



# PEER MEDIATION IN FIFE 2024 REPORT

# Introduction



*Peer Mediators from Balwearie High School display their peer mediation certificates after completing training*

Scottish Mediation (SM) was commissioned by Our Minds Matter Fife to deliver peer mediation training across Fife from October 2021 until January 2023. Within this time, SM offered peer mediation training to every primary school in Fife, reaching over 100 schools and 800 pupils. Due to this success, the programme was extended to 2024 to offer peer mediation training to all 18 high schools across Fife and provide further training to all primary schools– see Appendix 1 for a map of Fife schools.

In the recently released Behaviour in Scottish Schools report, it was noted that disruptive and violent behaviour in Scottish schools has been steadily increasing since 2016. According to the report, two-thirds (67%) of teachers had encountered general verbal abuse, 59% physical aggression and 43% physical violence between pupils in the classroom in the last week.

This information, combined with the lingering social and communication struggles young people have faced since returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic, have made communication and conflict resolution skills, such as those learned in peer mediation, more critical now than ever.

This report sets out how the programme was delivered, highlights the feedback received and demonstrates the impact that the programme has had. It also addresses learning points and next steps.

# What is Peer Mediation?

Peer mediation is a process by which children and young people help their peers deal with difficult situations in a constructive, non-violent way. This process involves two trained mediators leading those in conflict through a five stage mediation process to help them come to an agreement. Appropriate situations can include fights in the playground, rumour-spreading, or different types of bullying behaviour. During peer mediation, disagreements are faced and shared understandings are worked toward through careful exploration of the situation.



*Peer Mediators from Levenmouth Academy with their Peer Mediation certificates*

Peer mediation empowers young people to sort out disagreements themselves rather than always relying upon an adult to sort things out for them. Evidence shows that people are more likely to stick to an agreement if they have taken an active role in making it rather than it being based on someone else's ideas about what should happen. Young people have the ability to suggest solutions and can be creative and mature in their approach. Peer mediation offers them the space to do this and develops a wide range of skills including conflict-resolution, communication, listening, team-working and many others. Involvement in peer mediation can also have a positive impact on confidence and self-esteem-teaching young people that they are capable of resolving situations that before they wouldn't have previously had the confidence to sort themselves.

# Our Approach

## Peer Mediation In School Training

Peer mediation training takes a fun and interactive approach to offering young people the skills, knowledge and understanding to become peer mediators and support the set up and delivery of a peer mediation service within their school.

Peer mediation training is delivered by experienced trainers over two consecutive days either in a school or in an appropriate community venue. It uses a range of games and activities to build up the skills of mediation and allow the young people to gain confidence in their abilities and knowledge of the mediation process. Adults from the schools are encouraged to join in with the training alongside the young people to develop their own skills and offer support for taking peer mediation forward.



**Peer Mediators at Auchmuty High School pose with their certificates post training**

# Our Approach

## Training for Trainers

Built into the Fife training model was the idea of training adult staff within the local authority to take forward peer mediation training beyond the delivery of the initial programme. This meant providing multiple Training for Trainer sessions within Fife where teachers and other school staff could be trained to deliver peer mediation training themselves within their schools.

With the support of Our Minds Matter, we will continue to offer a yearly Training for Trainers for all Fife staff. This model will hopefully build capacity within school communities, ensuring peer mediation will continue to be embedded in Fife schools for years to come.

This model is supportive of the sustainability of peer mediation, especially when delivering across a whole local authority. As such, offering yearly Training for Trainer sessions is something we are keen to emulate should we deliver another programme of this scale.

**SCOTTISH MEDIATION  
FIFE REPORT 2024**



**Scottish Mediation  
trainers Mallory  
Hybl and Heather  
Zajac after a  
Training for  
Trainers session in  
Fife.**

# Numbers for Peer Mediation in Fife in 2024

**1** Key Partnership with Our Minds Matter

**3** Training for Trainers Sessions Delivered

**16** In School Training Sessions Delivered

**22** Schools Trained

**100** Educators Trained

**305** Pupils Trained

# The Impact of Training...

## On Young People



99.4%

of young people who responded felt confident they could do peer mediation after training

99.3%

of young people who responded understood why peer mediation was important after training

'The course was really enjoyable, good to have activities as it kept me interested.'

'I feel confident that I understand and can perform peer mediation.'

'Found it surprisingly interesting and now am confident in conflict resolution.'

'Really enjoyed the training and feel optimistic.'

'I feel that I have learned a lot about how to deal with different situation.'

*Quotes from Fife high school pupils and statistics collected from pupils in a post training survey*

## On Educators

'I thought the training (both the train the trainers and the pupil training) was excellent and included so many activities I have been able to replicate with our wider group of peer mediators. It also significantly boosted the confidence of those who attended in dealing with conflict.'

