

**KEEP
ASHFORD
TALKING**

AMS
ASHFORD MEDIATION
SERVICE

The Ashford Mediation Service Guide to Mediation with Young People and Families



If you're a young person facing struggles at home with your family, in school, or with your friends Ashford Mediation Service is here to help.

We have supported our community in resolving conflicts since 1997.

We're here to **Keep Ashford Talking** and to help you find a way to deescalate any struggles you may be having.

If you work with young people or families, this guide will help you to navigate a way to helping those in need find the solutions that are right for them.

#KeepAshfordTalking



Our services are free-of-charge for everyone in Ashford. Here are the ways you can get in touch with us:



ashfordmediation.co.uk



facebook.com/AshfordMediationService



twitter.com/ams_mediation



instagram.com/ams_mediation



youtube.com/@AshfordMediationService



ashfordmediationservice.blogspot.com

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Are you a young person experiencing conflict within a school or community setting?

Are there issues in your family with your grandparents, step parents, aunts or uncles, or other family members (intergenerational) living in your household causing endless arguments and stress?

Are you experiencing problems with your neighbours over anti-social behaviour, noise or boundary issues?

Ashford Mediation Service is here to support you.



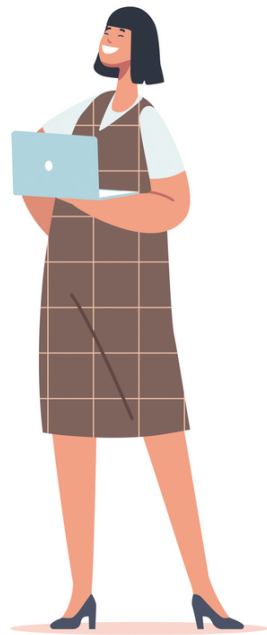
Who we are and who we work with

Ashford Mediation Service is a charity based in Ashford, Kent offering free help to all those that live in the community.

- Our aim is to prevent the escalation of conflict, which means considerably less intervention is required by the Police, Social Services and other public agencies.
- We provide young people with a safe and confidential space to talk about the problems they are facing with their parents, their schoolmates, their friends and their neighbours.
- We offer young people the space, the time and the respect they need, and equip them with the tools and skills that will empower them to communicate in a way that helps resolve problems quickly and effectively.
- We work with families, youth leaders, community groups and local social clubs, sharing knowledge and providing tools/frameworks that they can use to help young people have a better sense of belonging and more control over their lives.



About this guide



What's this guide all about?

We've produced this guide to explain what we do and how we can help young people and their families through the use of mediation.

We will explain what mediation is and give people who are helping young people, some tools and skills, hints and tips on how and when to use mediation.

We want to encourage young people, families, and community and school leaders, to contact Ashford Mediation Service and make use of our free mediation services.



What is 'Mediation' – a Glossary of Terms

As you read through this guide, you will find some words that you will need to both understand and be able to explain to the people you might be helping.

Here's what they mean.

- Mediate: To talk to two separate people or groups involved in a disagreement to try to help them to agree or find a solution to their problems.
- Resolve: To come to a definitive decision, to settle, to deal with a matter, uncertainty or problem.
- Voluntary: To do something that is not compulsory, without payment or reward, or feeling obligated to).
- Impartial: To be fair, just and unbiased.
- Empathy: To understand at a deep emotional level, another person's feelings or problems.
- Sympathy: To share feelings of another person, particularly around sadness or trouble.
- Criticise: To find fault, to make judgement about someone's behaviour or other actions.
- Confidential: Letting someone know that the information they pass on to you is private and secret and will not be shared with others.
- Neutral: Not to take any side or position in a controversy or dispute.



Conflict happens all the time

- People argue frequently and sometimes fights break out, or worse...
- Friends and neighbours regularly fall out over a range of issues.
- It's good to remember that there are at least two sides to every story.



The Good News is:

Mediation is a way to resolve conflict.



It's when two parties come together voluntarily with a mediator to talk through their conflict and find their own solutions.

The benefits of mediation

For the parties involved

- There's the chance to resolve their conflicts in a good way.
- You can trust the mediator not to take sides.
- Mediation works well because both parties are there voluntarily, no one is forced to be there.
- The focus is the problem, not the people.
- Parties agree to their own solutions.
- One party doesn't 'win' – BOTH parties' win.

For the school, family or community

- Mediation is a calm way of resolving conflicts.
- Less time is spent sorting out fights and conflicts. because people learn the skill of calmly talking about their issues and resolving them.
- The focus is on the future, not the past!

Just by attending mediation, listening skills, empathy, problem solving, and tolerance of others (cultures, race, class, gender and religious beliefs) improves.

Letting others know how you feel through words and not actions is very powerful.

Mediation helps build self-confidence and better mental health and well-being, often stopping the feeling of isolation as there is finally space, time and respect to be listened to.

What is the role of the mediator?

A mediator will help people communicate with each other.

A mediator will act as a bridge between parties.

