

From Theory to Practise

Establishing a Return on Investment

Introduction

- ▶ Helen Sherlock
- ▶ Worked for the West Midlands Fire Service for 20 years
- ▶ Masters in HRM and Business and CCIPD
- ▶ Manage a team of 12 Business Partners and Assistant Business Partners
- ▶ Member of the Internal Coaching Pool
- ▶ Trained Mediator
- ▶ Work in a Manager Led Support function to increase line management capacity to create the opportunities for management led solutions rather than formal processes.

West Midlands Fire Service

- ▶ Employ 2000 People (Many over 30 years Service)
- ▶ Emergency Service
- ▶ Interesting Cultural Issues
- ▶ Report on significant Case Management per year
- ▶ Average of 20 Grievances per year and similar numbers for Disciplinary
- ▶ Previous negative experience of the mediation process

Mediation - In theory

- ▶ Theory from CIPD and ACAS indicates that workplace conflict most likely to be resolved with direct action
- ▶ Voluntary - Willing parties engaging
- ▶ Early Intervention brings about a greater opportunity for success
- ▶ Core people management skill
- ▶ Preferable to formal processes
- ▶ Saves on Management Time and Effort

Experience from West Midlands (Pre Development)

- ▶ Case studies x 3 - 'We had a go'
- ▶ Use of External Mediators - at significant cost
- ▶ Use of External Mediators - heightened anxiety and often led to fixed positions
- ▶ Legacy of mediation within the service not setting a positive image
- ▶ HR and Managers completely out of the loop

Business Case for Investment

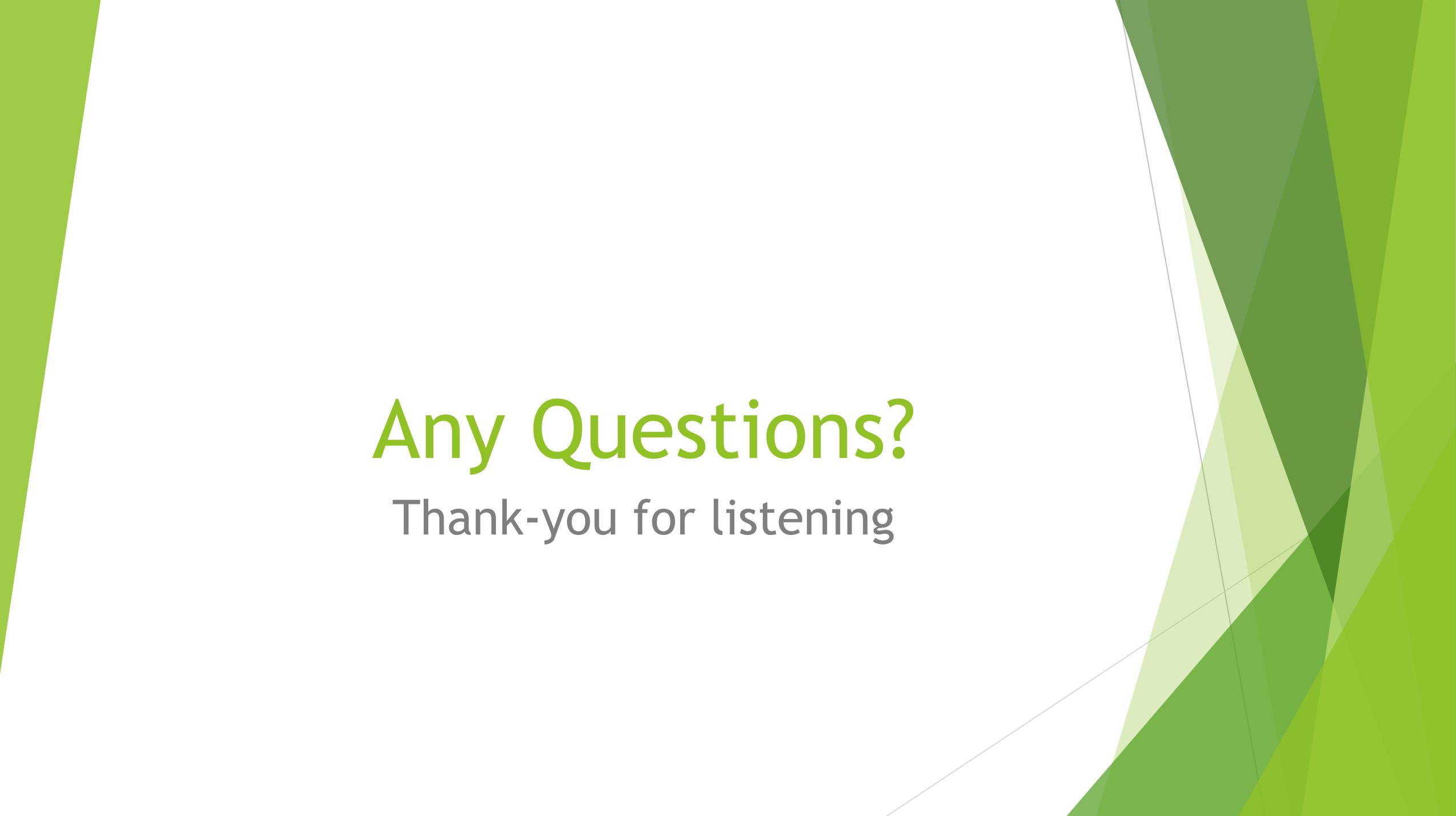
- ▶ Looked at Costs of the External Mediation and Case Management
- ▶ Review of Case Management - Outcomes of Debriefs
- ▶ Reviewed the teams experiences - the impact of disputes
- ▶ Revised recruitment process
- ▶ Cultural Differences old v new
- ▶ Escalation of change management programmes relating to efficiency and new ways of working
- ▶ Trade Dispute

West Midland Fire Service (After Development)

- ▶ Built into the offering of case management
- ▶ A team of qualified mediators (kept separate from the HR Role)
- ▶ Positive Case Studies resolving issues successfully
- ▶ Marketing around the subject opening opportunities for managers and employees
- ▶ Employees feeling empowered to resolve disputes prior to the formal procedures
- ▶ Creating a space to talk about workplace conflict and acceptance that it does exist
- ▶ Creates a blended suite of offering with CBT, Coaching and Mentoring

In Summary...

- ▶ Benefits are clear and research demonstrates the value of mediation in resolving conflict
- ▶ Historically handled badly by the Service and created a negative view of mediation despite the evidence and theory
- ▶ Took an opportunity to invest in development for members of the HR Team
- ▶ Created a more engaging way to introduce mediation and identify the benefits
- ▶ Post development, seeing an opportunity for early intervention in the informality of case management
- ▶ Indicative of a reduction in formal grievance processes and any related discipline cases.

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text centered on a white background.

Any Questions?

Thank-you for listening