07905 168285

I look forward to hearing from you
Neil



Interview with a Mediator

With a BA in Social Work & Welfare Studies from the University of Central Lancashire, I have worked within conflict resolution and mediation for decades across housing, workplace, community and interpersonal disputes. I am a NOCN-trained mediator and the founder of ADR Mediation & Training CIC. Alongside leading the organisation, I remain an active mediator and trainer because I strongly believe in the value of practical, real-world mediation. Much of my work has involved supporting people through highly emotional, complex and entrenched conflict situations, often where relationships have broken down over long periods of time.

Kim Logan



How do you encourage clients to engage in the mediation process and to attend joint meetings when they are reluctant to do so?

A lot of reluctance comes from fear. People are often worried they will not be heard, that they will be judged, or that the mediation will become another argument. I try to slow things down and explain clearly what mediation is and what it is not.

I spend time building trust during the initial conversations and focus on giving people a sense of safety and control within the process. I also explain that attending a joint

meeting does not mean they have to agree with the other person or “give in.” It simply creates an opportunity for a more constructive conversation.

Sometimes it helps to explore what continuing without mediation might look like versus what could potentially improve if communication changes.

Can you share any advice on how to successfully conduct a shuttle mediation meeting?

Preparation and pacing are extremely important in shuttle mediation. You need to stay

organised and maintain consistency in how information is shared between parties.

One of the biggest skills is managing emotion without escalating it. Shuttle mediation can sometimes unintentionally reinforce positions if the mediator is not careful, so reframing becomes very important. I also think it is essential to manage expectations and be transparent about the process throughout.

It is easy to become physically and emotionally drained during shuttle mediation, so maintaining focus and neutrality is key.

Are there any key mediation skills that you had to work harder on and how did you go about improving?

Early on, I had to work particularly hard on resisting the urge to “fix” situations too quickly. Coming from a social work background, there can be a natural instinct to move into problem solving or supportive roles.

Over time, I became more conscious of the importance of staying within the mediator role and allowing the parties to own both the conflict and the solutions. Experience, supervision, reflective practice and co-mediation all helped me develop stronger discipline around this.

Can you share any advice as to how a mediator can self-evaluate their performance, learn and improve?

Reflective practice is incredibly important. After mediations, I often think about what worked well, what shifted the conversation positively and where I may have unintentionally influenced the dynamic.

I also think it is important to remain open to feedback, continue training and engage in supervision or peer discussions. Some of the best learning comes from difficult mediations rather than straightforward ones.

Do you have any tips on how to encourage parties to generate solutions?

People are far more likely to commit to solutions they have created themselves.

I try to avoid jumping in, I use questions that encourage forward thinking, such as:

“What would need to happen for this situation to feel manageable

moving forward?”

“What would a good outcome realistically look like for you?”

Sometimes conflict becomes so focused on the past that people struggle to think beyond blame. Helping parties shift into future-focused thinking can create movement.

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Have you ever found it challenging to maintain your impartiality during a mediation? How did you manage this?

As mediators, we are human beings and there will always be situations where we naturally empathise with aspects of somebody’s experience. The key is recognising that internally without allowing it to shape the process externally. I regularly self-monitor during mediations and ask myself whether I am giving equal attention, challenge and empathy to both parties. Reflective practice and supervision are also very important safeguards.

Can you share any examples of where you used a breakout room to good effect?

Breakout rooms can be very effective when emotions are escalating or where somebody needs space to regulate emotionally before continuing.

I have used breakout rooms successfully in virtual mediations where one party became visibly distressed during a joint discussion. Giving them private space allowed them to regroup without feeling embarrassed or exposed in front of the other person.

Often, a short pause can completely change the tone of a mediation.

What are your views on the pros and cons of virtual mediation? Do you have any best practice tips based on your own experience?

Virtual mediation has improved accessibility significantly. It can reduce travel, lower anxiety for some participants and make mediation more flexible.

However, it can also make rapport building more difficult and it is sometimes harder to read body language and emotional cues through a screen.

Good preparation is essential. I always encourage parties to join from a quiet, private space where possible and ensure they understand how the technology works beforehand. Clear structure and regular check-ins also help maintain engagement.

Do you have any phrases or questions that you commonly use in mediation to good effect?

