

## **Report on Mock Mediation: Strathclyde Mediation Clinic**

### Background

The Clinic's Housing Mediation Project was relaunched in February 2021. The project offers landlords, tenants and agents within the Private Rented Sector (PRS) a cost-effective, pragmatic and less stressful means of resolving disputes while helping to preserve relationships. This contributes to good practice in the sector and reduces the risk of evictions with their attendant social cost. The pandemic has heightened the need for such a service.

### Mock Mediation Session

On June 16<sup>th</sup> the Housing Mediation Project presented a Mock Mediation Session over Zoom. The event was aimed at advice givers and others working within the PRS to publicise our free service as an alternative to the courts and First Tier Tribunal. Over 120 people attended, including policy makers, CABs, Shelter, Scottish Association of Landlords, housing associations, tenancy deposit schemes, solicitors, mediators, landlords and property managers.

During the hour-long presentation role-players acted out a housing mediation based on a case that had come through the Clinic. Clinic Director, Charlie Irvine, facilitated the event, pausing the action from time to time to ask participants to suggest what mediators should do next and inviting further questions about their practice .

The session highlighted the complexity of housing disputes. Questions illustrated the dilemmas mediators face, including how active they should be in making parties aware of their legal responsibilities, and when to step back to enable constructive conversation between tenant and landlord. They also demonstrated a wide range of expectations within the PRS about what mediation is and what it ought to do.

### Feedback

Feedback has been very positive. Participants told us the session gave them an insight into how mediation works and how it can serve a useful purpose in resolving disputes. Some felt better placed to explain the process to service users. Further mock sessions would be well received. The session also highlighted that the project would benefit from external input in the form of information sessions from advice organisations.

### Forward Planning

Advice organisations are well placed to provide information and training sessions. These will equip mediators with insights from those supporting the PRS, enhancing their knowledge and raising awareness of new challenges as they arise. Such sessions will also provide an opportunity for dialogue with a sector in which some remain sceptical about mediation.

The resources section of our webpages has been updated with resources for tenants, landlords, agencies and mediators.

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