



Harvinder Singh Bhurji
Effective Dispute Solutions
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5th May 2020

Dear Harvinder,

I wanted to write just to give my feedback about the help you provided in my decision to train as a mediator. I first approached you in late 2019 when I was considering a second career as a civil and commercial mediator. I had already booked and paid for attendance on a five-day mediation course in London and I wish I had known you better before I had booked that course. Not only did I have to wait three months to attend, but the value afterwards was limited. That aside, and under your guidance, I have observed a number of mediations and benefited greatly from your expertise and common-sense approach.

As I said, my initial training was with another mediation supplier and whilst I cannot fault the quality of that training, the after-sales support and the assistance necessary to complete the requisite observations in order to satisfy the Civil Mediation Council was sadly absent. You, however, did exactly what you said you would when I made contact with you. You were always there when needed – by telephone, email or WhatsApp – and, unlike anyone else, you were able to offer me the ability to observe four mediations when nobody else either could or would. You cannot put too high a price on that support and the value that it delivers.

Observation one in person, employment mediation, which settled. Observation two in person, £95,000 sale of a business, contract mediation which settled. Observation three via Zoom video conference, £14,000 builder dispute, alleged defective works, which settled. Observation four via Zoom Video conference, £200,000+ insurance, contract dispute, did not settle. In terms of the content of those observed mediations, they were well thought through and executed perfectly. There was always an initial session where the observer could talk about the dispute being mediated, the content of the position papers and the approach to the mediation. Thereafter, at convenient points in the mediation, you adjourned so that we were able to discuss how things had progressed, how things might have gone differently or been managed differently, and you asked our opinions on what to do next.

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And then at the end of the mediations, there was always a full de-brief and, as an added bonus, you would send round a quiz afterwards to make sure that the key points were identified and understood. Daft as it might sound, they helped demonstrate how important it was to observe everything and the reaction from people at different points in the process. Without a shadow of doubt, I would say that your approach is probably unique and your experience of nearly 20 years and over one thousand mediations shines through.

Without hesitation, I would recommend you to any aspiring mediator whether that is for observations, CPD training or even initial training. One of the incremental benefits of your approach was that I observed with another observer trained by you and that was useful for both networking and also for appreciating the different perspective of what can be a quite intensive process. We all think differently and having someone else to debate with was a positive.

I have already asked if you will provide support and mentoring services going forward and you have said that you would. I know that you do a large amount of training for the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and are Head of Mediation Training for ADR Group and are developing a number of CPD modules which I would happily support in the coming years.

Finally, I would just say that one of the things you learn after attending a mediation course is that what comes afterwards is the thing that matters most. With my training provider, nothing came afterwards. When I was considering mediation as an opportunity, I approached eight or nine firms, all of whom were accredited by the Civil Mediation Council. I did so with a view to securing the opportunity to observe a mediation. In fact, I wanted to observe one before I went on the initial course to get a feeling about the real challenges. Out of the nine firms that I approached, including the company that provided my initial course, it is somewhat of an embarrassment to the others that it was only you that responded. Not only that, you arranged an initial observation for me, and then, after I had completed the course, provided another physical observation and a further two video observations using Zoom. In a market that is full of marketing promises, you were the only person that I have found to deliver and to deliver consistently.

If any of your future clients has any further questions, or if they would like a personal testimonial about your services, then I am happy for you to provide them my email address. Thank you for your professional and consistent support.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Dr Stephen Evans
Managing Director
Honorary Lecturer, Institute of Criminal Justice Studies