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With a Scottish election in 2026 there's an opportunity for mediation

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2026—A Big Year for Mediation?

With all the developments in mediation over the last year 2026 certainly provides an opportunity for a greater use of mediation in a number of areas.

In May Scotland will go to the polls to elect a new government. There are many areas where government can support a wider use of mediation and Scottish Mediation will be calling on them to do so.

There has been some good progress on the development of the use of mediation in the civil justice system and now is surely the time to further develop the use of mediation. With court backlogs mediation has a role to play in ensuring parties get their dispute resolved quickly, this would also help to reduce court backlogs. It's also the case that for some taking court action even if successful may not be economic and in such cases mediation could be used in order to bring about resolution.

In education behaviours in schools are an issue across Scotland and the work taking place to give school students better communication skills through mediation training could help considerably. Such initiatives have also been shown to assist with student's better mental health, well being and engagement.

The business of government and public bodies could be substantially improved by the wider adoption of mediation and by embedding mediation skills in the workforce. In other countries such an approach has reduced employment disputes, brought people together to resolve complex matters such as those around climate change and planning and helped to reduce the disputes people might have with government.

We'll be publishing wider proposals that we'd like to see adopted and will be engaging widely to promote them.

Why Early Mediation Matters: Reflections from Litigation Practice

Jagadeshwari N. Narayan

Conflict seldom knocks on the door wearing the tidy label “legal issue”. During my first years in court, especially in family cases, people usually showed up hearts first, briefcases later. They were not chasing a victory lap, they wanted the fog to lift, the ache to stop, or just some solid ground beneath their feet. Watch enough of these scenes and you start to see a pattern: the longer we wait to step in, the more a private struggle hardens into a public war. That realization pushed me to stop treating mediation as the emergency exit at the end of the hallway and start viewing it as the front door. Family ruptures almost always coincide with life’s rawest moments- grief, terror, rage, betrayal, at the exact same time people are asked to decode alien rules and rituals. Left untended, those feelings swell instead of shrink. Words travel back and forth in formal filings instead of across kitchen tables, and every layer of procedure muffles the chance for two people to look each other in the eye. By the time the gavel comes down, the very system designed to help can leave everyone feeling voiceless and strangely alone.

necessary and important part of the justice system. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of its limitations in addressing the emotional dimensions of conflict. Legal processes are designed to determine rights and responsibilities; however, they are often less equipped to address emotional harm, damaged relationships, or the human need for acknowledgement. Without early intervention, disputes may escalate in ways that are costly not only financially, but also emotionally and relationally.



Photo by Geoffrey Moffett on Unsplash

“Early mediation is not about avoiding the law, but about meeting conflict while people are still able to listen.”

Through prolonged litigation, I saw conflict shift from problem-solving to entrenchment. Parties often become attached to adversarial stories to protect themselves. Children, though not always directly involved, are affected by ongoing hostility and uncertainty. Even after legal outcomes, emotional and relational damage can last. This is not a criticism of litigation, which remains a

Mediation is a different approach where timing is crucial. Early mediation, before communication breaks down and positions harden increases willingness to engage constructively. It preserves relational flexibility, helping people reflect on real concerns beyond legal claims. Importantly, early mediation does not require parties to abandon legal advice or procedural safeguards. Instead, it complements the legal framework by offering a structured space in which parties retain agency over decisions that directly affect their

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lives. This sense of participation and control can be particularly empowering in family disputes, where individuals often feel overwhelmed and disempowered by the process.

One of the most significant insights from my transition into mediation training has been the recognition that mediation is not merely a procedural tool, but also an emotional process. Mediation creates space for parties to express their concerns, feel heard, and explore options without the pressure of adversarial positioning. Early mediation enables the emotional needs such as respect, recognition, and a voice to be addressed alongside practical issues. Even when full agreement is not reached, mediation can still reduce hostility, clarify issues, and support more constructive future interactions. By intervening early, mediation can prevent the solidification of adversarial identities and encourage a more collaborative approach to conflict resolution.

Reflecting on my litigation experience through the lens of mediation has reshaped my understanding of dispute

resolution. I now see early mediation as a proactive and humane intervention, one that recognises disputes not only as legal problems, but as human ones. When introduced at the right moment, mediation has the potential not just to resolve disputes but to change how parties experience



conflict itself.

AUTHOR DETAILS: Jagadeshwari. N is an LL.M. candidate in Mediation and Conflict Resolution at the University of Strathclyde. She is a qualified lawyer from India with professional experience in litigation, particularly in family and matrimonial disputes. Her interests include early dispute resolution, mediation practice, and the role of emotion and communication in conflict. She is currently engaged with mediation clinic work and dispute resolution research in Scotland.

