



TRAINING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

1. COMMUNITY MEDIATION IN SCOTLAND

Community Mediation has now been established in Scotland as a tried and tested means of resolving neighbourhood conflict. It is comparatively inexpensive, quick, gets to the root of the problem, and is often successful where all other methods of intervention have failed. Almost all Scottish local authorities now have access to mediation services or are currently planning for such provision.

Different models of service provision have been developed, from independent specialist charities to in-house local authority mediation services. All models, however, share a basic requirement that their mediators are trained effectively and efficiently in mediation theory, knowledge and skills. Mediators operate in situations of conflict where those involved are usually stressed and often depressed by their circumstances. Moreover, neighbour disputes are unpredictable and rarely similar, and mediators are required to act with a great deal of autonomy, often having to make important decisions immediately.

SCMN believes it is therefore essential that all mediators practising Community Mediation are trained to adequate standards. The scheme outlined below sets out the standards we consider to be necessary for fully competent training providers to meet.

2. STANDARDS

2.1 Core Standards

All training courses should have the following characteristics:

- a) The course tutors should be experienced community mediators as well as having training/experience in running training courses;
- b) Initial community mediator training should be at least thirty hours long;
- c) Course objectives should be clear and appropriate;
- d) Selection for the course should be clear and reflect good equal opportunities practice;
- e) Course content should include substantial opportunities for skills practice;
- f) There should be adequate means of assessing both candidates and the course itself.

2.2 Specific Standards

a) Access

- *Potential trainees are given adequate information about what they can expect from the training and what will be expected of them.*
- *If the course has entry requirements, there is a written process to ensure fairness of selection.*
- *Provision is made to ensure training venues are appropriately accessible and that course materials, training methods and styles are suitable for and accessible to participants.*



b) Resources

- *Venues for training courses have at least one good-sized room with at least one further group work room/breakout space.*
- *There are written course materials that support trainees towards achieving the course objectives.*
- *Trainees are signposted to reference and support materials and other learning/knowledge resources e.g. booklists, websites.*

c) Training Methods and Style

- *A range of methods is used to accommodate differing learning styles, with chosen methods of delivery participative and acknowledging the experience that trainees bring to the course.*
- *The course provides substantial opportunity for trainees to practice core mediation skills.*
- *The style of the training matches the underpinning values of mediation e.g. mutual respect, equality of opportunity, maximising potential for self-determination.*

d) Training Content

- *Course content covers the ethics and underpinning values of mediation.*
- *All stages of the mediation process, from first contact to mediation meetings are covered.*
- *The specific cultural and legal contexts of community mediation in Scotland are covered.*

e) Learning Outcomes/Course Objectives

- *There are clear learning outcomes or course objectives that are made explicit to trainees.*
- *The learning outcomes/course objectives as a minimum reflect the standard required to equip trainees to begin to practice basic mediator skills.*
- *The learning outcomes or course objectives support the trainees towards future achievement of the SCMN Standards for Mediator Competence.*

f) Assessment

- *A range of appropriate assessment methods is used during the course, including opportunities for trainee self-assessment and assessment of practice/role play performance.*
- *The final decision on trainees meeting the required learning outcomes rests solely with the training provider.*



- *The training provider will give the trainee written feedback on their performance during the course including a clear decision as to whether they have satisfactorily met the learning objectives.*

g) Training Course Evaluation

- *There are opportunities for trainees to evaluate the style of delivery, method and content of the course.*
- *Agencies commissioning courses are asked to provide feedback on course delivery and satisfaction levels.*
- *Feedback is documented and used to inform changes to subsequent courses.*

3. ACCREDITATION PROCESS

3.1 Assessors

SCMN's Standards Committee will appoint a panel of no less than seven assessors each of whom will serve for no more than three years. Assessors will have a minimum of two years experience of mediating in a community mediation context and will receive training in assessment procedures.

Member services participating in the scheme will agree to contribute an assessor's time and expenses arising from assessment duties when required as well as contributing any time and expenses arising from assessors acting under the Training Accreditation Scheme together with the service and mediator schemes. In return services will have access to free accreditation under all three SCMN accreditation schemes. No assessor shall undertake any more than three assessments per year.

3.2 Access To Assessment Process

Any training provider who is a contributing participant in the SCMN accreditation schemes will be eligible to apply for accreditation without cost. There will be a fee of £1000 for each application submitted from other training providers.

3.3 Assessment Process

- a) Applicant training providers will complete the Application Form (see Appendix 1) and return it together with any supporting documentation to SCMN's Standards Committee, who will allocate an assessor.
- b) Assessors will satisfy themselves that the application is completed appropriately and may make a request for clarification or further details if necessary.



