

Community Mediation

Party 1 – Mr & Mrs Jones

Mr & Mrs Jones live in a bungalow in a street with three and four bedroom houses and are upset with the neighbours children who run up and down the path by the side of the bungalow that forms an alleyway to the next close. The children bang the window and the door and then run off.

Mr Jones is off work with ill health and Mrs Jones is worried about him. She finds the knocking of the front door and windows very annoying and has grabbed one of the children and threatened them. The police had been called to Mrs Jones and cautioned her for 'man handling' one of the children.

Party 2 – Mr & Mrs Baker

The parents of the children, Mr & Mrs Baker, have had a visit from Social Services and are convinced that Mr & Mrs Jones reported them. Mr & Mrs Baker have four boys and are very upset by the visit from Social Services as they feel they are caring parents and are relieved when Social Services say that there is no need to re-visit. They feel they and their boys are blamed for everything that goes on in the street.

Initially neither party wanted to meet face to face as there was so much animosity between them and various name calling had taken place.

Mediation

Mediators visited each party in their own homes to establish what was actually going on. Mrs Jones was very worried about her husband and felt intimidated by the boys who were aged 6 – 13 years old and especially the older boys who seemed to attract boys from all over the estate. The older boys were always playing football in the close or on bikes riding down the alleyway. Mr Jones was starting to feel better but had to go to the hospital for lots of tests and was often very tired late afternoon early evening when the boys were playing outside. He did not want to fall out with Mr & Mrs Baker but was concerned about his wife and the fact that the police had been to see her and cautioned her when the children were just as much to blame. They wanted Mr & Mrs Jones to take more control of their children.

Mr & Mrs Baker were angry that Social Services had been called and were convinced that it was the Jones who had made the call. They had kept the younger children in their own garden but felt it was difficult to keep the older boys in, however, they had told them not to bring their friends into the close and to play elsewhere. There were going away for the week and hoped that things would settle down and be better when they came back. They really wanted to resolve the matter and the mediators convinced Mr & Mrs Baker that a face to face meeting with Mr & Mrs Jones at neutral venue would be very beneficial and said they would set it up for their return.

The mediators contacted Mr & Mrs Jones and explained how the Bakers wanted to resolve the matter and had agreed to a face to face meeting. Mr & Mrs Jones were initially concerned but eventually agreed to such a meeting. The mediators explained that the Bakers were away and it would not be for another week.

At the face to face meeting Mr Jones admitted that perhaps they had blamed the Bakers' boys for things they might not have done as they had had trouble with door knocking and things being thrown over the garden fence during the weekend that the Bakers were away so it could not have been their children. They did not want to fall out but were finding the antics the children got up to very upsetting. Mr & Mrs Baker explained the things they had put into place regarding the boys and how upset they were at the call from Social Services. Mr & Mrs Jones assured Mr & Mrs Baker that they hadn't contacted Social Services. Mrs Baker felt that the boys were 'retaliating' over the Social Service incident because they know how upset she was. Mr Baker said that he would get the boys to come and apologise for what was going on and make sure that their friends did not continue the 'game'.