Mediate 25

This year's annual conference included fabulous guest speakers. A special call out to Dr Samantha Hardy from Adelaide and her thought provoking talk on Aspirational Ethics, including being radically transparent, embedding reflective practice as routine, and holding ourselves to the standard of being the best we can be. Also to Manira Ahmed, her insights on the human cost of relationship breakdowns was totally inspiring. And keynote speaker Dr Suzanne Zeedyk was simply wonderful, such an engaging speaker. One of Suzanne's closing remarks "making up is more important than messing up" will stay with me as I continue my mediation journey.

In the afternoon there was a focus on workshops and short presentations covering areas as diverse as community, environmental and workplace mediation. We rounded the afternoon off with a conversation about using the Edinburgh Declaration to promote more mediation and dialogue in a world dominated by raw power and binary thinking. We're already thinking about Mediate 26, let us know if you'd like to be involved.



Scottish Mediation – Services for Housing and Neighbour Conflicts

May Millward

Scottish Mediation has been working in partnership with SafeDeposits Scotland Charitable Trust since 2019 to deliver mediation-based services designed to resolve housing-related disputes and prevent cases escalating to the Housing Tribunal or court.

We are delighted to have received continued funding from the Trust for 2026. This support will allow us to maintain and further develop our work, including the delivery of online Mediating Skills Workshops for letting agents and landlords, as well as providing mediation services for neighbour disputes where at least one party is in the private rented sector.

Mediating Skills Workshops

The workshops are delivered through Landlord Accreditation Scotland (LAS) and give participants practical insight into the causes of conflict, how disputes escalate, and how they can be prevented. The focus is on early intervention and relationship management, helping participants avoid situations that can lead to costly and time-consuming disputes, premature tenancy endings, deposit disputes, and referrals to the Housing Tribunal.

Workshops for letting agents have been particularly successful and are now embedded as **Module 5 of the LAS Letting Agent Compliance Programme**. While engagement from landlords has been more challenging, those who have attended consistently report that the workshops are invaluable. In response, we plan to develop a new delivery format during the coming year—potentially a series of one-hour sessions—to make

the training more accessible and appealing, especially to landlords with smaller property portfolios.

Neighbour Mediation Service

The second strand of funding supports our Neighbour Mediation Project, which provides mediation for disputes between neighbours. These conflicts can be extremely stressful and damaging, often resulting in prolonged complaints, deteriorating relationships, and, in some cases, loss of tenancies.

The service is administered by Scottish Mediation and delivered by a panel of fully qualified, accredited mediators drawn from the Scottish Mediation Register. Neighbour disputes can arise from a wide range of issues, including noise, inconsiderate parking, children's behaviour, and the use and maintenance of gardens and shared spaces.



The Neighbour Mediation Project provides **free mediation** where:

The neighbours live in Scotland

At least one party is in private rented accommodation

All parties are willing to take part in Mediation

Removing the cost barrier has been a significant step forward. However, expe-

Scottish Mediation – Services for Housing and Neighbour Conflicts

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Experience has shown that encouraging the second party to engage in mediation can be an even greater challenge. Over the coming year, we hope to develop new strategies to address this and increase participation.

We are delighted to continue our strong working relationship with SafeDeposits Scotland Charitable Trust and look forward to further improving our housing-related services to support many more people in dispute.

Referrals and Contact Details

Referrals can be made by either party involved in the dispute, or by a landlord or letting agent, via the **Scottish Mediation Helpline**:

Telephone: 0131 556 8118

Email:

admin@scottishmediation.org.uk

For further information, please contact:

May Millward MBE

Project Officer, Scottish Mediation

Tel: 07532 739925

The Science & Artistry of Resolving Conflicts

Jeremy Scuse

I have been mediating for some twenty years and taking part in negotiations for a lot longer, so this is a very personal view of how humans behave when they are in conflict. It attempts to share what I have found to work in the hope it will give some options to add to your "toolbox" in managing relationships with the people around you.

Whether they are colleagues in your workplace, people in other organisations or members of your family, conflict is ever present, and the key question is how we react to it. This is about the techniques I and others have used to help the "combatants" hold a calmer, more productive conversation than they would be able to do without our help in agreeing on what their best future looks like and how to get there.



The first five chapters will give you a grounding in the core elements of the science behind the human in conflict and the theory, artistry and practice of mediation.

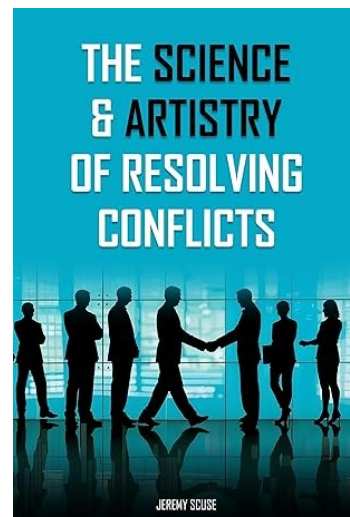
The remaining chapters look at different fields of conflict – for example, between colleagues or organisations and other significant considerations, such as mental health.