- c) The assessor will contact the training provider to arrange a suitable date for an assessor interview and to explain the next steps in the process.
- d) During the interview (normally between 2-3 hrs) the assessors will be given the opportunity to view the training provider's training materials and to conduct interviews with trainers.
- e) During the assessment interview the assessors will satisfy themselves that evidence meets the following requirements:
 - a. Valid - there is a clear relationship between the evidence supplied and the standard it seeks to meet;
 - b. Sufficient - there is enough evidence to indicate the standard can be met consistently;
 - c. Current - the evidence demonstrates the candidate's current knowledge and skills;
 - d. Authentic - the evidence is the candidate's own work.
- f) The assessors will complete a brief written report form and will forward this to the Centre for internal verification within two weeks of the visit.
- g) The Centre's Internal Verifiers will sample a proportion of assessor reports together with the relevant evidence portfolio and either accept or substitute the assessors' recommendation. If the assessors' recommendation is not fully accepted, the assessors will be provided with written reasons.
- h) The Centre will inform the training provider and the Standards Committee of the decision in writing and shall include a copy of the Assessors' Report and, if appropriate, written reasons for substituting the Assessors' recommendation. The time between the Assessment Interview and the Centre notifying the service of its decision shall not be greater than 30 days, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- i) If the training provider's application has been considered not to warrant Training Course Accreditation, it will be entitled to engage with the Appeals Process (see Appendix 2). If an appeal is unsuccessful a provider may not reapply for accreditation for that course within a year of the original decision being made.



3.4 Accredited Training Courses

Accreditation will be current for a period of one year from the date of the Standards Committee's decision, and will be extended for a further three years under the following conditions:

- a) *A written statement is produced by the training provider that it continues to meet all of the Scheme's standards*
- b) *Copies of all trainee feedback forms from courses held during the first year of accreditation are deemed by the SCMN Standards Committee to indicate courses have met the standards.*

After this period has expired providers will be required to make a fresh application under the full assessment process.

Training providers will be required to inform SCMN of all trainees who have successfully completed a course accredited under this scheme and trainees will be issued with a SCMN Mediation Skills certificate of competence.

Courses with current Accreditation will be entitled to be described as follows on all documentation and publicity:

"Accredited under the Scottish Community Mediation Network's Training Accreditation Scheme."



TRAINING ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

APPEALS PROCESS

If you do not agree with the Standards Committee's decision on your evidence claim you should lodge an appeal in writing within 21 days of the decision date. Your appeal will be heard by the Appeals Committee, which will consist of two members of the Standards Committee not previously involved in assessment of your Evidence Portfolio, and a representative of an independent external body, such as Scottish Mediation Network. The hearing will take place no longer than 30 days after receipt of the appeal letter. You will be entitled to have a representative appear in person and to bring a further representative/supporter if desired. The decision of the Appeals Committee will be given in writing and will be final.

The Guidance

How can I appeal?

The Centre will send you a decision letter along with an appeal pro-forma which will allow you to appeal the decision that the assessors have made.

How long do I have to appeal my decision?

You have 21 days from the date you receive the decision.

What decision can I appeal against?

You can appeal against a decision not to grant service accreditation on the following grounds:

- The assessment is founded on an error of material fact.
- The assessment has failed to take account of all appropriate evidence.
- The assessment is clearly unreasonable or perverse in light of the available evidence.
- The assessment procedure has not been followed.

Who will hear the appeal?

A panel of two members of the Standards Committee (one from the voluntary sector and one from an in-house service) who were not involved in the original decision, along with a representative of an independent external body, such as Scottish Mediation Network.

Will the training be accredited during the appeal process?

During the appeal process you will not be accredited.



What happens after I have sent in an appeal?

After your appeal form is received, a letter will be sent out to you within 5 working days. This letter is to let you know that we have received your form.

When will the appeal be heard?

Your appeal will be heard within 30 working days of receipt of your appeal form.

Who can attend the appeal hearing?

A representative of the training provider will be entitled to appear in person and to bring a representative/supporter if desired.

When do I find out the decision of the appeal?

You will be informed in writing of the decision within 5 working days of the decision.

If a decision cannot be reached, the panel will keep you advised of the progress of your appeal or the further timescales that may be required to investigate further.

What decisions can the panel make?

The Committee will decide either to overturn the original decision made in your case or to uphold the original decision. If the panel overturns the original decision you will receive accreditation within 30 working days of the decision date.

What happens if I am still unhappy with the panel's decision?

The decision of the appeals panel is final. You may wish to take independent advice in these circumstances.

SCMN Standards Committee
C/o Scottish Community Mediation Centre
21 Abercromby Place
Edinburgh
EH3 6QE



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Letter of Appeal

I wish to appeal against your decision of not to grant Training Accreditation on the following grounds:

Name:

Designation:

Signature:

Please return to:

SCMN Standards Committee
C/o Scottish Community Mediation Centre
21 Abercromby Place
Edinburgh EH3 6QE