

What is Mediation?

Separation and divorce will affect many aspects of your life and that of your family. Many important and difficult decisions have to be made which can add to the emotional stress of your situation. Issues relating to children, money, property and possessions need to be resolved in the best interests of all concerned.

A mediator can help you consider all the options open to you and to work out mutually acceptable arrangements. He or she will not take sides but will help you and your partner make the decisions. If there are children involved, their needs and wishes can also be discussed.

Mediation is possible even if you are not married. It is also possible where there are no children and it is only financial issues that need to be resolved.

Why have a lawyer as a mediator?

Lawyer mediators are solicitors who have combined many years of family law experience with intensive training in mediation skills. This combination

of practical experience and legal knowledge together with a sympathetic approach makes lawyer mediators ideally equipped to deal with all issues which might arise.

When should we go to mediation?

You can see a mediator at any stage in your separation or divorce. However, the sooner the better. This gives you the best chance of working out arrangements that suit everyone - you and the children

Do we both have to go?

Mediation can only work if you are both there, willing to discuss the issues. The mediator will arrange an informal setting for you and your partner to meet with him or her to discuss the available options. You will be required to provide any financial information necessary. The mediator will give you both legal information about your situation to help you come to an arrangement with your partner which is acceptable to you both.

Is it binding?

Discussions at mediation are confidential, so you will not be bound by any arrangements unless you have also taken independent legal advice and signed a written agreement. At the end of the mediation your mediator will, if you

wish, set out the proposals that you have jointly made. If you want to have a binding legal agreement, you will each need your own solicitor to do this for you.

How much will it cost?

Your mediator will tell you his or her hourly rate in advance. This can be shared between you and your partner in whatever proportions you agree. If you qualify for legal aid, your share may be paid for you. Sessions usually last about one and half hours and 3-4 sessions are usually enough. Mediation is usually less expensive than negotiating through solicitors or going to court.

Will we sort everything out at mediation?

It is possible for you to find solutions which are workable and acceptable to both of you.

Only a court can grant a divorce, but if you have sorted out all or most of the other issues, the court proceedings are likely to be shorter and less expensive than they would otherwise have been. You may not even have to attend at court at all.