A mediator will be fair and balance the needs of each party.

Mediators do not give advice; they help two people find their own solutions to their situation.

You can hear from our team of mediators by watching the videos on our YouTube channel, or by visiting the Ashford Mediation Service website and social media channels.



Communication that hinders resolution

It's helpful to avoid these communications blockers:



- Criticising.
- Giving advice.
- Telling the parties what you think of their situation.
- Assuming you know what is happening for the speaker.
- Threatening.
- Passing judgement.
- Trying to be sympathetic or comforting.



Young people and mediation

Young people and mediation

As a young person do you...



- get cross with your parents a lot?
- feel they criticise you all the time?
- want to shout and walk out when they get at you?
- feel bullied at school?
- feel you don't 'belong'?

- feel like an 'outsider'?
- feel pressured to get involved in stuff you shouldn't?
- feel it's easier to skip school than to go in every day?
- have a hard time with the other people in your youth club or social group and want to stop all the fighting and get on better?
- get involved in things that you don't really feel comfortable with?



As a young person you can...

- learn how to remain calm in tense situations, so that you can express your feelings in a calm and non-emotional way, so that you and your parents can engage in a more meaningful and productive manner.
- understand what bullying is and learn how you can feel better and less pressured by those that bully you.
- feel happier about going to school.
- identify ways to work with people you don't like or respect and get on better with them.
- learn how you can manage bullying.



As a young person engaged in mediation

As a young person you can help resolve your own conflicts and those of others.

You will gain the following skills:

- Co-working (working with someone else).
- Learn how to handle strong emotions.
- Learning how to separate facts and feelings.
- Become an active listener (giving your full attention to the person speaking).
- Learn how to summarise (repeating back in your own words the main points that the speaker has made).
- Demonstrate empathy (reflecting back the feelings and experiences of the speaker).

Get in touch with us and we can help you with all these things!

info@ashfordmediation.co.uk

Family mediation

Parents and mediation

As a parent do you...

- have a child that's been in trouble with the Police, Social Services, a teacher or someone else in authority?
- get sick and tired of shouting at the young people in your family?
- worry that they are being influenced by the 'wrong crowd'?
- struggle to hold a decent conversation with your child- it always erupts into an argument?
- feel that your child is disrespectful of you and others in the family?
- worry that your child won't/can't get on with their schoolwork and often doesn't want to attend school?



As a parent you can...

- use mediation to help you and your children approach your differences in a calmer manner.
- Better communicate with your child through the mediation process and understand who is influencing their choices.
- use mediation to understand what is troubling the young person in your family and find the underlying cause of the 'real problem'.
- learn mutual respect for one another through the mediation process.

Get in touch with us and we can help you with all these things!



Family mediation

As a family member, you can help people within your family resolve their conflicts or help yourself with any conflicts you have with family members.

As a family member engaged in mediation you too will gain the following skills:

- Co-working (working with someone else).
- Learn how to handle strong emotions.
- Learning how to separate facts and feelings.
- Become an active listener (giving your full attention to the person speaking).



- Learn how to summarise (repeating back in your own words the main points that the speaker has made).
- Demonstrate empathy (reflecting back the feelings and experiences of the speaker).



Community mediation

Community and school leaders engaged in mediation

As a community or school leader, you can help others resolve their conflicts and help to create a more cohesive and harmonious society using the following skills:

- Co-working (working with someone else).
- Handling strong emotions.
- Learning how to separate facts and feelings.
- Become an active listener (giving your full attention to the person speaking).
- Learning how to summarise (repeating back in your own words the main points that the speaker has made).
- Demonstrating empathy (reflecting back the feelings and experiences of the speaker).



Working with young people

As someone who works with young people you can...

- use Ashford Mediation Service to help you understand a new range of skills and techniques for helping young people who are troubled and experiencing difficulties.
- call on Ashford Mediation Service for advice and signposting services when you need help to facilitate and broker a better relationship between the young people you work with and others in the community.
- take advantage of our offer of a free (and brief) workshop to introduce you and your team to mediation, how it works and how you can use it to create a more harmonious community.

As someone who works with young people you are in a great position to help young people cope with the problems they face.

Mediation knowledge and skills can help you to equip yourself and those you work with to communicate better and to reach better compromises with those that are experiencing conflict.

Ashford Mediation Service can offer you and the leaders in your group, a brief workshop to introduce you to mediation – a successful tool to facilitate a more harmonious community.

How does the mediation process work?

Stage 1

The Mediator prepares for the case with both parties having a pre-meeting on their own with the mediator to hear their account, explain mediation and explore options.

Stage 2

If both parties agree, they both go to a joint session where introductions are made, facts and feelings are discussed, and the future is described.

Stage 3

If the mediation goes well, an Agreement may be written, and the mediators debrief the session.



