



2nd October 2006

SEE YOU OUTSIDE COURT: DYFED POWYS SUPPORTS CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE MEDIATION

The Dyfed Powys Area of HM Courts Service is holding a couple of events in support of National Mediation Week, a national campaign to resolve more disputes out of court.

Running from 9 - 13 October, National Mediation Week promotes mediation as a more flexible, speedy and cost effective dispute resolution process than court.

In addition to a less hostile environment in which parties can discuss their issues, mediation also allows for more flexible outcomes than are available to a judge – for example donations to charity, an apology or a mutually agreed settlement. Mediation is also a speedier process than a full court hearing. Most mediation-resolved civil disputes, such as small claims, take around five weeks from the claim being lodged, whereas to take a claim to a full court hearing takes an average of 13 weeks.

Events taking place during and around National Mediation Week include:

Presentation to Court Users at Aberystwyth County Court on Friday 13th October 2006 at 12:00 noon; and
Staffed Mediation helpdesk at Brecon Law Courts on Wednesday 1st November 2006 from 10:00 until 15:00

Launching the campaign, Minister for Civil Justice Cathy Ashton said:

‘Mediation can be summed up as helping people to have difficult conversations. It is increasingly having a positive bearing on people’s lives in resolving a whole range of disputes – from unsociable neighbours to unscrupulous landlords, from individual small claims to large scale commercial disputes, from divisions of property after relationship break-ups to sensitive decisions on childcare.

‘Often taking cases through court can be intimidating, time consuming and stressful – not to mention costly. Mediation provides an alternative that allows parties to discuss the issues in a less formal environment, to ‘patch-up’ differences and most importantly to agree a settlement, rather than to impose one. This can be particularly beneficial where there is a continuing relationship following dispute resolution – such as in family or employment-related cases.’

Luigi Strinati the Area Director for HMCS in Dyfed Powys said: ‘When people come to court, they are almost always there because of a very serious situation in their lives, and mostly under stress and in need of assistance. A court which can provide an efficient mediation service contributes to the well being of the local users it serves’.

Mediation can be used to resolve a whole raft of disputes including housing issues, business disputes, small claims, debt claims, boundary disputes, employment disputes, contractual disputes, personal injury and negligence claims as well as community disputes such as nuisance or harassment issues and family mediation to sort out finances, property issues and childcare arrangements in the event of family or relationship breakdown.

Anyone can find out about mediation from the National Mediation help line on 0845 60 30 809 / www.nationalmediationhelpline.com or the Family Mediation help line 0845 60 27 627 / www.familymediationhelpline.co.uk.

Further information on National Mediation Week is available at <http://hmcourts-service.gov.uk/mediationweek>