

**Scottish Mediation Response to the Call for Ideas for NPF4 – in
collaboration with PAS
April 2020**

This response from Scottish Mediation has been prepared in collaboration with PAS as we have a shared desire to see mediation used more widely within the Scottish Planning System and are currently working in partnership in relation to this issue.

We would like to see a specific reference made to mediation within the text of NPF4. With the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 formally bringing mediation into the planning system for the first time, making it an option for Scottish Ministers to 'issue guidance in relation to the promotion and use of mediation' (Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, Section 40) in a range of planning situations, we believe that NPF4 is an ideal opportunity to highlight the commitment of the Scottish Government to actively encourage more mediation within the system.

With the increasing role of the NPF and the inclusion of planning policy within it, this will be the key planning policy reference document for all stakeholders within the planning system whether preparing a development plan, making an application or involvement in any other planning process. It is important that mediation is referenced at this level to reflect what the Planning Act has brought forward and to set a clear precedent for other important documents to include reference to mediation also. For mediation to receive greater acknowledgment and understanding in planning, there needs to be consistency across the different planning policy documents and NPF4 offers an opportunity to make a statement regarding mediation which can then be cross referenced to other relevant documents to ensure they all talk to each other effectively on this issue.

We feel that there are numerous ways that mediation could be acknowledged in NPF4. Dependent upon timescales, a mediation policy could be included or if this is not possible, it could be a simple paragraph outlining what mediation is, the benefits it can bring, where it could work in the system – we would recommend an emphasis on the formative stages of the planning process – and stating the intention of wider use where considered appropriate. This would at least highlight mediation as important within the system and would ensure that the opportunity to include mediation at this top level of planning policy would not be lost.