Some questions I regularly use include:

- “What would you like the other person to better understand about your experience?”
- “What would moving forward look like for you?”
- “What part of this situation feels most difficult right now?”
- “What do you think needs to happen next?”

I try to keep language calm, accessible and non-confrontational.

Can you share an experience you have had in dealing with a particularly challenging client and explain how you handled the situation?

I have worked with clients who entered mediation extremely angry and distrustful of the process. In one case, a participant interrupted constantly and struggled to regulate their emotions.

Rather than immediately challenging the behaviour, I acknowledged the frustration underneath it and worked to establish boundaries calmly and consistently. Once the individual felt genuinely heard, their engagement improved significantly.

Very often, challenging behaviour is rooted in feeling unheard, unsafe or powerless.

Can you share any examples of where you had to account for mental health issues during a mediation and how you overcame any obstacles this presented?

Mental health considerations are present in many mediations, particularly where conflict has become prolonged or highly stressful.

I have adapted mediations by

slowing the pace, increasing breaks, simplifying information and checking understanding more regularly. In some cases, shuttle mediation or shorter sessions have been more appropriate.

The most important thing is remaining person-centred without becoming therapeutic. Mediators must recognise their role and limitations.

Do you have any general advice about mediating where mental health issues are a consideration?

Avoid assumptions and avoid labelling behaviour. Focus on communication, regulation and creating psychological safety.

It is also important to consider capacity, pacing and whether additional support or adjustments may be required. Flexibility and empathy matter enormously.

Can you provide any advice on how to best prepare for a joint meeting following the initial discussions with both parties?

Preparation should focus on emotional readiness as much as practical arrangements.

I usually explore triggers, concerns and expectations beforehand so there are fewer surprises during the joint meeting. It is also helpful to prepare parties for the fact that the conversation may feel uncomfortable at times while reassuring them that the mediator will manage the process.

Do you have any tips on how to best prepare clients for the joint meeting?

Encourage clients to think about outcomes rather than winning arguments.

I also encourage them to consider:

- What they want the other person to understand

- What they are willing to listen to
- What a workable future would look like

Helping clients move away from rehearsing grievances can make a huge difference.

How do you manage your own personal and professional development as a mediator?

Continuous learning is very important to me. I regularly engage in training, supervision, reading and professional discussion.

I also learn a great deal through delivering training and through hearing different practitioner perspectives across sectors.

Can you provide any examples of how you have successfully managed a power imbalance during a mediation?

Power imbalance can show itself in many ways including communication style, confidence, professional status or emotional dominance.

I have managed this by adjusting structure and pacing, ensuring equal speaking opportunities and sometimes using shuttle mediation where appropriate. Careful preparation beforehand is also very important.

The mediator’s role is not to remove all imbalance entirely, but to create a process where both parties can participate meaningfully.

Do you have any views on the use of visual tools e.g. flip charts, stress balls, hourglass timers during mediations?

I think visual and sensory tools can be very helpful when used appropriately. Flip charts can help organise discussions and create clarity, while stress regulation

tools can help people feel calmer and more grounded.

However, tools should support the process rather than distract from it. Different clients respond differently, so flexibility is important.

Have you ever found yourself slipping into other roles during a mediation (e.g. ‘advisor,’ ‘comforter’) and how have you corrected this?

Yes, particularly earlier in my career because of my background in social work.

Awareness is the first step. If I notice myself becoming overly solution-focused or emotionally over-involved, I consciously return to facilitation and neutrality. Good supervision and reflective practice are essential in helping mediators recognise these moments.

What do you think the key ethical considerations are as a mediator and how do you make sure you account for these?

Impartiality, confidentiality, informed consent and professional boundaries are all essential.

Ethics are not just theoretical concepts. They show up constantly in decision making during mediations. Regular self-reflection, supervision and adherence to professional standards all help maintain ethical practice.

Do you have any examples of where a client has been accompanied at a mediation and this has proved a hindrance to the process? How did you manage this?

There have been occasions where accompanying individuals unintentionally increased tension or answered on behalf of the participant.

In these situations, I clarify roles

and boundaries early on and refocus the conversation back to the parties themselves. It is important that the mediation remains centred on the individuals directly involved in the conflict.

Do you have any advice on how to effectively co-mediate?

