

Woods' Core role bringing mediation to enterprise sector

SCOTT REID

CHARLIE Woods, the former senior director of strategy and chief economist at Scottish Enterprise, is to join Edinburgh-based mediation specialist, Core Solutions, as an associate.

Woods, who worked for SE and its predecessor the Scottish Development Agency for 26 years, trained as a mediator earlier this year and has been working alongside Core's founder and chief executive, John Sturrock QC, to take the firm's thinking and techniques into the corporate and public sectors. Mediation offers an alternative to costly litigation, by attempting to find common ground between two feuding parties, using the skills of a trained - and neutral - mediator.

Unveiling the high-profile appointment, Sturrock said: "We are delighted to welcome Charlie. His experience of the enterprise sector in Scotland and elsewhere and his imaginative approach to collaboration is a natural development of the work Core has been doing in dispute resolution over the past five years in Scotland."

Highlighting recent research, which showed that a fifth of senior management time is spent on dispute management, with 75 per cent of cases involving the chief executive of a company, Sturrock added: "For smaller and medium-sized businesses, this is particularly wasteful."

Woods said: "I have become convinced of the wider economic benefits to industry and commerce and to the Scottish economy in general of deploying the techniques that are used in mediation to help people to fashion better deals, overcome sticky negotiations and allocate resources more effectively.

"This is a great opportunity for Scotland. My experience in finance and enterprise has given me a keen interest in the work of bodies such as the World Bank and the International Financial Corporation which promote mediation as a tool of economic development to help facilitate the development of a vibrant commercial sector."