



Press Release:

Senior mediator calls for greater use of mediation to ease court pressures

Edinburgh, Scotland (14 October, 2014) – John Sturrock QC, one of the UK’s most experienced mediators and chief executive of Edinburgh-based Core Solutions Group, today called for greater use of mediation to relieve civil courts in Scotland of additional pressures which may arise as a result of court reforms and closure of courts.

Sturrock commented: “These reforms are often necessary parts of facing up to a changing economy, new technology and the realities of limitations on public expenditure. However, it is unnecessary to consider reforms only against the backdrop of what has gone before. It is likely that many more cases are now resolving without coming to courts at all and most lawyers have enhanced skills in negotiating and problem-solving. They can help clients solve disputes quicker and more effectively.

“That said, it is also the case that Scotland remains behind many countries in its use of mediation as a way to help litigants and potential litigants to reach sensible, speedy and cost effective solutions in cases when disputes are not easily solved. This is a world-wide change and Scotland can follow this trend.

“Mediation’s track record is excellent across all types of disputes, including family, neighbourhood, commercial, workplace and personal injury cases, and in both the public and private sectors. Often tens of thousands of pounds and much time and stress is saved by mediation. Mediation usually takes a day or less, in contrast to many court cases which can take much longer. Often, important relationships can be maintained or renewed.

“It is time now for Scotland to introduce mediation as an option in all of its courts and for judges actively to encourage its use. People with disputes would benefit from earlier and less costly settlements. And, with the resulting reduction in the number of cases, those relatively few cases in our civil courts which are actually decided by a judge could be dealt with more quickly and given even more attention. The public purse would also benefit.

“One measurable way to do this would be to allocate the salary of one sheriff in each sheriffdom and set up specific in-house mediation services, like the one which has operated successfully in Edinburgh Sheriff Court for years.

“We have seen bold approaches being taken to court reform and this would be a further development consistent with modernising the way we resolve civil

disputes in Scotland. Not only would it save time and public money, but it would give many people the opportunity to take part in the resolution of matters which affect them deeply.”

For questions or comments, contact John Sturrock at john.sturrock@core-solutions.com; 07793401511