ANDERSON LONGMORE & HIGHAM

Family Mediation Service

Edward Cooke is a mediator trained by Resolution, the nationwide organisation of family lawyers committed to the constructive resolution of family disputes. Edward is also a family lawyer and a collaborative lawyer. He is accredited by Resolution as a family law specialist with particular expertise in financial cases and children law.

What is mediation?

Mediation is a process where a couple meets with a mediator, normally without lawyers present, to look for solutions to issues arising at the end of a relationship. The mediator's role is to be impartial, but to help the couple find solutions, whether it be to agree ongoing arrangements for their children or financial matters. The couple can seek legal advice from their lawyers between meetings and they are not tied to any agreement reached until they have had the opportunity to consult their own solicitors.

What can be the benefits of mediation?

- Better communication between parents – this is very important where there are children of the relationship.
- It offers a dignified, civilised approach.
- Couples can resolve conflict in a positive way.
- Couples can reach solutions which suit the family's specific needs and requirements, not necessarily what a court would impose on them.
- It is cost effective – couples do most of the work, thereby avoiding costly court proceedings.

What sort of issues can be addressed in mediation?

- Children – how the children will spend time with each parent, where they will go to school, other issues relating to their welfare.
- The process of separation or divorce, the timescale and how to manage the separation in the best interests of the children (including how to talk to them).
- Financial issues – property, maintenance, pensions, family businesses and other aspects.

Why choose a Resolution mediator?

Most Resolution mediators are qualified and practising solicitors who understand the law, as well as being trained in mediation skills. Mediation takes place "in the shadow of the law" and therefore having a Resolution-trained mediator is helpful, as he or she can provide valuable legal information and bring experience to bear to the process.

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ANDERSON LONGMORE & HIGHAM SOLICITORS

FAMILY MEDIATION SERVICE

How does mediation work?

- Before you start, you and your partner will need to contact us to confirm you wish to start the mediation process. We will explain about the process and send you an information form to complete and return before the first meeting.
- We will explain at the outset the basis upon which we charge. The costs of the mediator are shared between the couple and as such, mediation, if successful, will usually cost significantly less than the court process.
- You will have a number of sessions (three or four one- to two-hour sessions are not uncommon) with the mediator; during these, you will explore options for resolving issues to help you reach agreement.
- Where there are financial issues to resolve, you will provide disclosure of your financial circumstances to one another during the process.
- You can consult your own solicitor at any time, to take advice on what is best for you.
- When you have reached a proposed agreement, you can return to your solicitor for advice before an agreement becomes legally binding.

Although Edward Cooke is based in Chichester, he offers mediation for couples at all of our offices, in Chichester, Petworth, Storrington and Billingshurst.

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