Hopefully, there is some logic as you go through the chapters for the first time and then use individual chapters later to refresh specific issues.

If you wish to use these skills to generate an income, you should join one of the recognised professional bodies (see Appendices) and pay particular attention to Chapter 5, Professional Skills.

However you approach it, good luck and if you need more ideas, have a look at our website at www.catalystmediation.co.uk. If you have any further questions, please let me know.

Available on [Amazon Kindle](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07K111111).





University of
Strathclyde
Humanities &
Social Sciences

LLM/MSc/PGDip/PGCert Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Embark on a transformative educational journey with our leading postgraduate course in Mediation and Conflict Resolution at the Law School, University of Strathclyde. Immerse yourself in a learning experience where theory meets practice and discover the art of mediation under the guidance of our UK and international experts.

WHAT DOES THIS COURSE PROVIDE?

- A thorough introduction to the academic study of mediation and conflict resolution.
- Opportunity to gain hands-on mediation experience with our award-winning Mediation Clinic. The recent expansion across most of Scotland's courts increases the opportunities for students to gain real-life practical experience.
- Rigorous and multi-disciplinary with a distinctive focus on interpersonal mediation skills including the ability to deliver online mediation.
- Participants will enhance their confidence in dealing with interpersonal and organisational conflict while developing their communication and problem-solving skills.
- As well as core classes on mediation theory and practice, students may choose electives in negotiation, employment mediation and arbitration plus classes from throughout the Law School.
- Accreditation by Scottish Mediation (as fulfilling the training requirement for the Scottish Mediation Register).

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS COURSE?

This course is designed for individuals seeking a dynamic and practical understanding of mediation. It will appeal to mediators, lawyers, managers, HR, health professionals, and anyone who deals with conflict in their work. Whether you are a seasoned professional looking to enhance your skills or a newcomer eager to explore the world of mediation, our course provides a comprehensive platform for personal and professional growth.

Legal training is not a pre-requisite; the MSc/LLM option means students from a wide range of disciplines can tailor the course to their needs.

HOW IS THIS COURSE TAUGHT?

The course is taught via a mix of in-person and online classes at the University of Strathclyde. Classes normally take place early evening, and some weekend availability will also be required.

WHAT OUR GRADUATES SAY?

"I absolutely loved my time at Strathclyde. Taking the time to think deeply, read widely and engage with others has proved to be extremely valuable".

"The opportunity provided by the Mediation Clinic is invaluable. The combination of theory provided by the lecturers, and real-world practice offered through the clinic has strengthened my practice in ways that a theory-only course never could have".

Start date: September each year

Mode of Study: Full-time and Part-Time, taught by a combination of early evening and weekend classes, in-person and online teaching. In person attendance is compulsory.

Application and Further Information can be found at:
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/taught/mediationconflictresolution/>

Join us and become part of a community dedicated to fostering excellence in mediation. Elevate your expertise, gain hands-on experience, and make a meaningful impact in resolving conflicts.

Contact

E: hass-pgt-enquiries@strath.ac.uk
T: +44 (0) 141 444 8600

The University of Strathclyde is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, number SC05263



Prevention Is Better Than Cure

May Millward

Scottish Mediation Workshops

We all know that mediation works—but surely it is better to prevent issues from escalating into disputes in the first place?

Mediation is effective because it helps people see the bigger picture, communicate openly and honestly, and reach solutions without rancour. If individuals can develop stronger relationship and communication skills, they are better equipped to manage potential disagreements constructively and, in many cases, avoid the need for mediation altogether.



Photo by [Edi Kurniawan](#) on [Unsplash](#)

This philosophy underpins Scottish Mediation's workshops, which we have been delivering both in person and online since 2017.

About the Workshops

During the workshops, participants gain a deeper understanding of conflict and how it escalates. Sessions explore practical skills that can be used to prevent and resolve conflict, including:

- Active listening
- Empathy
- Assumptions and perceptions
- Reframing
- Strategic questioning
- And more

The workshops are highly interactive and focus on building confidence and practical tools that participants can apply immediately.

Who We Work With

Scottish Mediation has delivered workshops to a wide range of organisations, including those in:

- Local and national government
- The NHS
- Education
- The Third Sector
- The Access and Active Travel sector
- And many others

Workshop content is tailored to the specific background and needs of participants and can focus on workplace relationships, customer or service-user interactions, complaints handling, or telephone-based communication.