*Quote from Fife teacher collected via follow up survey and statistic gather from post training survey*



OF EDUCATORS WHO RESPONDED FELT MORE CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO HELP PUPILS SOLVE CONFLICT POST TRAINING





# Learnings

While there were many successes throughout the project, we also had some moments of learning that have allowed us to adapt and grow!

**Challenge:** High schoolers are a bit more hesitant to attend mediation

- While many staff and students commented on the eagerness of the peer mediators to begin holding mediations, some high schools also noted that other pupils were hesitant to seek out mediators/engage in peer mediation.

**Response:**

- Connect Peer Mediation Advisors with one another across schools to share best practice, specifically using a GLOW page set up by Our Minds Matter.
- Create informational flyers to let pupils know about peer mediation.
- Let the Peer Mediators lead and get creative in how they engage younger pupils (they are the experts after all!)

**Challenge:** Schools are busy!

- It is amazing what staff and pupils accomplish in a day. With that being said, it can be hard to prioritise programmes such as peer mediation, so how can we help ensure schools can engage with peer mediation without making it feel like an extra burden?

**Response:**

- Continue to offer multiple ways to engage with the training, whether that is Training for Trainers or providing resources, allow schools to do what works best for them.
- Evidence, evidence, evidence. Ensure that staff and leadership teams within schools have access to data, such as this report, to demonstrate the efficacy and benefits of investing in peer mediation. It is hoped that peer mediation will not only better young people's relationships but ultimately save staff time as well!

# Next Steps

In seeking to continue to support peer mediation within Fife, Scottish Mediation and Our Minds Matter will continue to offer annual training for school staff in Fife.

01

## Continue to support schools trained

Through emails and zoom calls, Scottish Mediation staff will continue to support individual schools. We will also offer a one-hour long support session twice during the year to any school delivering peer mediation.

02

## Train the Trainers

In order for staff to retain the information given to them at their initial training, we will offer an annual Training for Trainers course to any school staff, whether new to peer mediation or requiring a refresher.

03

## Peer Mediation Conference

We hope to hold a peer mediation conference for Fife schools in June 2025 to allow peer mediators to connect with one another, share learning, and be recognised for the impact they are having on their school.

# Conclusion

Working with Our Minds Matter, this project has seen peer mediation rolled out across a local authority for the first time in our history and has acted as the blueprint for roll outs in other authorities. We are constantly inspired by the work of the peer mediators, school staff, and the team at Our Minds Matter, and look forward to continuing this partnership for many years to come.

## Highlight 1

So many young people were trained as peer mediators in Fife in 2024

- 305 pupils from 22 different schools to be exact!
- This adds to the over 430 primary pupils trained since 2021!

## Highlight 2

Peer mediation increases pupil (and staff) confidence and ability to resolve conflict, within and outwith school

- Both young people and staff noted feeling more confident in conflict resolution post training

## Highlight 3

Schools who have peer mediation schemes experience more positive conflict outcomes for their young people

- Not only does this allow young people to engage positively with conflict, it also frees up more staff time for teaching or dealing with more complex conflicts

