During 2017 a Working Group supported by the Department of Education and consisting of SEND Mediation providers[[1]](#footnote-1) met to develop training and practice standards for mediators working with SEND disagreements.

This group was co-chaired by representatives from the Civil Mediation Council (CMC) and the College of Mediators (COM). These are independent, standard setting bodies operating in the mediation sector. Both provide either corporate or individual professional membership for practising mediators. Members of these bodies are trained to a recognised standard, maintain continuing professional development, work to the ethical code of conduct outlined by these organisations and carry the appropriate indemnity insurance.

It was established at an early stage that professional standards for mediators in this context are highly desirable but that they should remain simple and accessible. To be consistent with other mediation standards they should be light touch and voluntary. They should represent an achievable minimum standard, beyond which individual providers are free to extend if they wish to do so.

The main task of the group has been to identify a training and accreditation route for SEND mediators that will provide an industry standard and ensure quality and consistency of practice for potential referrers and users.

**Training and Accreditation Route for SEND Mediators**

SEND mediators will have first attended a basic training in mediation skills which is a minimum of 40 hours in length and is recognised by a body such as the CMC or the COM. Following initial training and a period of practice mediators will attend a SEND-specific training programme which provides the relevant contextual knowledge and elements of practice in this field. The training should consist of a minimum of 12 hours’ delivery and should be delivered by a recognised provider of the College of Mediators or the Civil Mediation Council. The taught programme is to be followed by a period of professional practice training consisting of observation, at least 12 hours of casework and a further 2 hours of reflection on practice. Finally, in order to reach accreditation practitioners will be supervised, observed and endorsed by an experienced SEND mediator.

**SEND Mediation Training**

Training providers will be required to submit details of their training programmes for approval and demonstrate that their curriculum covers the four main areas outlined below:

1. The legislative framework
2. Contextual knowledge of SEND
3. Mediation practice and the conduct of cases
4. Local processes and procedures

**Registration as a SEND Mediator**

The CMC and the COM will operate a shared register. Mediators will register with either the College or the Council, as individual members or as part of a panel. The CMC and the COM will form a team of assessors to review membership applications and training approval. SEND mediation providers will work to organisational standards that cover the following areas:

 Commissioning, Governance and Management; Strategic Functions

 Provision of Independent Mediation Information; Supporting Service Users

1. The group included representatives from Global Mediation, KIDS, Prime Resolution, Steve Hindmarsh Ltd and the Together Trust [↑](#footnote-ref-1)