Good communication and clear role definition are essential.

Co-mediators should prepare together beforehand, debrief afterwards and remain consistent in their approach during the mediation itself. It is also important to trust one another and avoid competing for control of the process.

When done well, co-mediation can provide excellent support, balance and learning opportunities for both mediators and clients.

Are there any books, articles, YouTube videos etc that you would recommend to help us develop as mediators?

I would recommend:

Getting to Yes by Roger Fisher and William Ury

7 Principles of Conflict Resolution, The: How to resolve disputes, defuse difficult situations and reach agreement by Louisa Weinstein.

TED Talks on conflict resolution and communication

Reflective practice and psychology-based resources around emotional regulation and trauma-informed communication

The ADR Mediation YouTube channel

I also believe some of the best learning comes from observing experienced mediators and engaging in co-mediation opportunities.

Spotlight on a Mediator

What is your favourite country?

Jamaica. It's where both my parents were born, so it always feels like a home away from home. I love the food, the culture, and there's nothing better than spending time by the beach.

What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

Conch, which is a sea snail. I tried conch soup whilst visiting Jamaica. I'm not really a seafood lover, so I surprised myself by actually enjoying it!

Where would you most like to be?

On an island. Two years ago I went to Madeira with the plan of climbing Pico Ruivo, but unfortunately the weather had other ideas and I didn't get the chance. I'd love to be back there now so I could finally complete the hike.

What do you do when you're not mediating?

Until recently, I spent 22 years working in NHS general practice commissioning, so that was very much my day job. Following a recent reorganisation, I'm taking a sabbatical and focusing on growing my mediation business alongside a few other business ventures. Outside of work, I enjoy gardening and growing fruit and

vegetables on my allotment, getting out for long walks, and travelling whenever I can. I also volunteer as a mentor for a local charity, where I support a school-aged girl.

Why did you decide to start mediating?

I decided to become a mediator because I've seen first-hand how easily communication can break down when people stop listening to or understanding one another. Giving people the opportunity to be heard in a safe, neutral space can make a real difference, helping them move forward and often bringing people closer together.

Where's your next holiday?

Jamaica! I'll be spending a few weeks there with my mum as part of her 70th birthday celebrations, which I'm really looking forward to.

What's your favourite food or meal?

Thai green curry is definitely one of my favourites. I also have a bit of a weakness for crisps!

What was your favourite TV show growing up?

Knight Rider. I used to watch it every Saturday morning and never missed an episode. I thought KITT was the coolest car ever!

Our Spotlight Mediator is Lorraine Wynter, who joined Croydon Community Mediation early this year.

Welcome to the team Lorraine!



ACCREDITED MEDIATION TRAINING NOVEMBER 2026

Croydon Community Mediation is pleased to announce plans to run an accredited mediation course in November 2026, approved by The College of Mediators.

The course will be delivered over six non-consecutive days throughout November 2026, allowing participants to balance the training with existing work and other commitments.

What will the course cover?

Attendees will receive expert training from an experienced, accredited mediator on:

- the key skills required to resolve disputes effectively, including empathy, reframing, rapport-building, active listening and summarising
- conflict and the ways in which people's behaviour can influence and escalate disputes
- the structure and stages of the mediation process

- the role of mediation and the mediator in supporting people to resolve conflict
- practical techniques for managing difficult conversations and helping people move towards constructive solutions..

Who is the course for?

The training is ideal for anyone looking to develop practical mediation and conflict resolution skills which could include:

- front-line antisocial behaviour professionals
- workplace managers and team leaders
- complaint handlers
- neighbourhood and tenancy officers
- community safety professionals
- anyone involved in dispute resolution or conflict management

On completion, attendees will receive an accreditation in community mediation and a no obligation opportunity to volunteer for the service, providing immediate access to mediation experience.

Places are limited, so we encourage you to register your interest as soon as possible by emailing the Croydon Community Mediation office: office@croydonmediation.org.uk

We will provide further information, including the confirmed dates, venue, course fees and booking arrangements, once these have been finalised.



If you would like to support the work of Croydon Community Mediation, please consider making a donation using the QR code. Your contribution helps us continue providing free, impartial mediation to residents across Croydon, supporting neighbours and communities to resolve conflict and build better relationships. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a real difference. Thank you for your support.