Brunel University provides access to an impartial and independent mediation service free of charge to assist in the resolution of neighbour disputes between its students and local residents.

The mediation service is not intended to replace the work the Community Liaison Officer does in trying to resolve any problems or issues you may have with your neighbours. It is offered as a confidential and complementary service, to run alongside it.

If you are having difficulty with a neighbour and either you, or they, are a Brunel University Student, you can call this number for more information about how mediation can help and to get a referral to mediation if you decide to try it.

Call 01895 267770

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICER
Neighbours can sometimes experience difficulties over issues such as:

- Noise – from music, machinery, vehicles and other sources
- Parking – where there is limited space for parking and high demand for places, difficulties can often arise.
- Social events such as barbecues and informal gatherings
- Disposal of rubbish, upkeep of property, gardens and communal areas
- Many others such as difficulties relating to children’s behaviour, pets, hedges and overhanging branches etc.

What can be done about this?

While every person has a right to ask authorities such as the Police, Local Council and others to become involved in these situations it can often be the case that they are not able to take action because no law or other legislation has been broken, or there is no evidence to prove it has. When this is so, the situation can remain unresolved for a long time.

This can be very unpleasant for those involved and can affect their enjoyment of their home and lead to stress, loss of sleep, it can have a negative impact on their family life and work even lead to taking medication for depression or to try to sleep better.

Mediation is an approach to these kinds of difficulties that helps those involved to take their own steps to improve their situation, and their relationship with their neighbour.

Most disputes have a negative impact on all involved and so there can be good reason for both neighbours to try mediation in order to end the ongoing difficulties the dispute is causing, such as uneasiness when the neighbours are around, avoiding leaving the home or using the garden in case the neighbour appears, loss of sleep due to worry or disturbance, ongoing anger or frustration etc.

What is Mediation?

- Mediation is a voluntary process so you can’t be forced to have it or to agree to do anything that you don’t want to.
- Mediation is a confidential process so anything you discuss will not be shared with other people or other agencies.
- Mediation is an impartial process so the mediator(s) will not take sides and try to tell you that what you are doing is wrong or that your neighbour is doing something wrong.

The sole focus of the mediator is to help you create a way of improving the situation so that it is no longer a cause of stress and concern for you.
How does a mediator do that?

We meet with any participant who wants to try mediation to:

1. Listen to their view of the situation
2. Explain fully what mediation involves including what a joint mediation meeting would involve so that the participant can decide if they want to go on to have this with their neighbour.
3. Help the participant think through how they can support themselves in the situation whether a joint meeting goes ahead or not. Also to help them think about what they could do to try to improve things, again, whether a joint meeting happens or not.

Sometimes only one neighbour wants mediation, but the mediator(s) can still help the person who wants it. This will improve their own ways of dealing with the situation so that it has less impact on their lives, and that of any others who live with them.
The Joint Mediation Meeting

If both/all the neighbours involved in a dispute want to have a joint meeting this will be arranged at a neutral venue such as a Church Hall or Community Centre or in a School etc. that is as close as possible to where they live but far away enough that privacy is protected.

A joint mediation meeting is structured and managed by the mediator(s) to ensure:

- All viewpoints get a chance to be heard without abusive or offensive language or behaviour being used.
- The difficulties experienced by those present can be explained with the aim of finding a way of improving the situation.
- Ways forward for improving the situation can be explored in order to reach an agreement or create an action plan or simply to have a better understanding of each other.
- Ways of dealing with things can be established in case, for some reason, an agreement or action plan doesn’t work after the mediation is concluded. This is what we call ‘reality testing’ to make sure any ideas for ways of improving the situation are not just ‘pie in the sky’.

Who can use the Mediation Services?

If you are a Brunel Student involved in a neighbour dispute, or a local resident with a problem with neighbours who are Brunel Students you can use CAOS Conflict Management, the independent mediation service that Brunel University is commissioning to help resolve such situations in its local community. This service is free of charge.

To find out more about having mediation, please contact the Community Liaison Officer on
01895 267770
Communityliaison@brunel.ac.uk

Or contact CAOS Conflict Management directly, on
020 3371 7507
caos@caos-management