The Resolution Centre

Family Mediation

Why use family mediation?

We help families in conflict, especially those divorcing or separating.

If you are facing divorce or separation, and don’t know which way to turn, family mediation can help you sort arrangements for children, property, finance and other important matters:

- It is much quicker, less stressful and usually cheaper than heading straight to court
- It enables you to shape long-term solutions that are in your family’s best interests
- It allows families to keep control of their own destinies, instead of handing it over to courts

Our Family Mediation service is a private, effective and rapid alternative to going to Court, and an established support and alternative to lawyers, for the negotiation of separation terms.

Mediation is four times quicker and five times cheaper than a typical alternative, with over 90% of all matters coming to mediation being resolved effectively, to the agreement of both participants.

Divorce Mediation

If you are getting divorced or have decided to separate or dissolve your civil partnership, family mediation can help you make future arrangements for your children, property and finance through mediation. Divorce mediation is a much quicker and more cost-effective way to settle things than heading straight off to divorce court.

Through mediation we offer divorce advice or divorce coaching (where a divorce coach - who may be a different person to the mediator – makes sure that you identify what’s important to you, your own needs, and your negotiating position to enable you to negotiate with strength and objectivity), reducing conflict in the moment, to enable that you and your family stays in control of arrangements over children, property and finance, instead of handing it over to courts.

Our National Family Mediation’s accredited mediators are trained in all aspects of family law and can provide you with the legal information you need. When you go to mediation you’ll be making your own arrangements that suit your unique circumstances. You decide how to divide your property and finances, what is best for your children and how you can work as separated parents.

Our mediators are all experienced in supporting people to find the best solutions for themselves and their
children. Although agreements made in mediation are not legally binding, our National Family Mediation approved agreements made in mediation are acceptable to courts and lawyers, and there is a mechanism through which we can help you make the agreement legally binding.

Where appropriate to the needs of your family, our individually accredited and experienced Family Mediators are also able to consider the needs of your children where they are over 5 years. This ‘Direct Consultation with the Child or children’ (DCC) is a safe way of ensuring that your children’s own needs are being met. If parents and/or the children want to be heard and understand the views from their standpoint in a safe, friendly and confidential environment DCC provides just this. With the parents’ consent children will be invited to meet with a mediator who is then able to represent their message to the parents.

DCC can be a powerful option for families and bring them closer together in finding arrangements that reflect every parties’ needs, whatever their age.

**Separation Mediation**

If you are married, in a civil partnership or have been cohabiting with your partner and are now separating or going through legal separation, we can help you to make arrangements for any joint property, finance and children through mediation.

Our National Family Mediation (NFM) accredited mediators are trained in all aspects of family law including the specific laws relating to people who have lived together but are not married. Living together and being married do not amount to the same thing when people separate, however long they have been together.

Family mediation is quicker and more cost-effective than heading to court. It reduces conflict, and your family stays in control of arrangements over children, property and finance.

**Mediation for Parents**

When parents are going through divorce or separation the impact on their children can be very complex. Children, as well as parents, feel the stress and confusion.

Many kids feel angry, sad and frustrated about the prospect of their parents splitting up and are uncertain what life will be like afterwards. Your ability to:

- communicate successfully with your child
- meet their needs for safety and support
- take care of yourself, and
- maintain a civil relationship with your ex

will all have a positive effect on your child. Given the right support your child will be able express their feelings, grieve their loss and emerge from this unsettling time a stronger, more resilient person.

Parental mediation helps parents stay in touch with their children because it increases their ability to communicate with each other. That doesn’t mean parents have to get on with each other after they separate.
It does mean they have to find a different way of co-parenting as *divorced* or *separated* parents.

One study, which looked at *separated* parents’ relationships with their children over a 12-year period, found that parents who went to mediation rather than court when they *divorced* had significantly better long term relationships with their children.

*Children* don’t like to take sides and our mediators don’t take sides either. All our mediators in this area are trained to talk to children whose parents are going through divorce and it may help them and you, as parents, to make use of this child consultation service.

If you are seeking family mediation please take your first step by completing our [family mediation referral form](#) and our expert team at [National Family Mediation](#) will help you through the process and provide all the information you might need.

Our Mediators are all trained to accredited national or international standards of mediation, including National Family Mediation and the Family Mediation Council, Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Queen Margaret University Edinburgh and the Institute of Law.

**What does it cost?**

As a social enterprise, we ask for payment according to income on a sliding scale. The majority of profits are re-invested back into this service, or other pro or low-bono resolution activity.

As we said above, using litigation is stressful, unnecessarily adversarial, and usually means that instead of focused, facilitated and swift negotiation, arguments about your separate stances take up the majority of time, at the hourly rate of your lawyer.

We know that mediation is four times quicker and five times cheaper than a litigious approach, as indicated on the comparison chart below. The middle ground of ‘mediator led, lawyer assist’ is sometimes used for more complex matters, and again finds the best balance for the necessary involvement.

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**Indicative Comparison Costs - MEDIATION vs LAWYER**

- **Mediator Led, Lawyer Advising**
- **Mediator Led, Lawyer Assisting**
- **Lawyer Led**

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How long does it take?
Each session lasts for up to three hours (though maybe a lot shorter); it is usual for clients to attend 1-5 sessions. The average nationally is 12 hours for mediation covering all issues (NFM).

Do I need a lawyer?
We always recommend that you use a lawyer to obtain independent legal advice during the process of mediation. However, use of the lawyer will be very focused, therefore avoiding the hefty legal costs associated with the traditional route of ‘lawyer only’ as we indicate in the cost comparison above. The mediator will talk to you about this and options available to you.

Summaries of any agreements that you reach during mediation will provided to you in a judicially approved template ready for formalising into a legal agreement. The agreement that you make will not be legally binding, but you can take them to your lawyer to see if a legal agreement can be formalised for the Court. This is usually the case where proposals are made relating to property and finances.

What if there is already a court case?
We are independent of the court, and you may still be referred to Mediation if the court thinks that Family Mediation could help you. Time will be allowed for this in the court process, with matters paused whilst mediation is undertaken. In most cases the court would want you to make your own decisions rather than these being imposed on you by the court.

How can I make an appointment?
We would be pleased to hear from you direct on telephone 01534 730234. We also take referrals from lawyers, the court and other helping / support agencies.

We arrange separate interviews for each of you first of all, so that you can discuss your situation individually and find out more about the mediation process. We are also able to see you together for the first interview, should you so wish, however, mediation cannot take place unless you both voluntarily attend a mediation