While workshops are usually delivered to individual organisations, in early 2026 we are offering two publicly available online workshops via Zoom.



Photo by [jingji zhang](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Prevention Is Better Than Cure

May Millward

Managing Relationships in the Third Sector

11 March 2026 | 1.30–4.30 pm | Zoom

Working in charities and voluntary organisations can be deeply rewarding, but relationships can be just as challenging as in any other workplace. The passion and commitment people bring to the Third Sector combined with the dynamics between employees, trustees and volunteers can heighten the potential for conflict.

Partnership working, which often brings together differing values, cultures and aims, can also be a source of dispute. This workshop is suitable for anyone working or volunteering in the Third Sector who wants to foster positive working relationships and manage potential disagreements constructively. Click [here](#) or scan the QR Code for more information.



Mediation Skills for Those Involved in Access and Active Travel

18 March 2026 | 1.30–4.30 pm | Zoom

Issues around access to the countryside and encouraging active travel can be emotive and, at times, escalate into complex and challenging disputes between individuals or organisations. These conflicts may arise from single incidents or develop over time.

This workshop is appropriate for anyone involved in outdoor access or active travel who wants to improve their ability to manage disputes, address complaints, and work towards constructive resolution. Click [here](#)

or scan the QR Code for more information.



Scottish Mediation News

Welcome to Scottish Mediation

Scottish Mediation are delighted to welcome Suzy Houston, Douglas Richards, Eunice Olatunji, and Karen Sutherland, as Practitioner members.

Margaret Cook, Sarah MacDonald, Linda Udy, Dominica Noworolska, Nicola Elliot, Aleem Osman Shahid, Olanrewaju Olu-yide, Kerry Kirby, Louise Russell, Beverly Cutler join as individual members.

Valued Educational Services and Mediation in Motion Mediators join a organisation members.

Whether you are an organisation, a practitioner of mediation or someone interested in finding out more we have a range of memberships available which can be viewed [here](#).

Family Mediation Group

Our next session will explore what next when mediation isn't suitable for our clients?:

- a. What happens when parents go to court to resolve their issues?
- b. What other non-court options are there? For example, arbitration, collaborative law, etc.

These are often questions which arise in family mediation and the session is designed to inform and discuss family mediator's options and what experiences people have had of clients being involved in court and non-mediation processes.

The session is taking place on 11th March 2026 at 2pm online. It is open to Scottish Mediation members interested in family mediation.

New training calendar launched for 2026

We are pleased to announce the launch of our training calendar. For 2026 we have some exciting new workshops to offer, plus our popular and well-respected courses in mediation, conflict resolution and restorative skills. Listening to those who have been on our training courses in 2025 and reflecting on all the enquiries we have received, we have evolved a series of new workshops. Below are a few highlights of the coming year.



Mediation 'taster' workshop (1.25 hours)

Heard of mediation but not sure what it means? This short workshop explores some of the principles of mediation and outlines the process.

Mediation practice workshops (half day)

For those who have passed our accredited Mediation Skills course, this workshop provides further opportunities for practising skills in a safe and fun environment.

One-day mediator development workshops

Based on the successful relaunch in 2025, we're looking to provide one-day workshops on: Advanced Questioning, Shuttle Mediation, Selling Mediation and Mediation Theory.

For more information on any of these courses and how to book a place, [visit our calendar now!](#)

Scottish Mediation News

Managing Interventions

Workshop that explores the art of intervention.

Effective mediation requires knowing when and how to step in without disrupting the process. This online (Teams) interactive workshop explores the art of intervention—identifying the right moments, applying techniques that maintain impartiality, and managing discomfort for everyone involved. Gain practical strategies to build confidence in challenging situations and find interventions that support participant-led resolution.

Led by: Rebecca Swarbrick, University of St. Andrews.

For more information and to book a place click [here](#).

Workplace Employment Initiative Group

The next meeting of the group will be on Wednesday 25th March at 2pm.

The guest speakers will be Colin Sturrock and Daniel Donaldson

They will focus on agreements to mediate and settlement agreements. Looking at good practice, things to avoid and reflections on what's worked they will be interested to hear participant feedback on their experiences too.

Details on how to book will be available from the Scottish Mediation Website soon, look out for details.

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Introduction to restorative skills (1.25 hours)

This 'taster' workshop provides a short introduction to the definitions used in the restorative world, together with some of the practical skills that restorative practitioners need.

Introduction to Restorative Practice (1 day)

Based on our well-respected and accredited six-day Restorative Skills course, this workshop provides managers, team leaders and workers an understanding of:

- the restorative process
- restorative skills required of a facilitator
- an outline of the restorative meeting

For more information on any of these courses and how to book a place, [visit our calendar now!](#)