Useful questions mediators might ask

- What started this?
- Why have you come to mediation?
- How do you feel?
- What would you like from this mediation?
- What would you like to happen?
- Have you told them how you feel?
- How do you think he or she or they may be feeling?
- Have you got anything to add?
- Why do you feel this way about?
- Would you be willing to?
- Have you any ideas about why this happened?
- How would you like to resolve this?

How we work

Contact us by [telephone](#), [email](#), through [our website](#) or through [our social media channels](#) including [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [our blog](#).

Tell us what you're thinking and feeling.

We will get a trained mediator to listen to you and we may recommend further conversations, meeting in person or online.

We may also recommend that we involve the other person who is causing you upset and anxiety if you so wish.

At that meeting, we won't tell you what to do, but we will help you and the other person to discuss your differences.

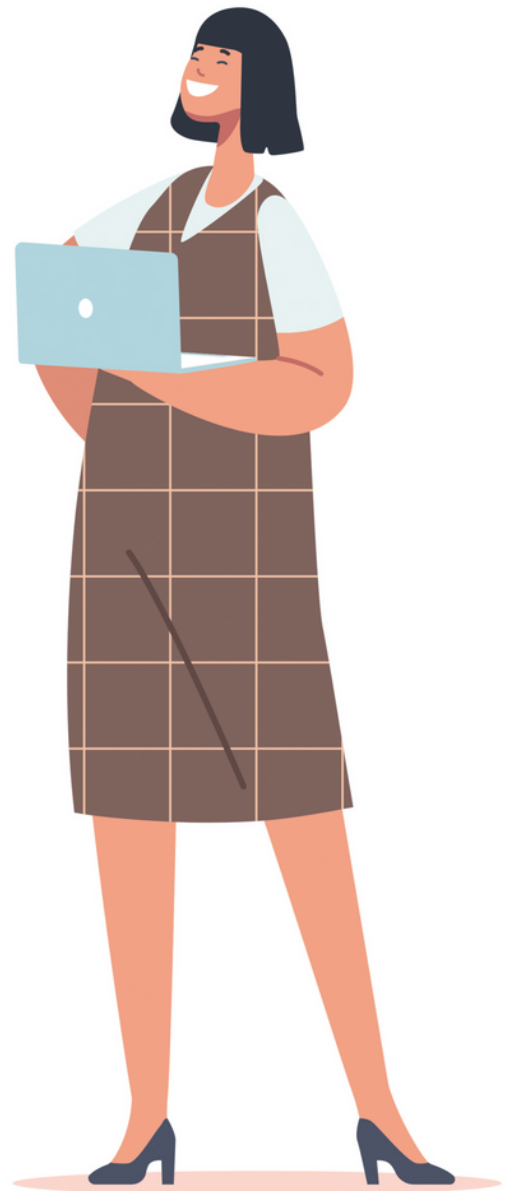
By talking out your differences, we help you to understand the other person's point of view and hopefully come to an agreement on what to do next.

We may suggest some more meetings between the two of you or we may advise you both on how you can set aside your differences and end it there.

When you leave your meeting, you will have a new set of skills to help you to cope with issues in the future.

Tips for mediators

- Look for any common ground between the parties and reflect that back to them.
- Try to lower the level of conflict by using more neutral language.
- The role of the mediator is to facilitate the meeting and the conversations between the parties.
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- Always remember that it is the parties' conflict, and they must come up with the solution to the situation, not you.
- Always look for positive comments or offers from the parties.
- Focus on the problem, not the people.
- Mediators never take sides.
- Focus on the future.



**Get in touch
with us**

Take that first step and get in touch
today –

**Call us on 07845 914838 or email
info@ashfordmediation.co.uk**

Quote reference PCC.

It is with grateful thanks to the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner's Fund that we can expand our services in Ashford.



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#KeepAshfordTalking

**Contact us to find out how our
free-of charge services can help you:**



ashfordmediation.co.uk



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twitter.com/ams_mediation



instagram.com/ams_mediation



youtube.com/@AshfordMediationService



ashfordmediationservice.blogspot.com

About us

Ashford Mediation Service (AMS) is a free service available to all residents of Ashford who are experiencing conflict.

We don't take sides; we work with all parties in dispute to help both 'sides' reach a solution that works for everyone.

Tackling conflict at an early stage prevents the breakdown in relationships and reduces issues with mental health and wellbeing, homelessness, and crime.

Our **Keep Ashford Talking** project is here to help young people within a school or community setting, and families who live in Ashford.

Although programmes exist for young people, the missing link is providing them with the skills to mediate themselves.

We work with schools and youth groups to equip staff, mentors and young people with mediation and negotiation skills.

There are a disproportionate number of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents and disputes in specific areas, so we work with community leaders to support people in resolving their differences.

Hear from our team

You can hear from our team of mediators by watching the videos on our [YouTube channel](#), or by visiting the [Ashford Mediation Service website](#).



The Ashford Mediation Service Guide to Mediation with Young People and Families.

Produced February 2023.

Contact Ashford Mediation Service on **07845
914838** or email info@ashfordmediation.co.uk

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