

Document 1

Proposal - Opening up dialogue on abortion protests/vigils About Centre for Good Relations

Centre for Good Relations (CfGR) is an independent not-for-profit company whose core work is 'civic mediation'; involving facilitation and dialogue, working through issues of contention and dispute, and addressing social conflicts and tensions. The organisation works with people positively on matters of contention, taking them through dialogue processes, which unpack issues and tensions. Every piece of dialogue/mediative work undertaken by CfGR is different, is an iterative process, and is tailored towards each specific situation/case.

CfGR is uniquely placed to facilitate a process relating to abortions and protests/vigils because of the organisation's track record of working on a range of relevant conflicted issues, which are centred on complex, systemic and contested issues. CfGR has experience of applying this process in the following situations:

- "Keeping Our Cool" at COP26 – an initiative commissioned by Scottish Government Justice Department to provide mediative support and input to help reduce tensions around protests and demonstrations in and around COP26 in Glasgow. A team of mediators worked on the ground to enable peaceful protests and manage relationships within and between protestors, police and local communities and businesses.
- Work with the Fishing Industry, Scottish Government and eNGOs on disputes associated with resource management in marine protected areas. This included exploring varied perceptions about scientific evidence and disagreements about the relevance of particular data, the challenge between historical traditions and the opportunities and risks generated by new approaches to the use of the marine environment. The work focussed on exploring and developing relationships to enable constructive dialogue around the designation of marine protected areas.
- Tensions and divisions involving race relations in East Lancashire (Burnley, Blackburn, Pendle) working with a range of political parties including the far right, members of Islamic organisations and local communities.
- Work in Lincolnshire on issues involving the economics of the agricultural and food processing labour market and the community and political impact of European Union migration.

CfGR practitioners will endeavour to establish relationships with all of the key stakeholders relating to the area of contention including engaging constructively with protesting/vigil groups who may sometimes be challenging to work with. This will be achieved through the unique Civic Mediation model that CfGR use to bring very disparate parties round the table together to tackle deeply entrenched problems. Discussions by Scottish Government officials with the Chief Executive of Mediate

Scotland have highlighted that there is no other organisation delivering this model. The outcome is for all interested parties – medical organisations, statutory agencies, and campaigners – to be engaged through a dialogue process and to consider the potential of collectively exploring constructive accommodations.

The main aim of the process will be to: [hear/understand the perspectives of stakeholders and to assess the potential of dialogue as a tool to build understanding between stakeholders and explore accommodations.](#)

Process

The work will involve carrying out an initial scoping exercise followed by a more detailed assessment to provide a conflict analysis of the situation and to determine if there is the potential for a dialogue/mediative intervention. This will be achieved through a series of individual/small group meetings and conversations in a safe space where people feel comfortable to speak openly around these matters.

Scoping Exercise – The purpose of this first phase is to establish relationships with a small representative number of key stakeholders, explain the potential role of dialogue/mediation, develop an initial understanding of dynamics between different stakeholders and hear about issues that stakeholders feel a dialogue/mediation process might help to address. By spending time with people, CfGR practitioners can impart a better understanding of dialogue/mediation and consider whether stakeholders are sufficiently open to a mediative intervention.

The Scoping Exercise will be carried out by two CfGR practitioners.

Assessment – This phase enables ‘conflict analysis’ to be carried out, and involves having confidential conversations with a wider spectrum of stakeholders to enable

CfGR practitioners to map out more fully:

- The issues being experienced
- The quality of relationships between the different stakeholders and
- The level of willingness to engage in ‘difficult conversations’ by all stakeholders

Engaging with relevant parties identified through the scoping exercise, the assessment will outline the potential for both mediative and other interventions, what these should focus on, and who should be involved. This is a critical stage of any process as it will provide the space for parties to meet with CfGR practitioners to share their viewpoints on issues relating to the aim outlined above and for the practitioners to test the willingness of parties to engage in a dialogue/mediative process.

The assessment will take the form of confidential semi-structured interviews with individuals/small groups, organised with the support of members on the Ministerial working group (tbc). These will be held via zoom, and where practical and feasible via in-person meetings.

The Assessment will be carried out by a team of four CfGR practitioners to maximise the number of interviews that can be held within a similar timeframe.

Cost

It is anticipated that the work outlined above will cost up to £10,000 +VAT. CfGR will invoice for work carried out at each phase providing a breakdown of costs incurred.

Document 2

Progress Update to Ministerial Working Group on exploring the potential for dialogue on abortion protests / vigils

This note summarises progress on work commissioned through the Ministerial Working Group. Centre for Good Relations (CfGR) was asked to carry out work to consider the potential for dialogue on abortion protests / vigils.

In July 2022, we undertook a series of initial conversations to [hear/understand the perspectives of stakeholders and to assess the potential of dialogue as a tool to build understanding between stakeholders and explore accommodations.](#)

Stakeholders included:

- Civil servants, Scottish government
- Back Off Scotland and others who are campaigning for the introduction of buffer zones
- Medical staff at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital and at Sandyford Clinic, Glasgow
- Police Scotland
- 40 days for Life

Most of the stakeholders we heard from saw value in further dialogue in some degree. **[text redacted]** did not want to engage further, they did however set out some points on the issues we discussed with them, on the understanding that these would be shared and talked through with those who commissioned the work.

During the conversations we heard a range of differing perspectives that we grouped into the following overarching themes:

thematic observations (*in the centre of the circle*)

motivations

management

timescale

strength of feeling

attitudes to mediation/dialogue

rights

who else?

Choice

CfGR recognises that these broad themes will be familiar to members of the Ministerial Working Group: given the group's focus on the issues, it would be surprising if they were not. Nevertheless, within these themes, there were some significant differences of opinion or emphasis, including sometimes amongst and between people who could be perceived as seeing things in similar ways.

Next steps and possible ways forward:

1) We feel that it will be useful to have a deeper discussion with at least some members of the working group in order to talk through the details of what we have heard, and our observations, and to consider options for possible next steps.

[text redacted]

Centre for Good Relations, 19 August 2022