

A guide to

Family Mediation and Collaborative Law



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Woodfines is one of the leading law firms in the region, with offices in five locations specialising in family and matrimonial cases.

Andrea Thompson, is a Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives and is accredited to carry out Mediations by Resolution, the Law Society, and the Legal Services Commission and is a Collaborative Lawyer trained by Resolution.

As a member of Resolution, formerly the Solicitors Family Law Association, she works to a code of practice formulated by Resolution which was established in 1982 and has, as one of its main objectives the encouragement of sensitive, efficient and economic handling of family matters by its members.

a member of



What is Family Mediation?

Mediation is a process which separating couples may use to settle their differences in a co-operative and non-confrontational way. The mediator is there to help you make your own decisions on a wide range of matters arising out of your separation or divorce.

Mediation can avoid the lengthy and often costly disputes which arise with each party using their own solicitor and a resolution being imposed on you by the courts. In mediation you are encouraged to make your own decisions, supported by an independent mediator.

A mediator, who is also a trained lawyer, is able to help couples by providing legal information in an even handed way whilst the couples can return to their own legal adviser for individual advice.

The discussions in mediation are not legally binding and you will each need separate lawyers to advise you and to prepare the documentation to give legal effect to the settlement.

What is Family Collaborative Law?

Collaborative law is a process which enables couples to obtain an amicable out of court settlement. The couple signs an agreement to work with their lawyers and each other, to exclude court proceedings and they engage in negotiations to achieve a settlement that is fair and which is the best possible outcome for their family.

Collaborative law will try and help you maintain open and positive relations with your former partner for the future which is significant particularly if you have children together.

Collaborative law requires you both to enter into open and honest communication, with a willingness to work towards a resolution that you have some control over, without having the threat of court proceedings hanging over you. Meetings are held jointly with the couple and their respective legal advisers and all four will work together to achieve an appropriate settlement.

What is the difference between Mediation and Collaborative Law?

They are both processes which separating couples can enter into if they are committed to resolving their issues in a more friendly, non-confrontational and co-operative way. They are both for couples who want to have a say in their settlement rather than having it imposed upon them by the court.

Mediation

In Mediation, the Mediator is neutral and will help and support you both. The discussions are not legally binding and you will still need your own legal advisers to deal with the documentation and the divorce proceedings if appropriate.

The mediation process is cost-effective and public funding (formerly legal aid) is available subject to eligibility.

Collaborative Law

In the Collaborative process, you will be assisted throughout by your own legal adviser who will advise and support you and who will deal with the divorce and financial arrangements to make the settlement legally binding.

The collaborative process can be more cost-effective than court proceedings. Costs will be discussed at an early stage on a case to case basis.



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The opportunity to talk in a comfortable environment, with knowledgeable people, really saved a lot of time, expense and heartache in the long run.

Woodfines Client

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For Mediation and Collaborative Law services please contact your nearest Woodfines office. See the back of this leaflet for details.

The next step

For Mediation and Collaborative Law services please contact our Mediation Team on:

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