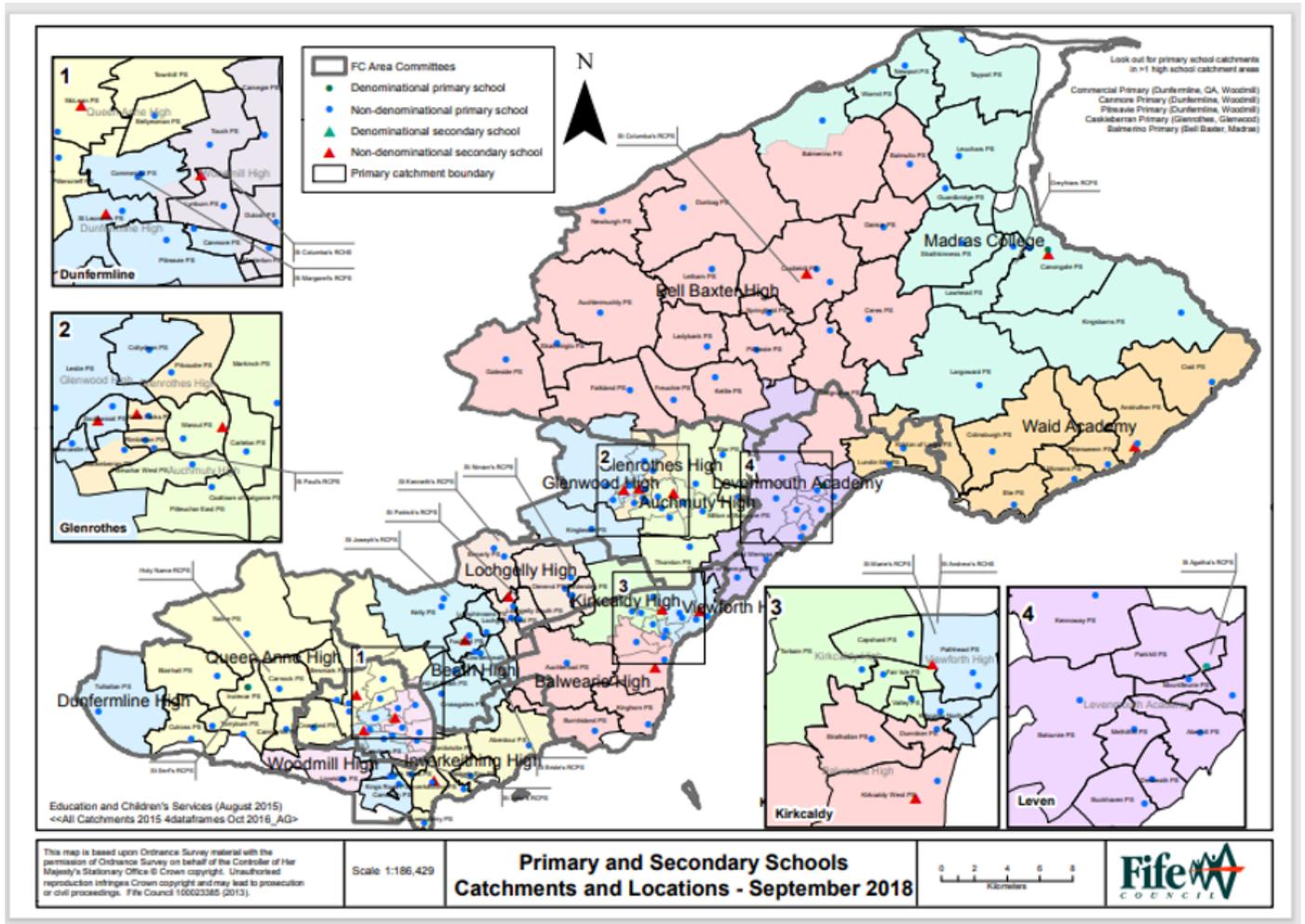
## Highlight 4

And...there is still more for us to learn from and grow into!

- High school students need extra support to engage in peer mediation and SLT can help by providing informational resources and follow up
- We can learn from the ways young people engage other young people!

**It is Scottish Mediation's vision to see a Scotland where conflict is dealt with in a positive manner. Based on the work we have done with peer mediation- that dream is very much alive and well in Fife, and we look forward to watching and supporting this generation of young people continue to bravely engage in conflict with empathy, emotional intelligence, and brilliant communication skills.**

# Appendix A: Map of High School Clusters in Fife



# Appendix B: Fife Schools Training Dates 2024

## Primary Schools

Dates	Cluster/School	No. of Pupils	No. of Schools
<b>Block 4 Aug-Dec 2024</b>			
23rd and 24th October	West Fife Cluster	10	1
29th and 30th October	Central Fife Cluster	16	1
13th and 14th November	East Fife Cluster	24	6
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>8</b>

## High Schools:

Dates	Cluster/School	No. of Pupils	No. of Schools
<b>Block 1 Aug-Dec 2023</b>			
13 & 14 September 2023	Queen Anne High School	22	1
4 & 5 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Madras Academy	24	1
25 & 26 October 2023	Glenrothes High School	23	1
<b>Block 2 Jan-April 2024</b>			
<b>Block 3 April-June 2024</b>			
29th and 30th May 2024	St Andrews High School	19	1
5th and 6th June 2024	Kirkcaldy High School	13	1
18th and 19th June 2024	Balwearie High School	22	1
25th and 26th June 2024	Waid Academy	12	1
<b>Block 4 Aug-Dec 2024</b>			
28 & 29th August	Levenmouth Academy	23	1
3 & 4th September	Bellbaxter High School	22	1
10 & 11th September	Madras Academy	16	1
17 & 18th September	Glenrothes High School	20	1
25 & 26th September	Auchmuty High School	22	1
26 & 27 November	Viewforth High School	17	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>255</b>	<b>13</b>

Adult Peer Mediation Training/ Training for Trainers	No. of educators
08 May 2024	5
15 May 2024	10
23 May 2024	11
03 October 2024	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>

# Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to Our Minds Matter, peer mediation trainers at Scottish Mediation and all the young people and staff with whom we were able to work in Fife. You all are an inspiration to us and it has been such a joy to be on this journey with you!



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## Contact

Scottish Mediation  
18 York Place  
Edinburgh EH1 3EP

[admin@scottishmediation.org.uk](mailto:admin@scottishmediation.org.uk)