Key benefits of mediation and disagreement resolution (DR)

Participant benefits:
- Voluntary – parents and young people can choose to mediate or not
- Informal but well structured
- Confidential - so people can be honest and open
- Independent and impartial mediator manages the process – does not take sides, does not impose decisions, can ask difficult questions
- Solving problems rather than gathering evidence
- Focus on negotiation rather than “who is right and who is wrong”
- Creative and “wider” solutions are possible than for example through tribunal
- Outcome negotiated and decided by the parties, not the mediator
- Power to settle - people at mediation make decisions
- Child / young person focused including self-representation
- Present and future focused

Practical benefits:
- Faster than tribunal (mediation where possible within 30 calendar days)
- Very little paperwork
- Takes place “near home” at neutral venue
- A “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) written outcome / agreement, signed by all
- Doesn’t affect parents’ and young peoples’ rights to tribunal
- Service delivery model can be adapted to meet participants' needs

Longer term benefits:
- Opportunity to build trust, leading to improved communication and relationships
- Learning to see other side’s perspective
- Learning to “do conflict better”
- Participants learning how to provide information better (for example Education Provider when making a request for statutory assessment)

How successful is SEND mediation / DR? (Based on recent KIDS statistics):
- Approximately 85% of cases reach agreement, fully or partly.
- Success is not only about agreements; it can also involve greater understanding and improved communication.
- 98% of user evaluations of KIDS SEND Mediation/DR are positive or very positive