



Agreement to Mediate

BASIC PRINCIPLES AND TERMS OF MEDIATION

The following are the terms on which this mediation is undertaken. At the first mediation meeting you will be asked to sign this document as an indication of your commitment to the process and of your agreement to the terms set out below:

Mediation Organisation and Code of Practice

1. I undertake this mediation as a member of the Family Mediators Council (FMCA) and The Family Mediators Association. In doing so I am guided and bound by their Code of Practice.

Mediator's professional capacity and functions

2. When working as a mediator, I do not advise or represent parties but instead I work in an impartial way to help you arrive at your own decisions. I do not give legal or any other advice to you, jointly or individually or make judgments about your individual or joint situation. I can, however, provide legal or other information on an even handed basis, to assist you both in understanding the applicable principles of law and the way those principles are generally applied.
3. My role is to assist you both to consider possible ways of resolving any issues that you may have or of making future arrangements for yourselves and any children. I will help you both to explore the options available to you, with a view to your reaching a resolution that you both consider appropriate to your circumstances. That may not necessarily be the same conclusion that might be arrived at by the court. If practicable I will tell you if I consider that your proposed terms are likely to fall outside of the parameters that a court might approve.
4. I will not tell you what you should do or comment about what your "best interests" are or might be. The choices and decisions are yours. It is possible and often very helpful for you to have advice from your solicitor during the mediation process in order to make informed decisions and so that your respective advisers are kept informed as to progress. I may help you to consider when legal advice outside the meeting is appropriate.

No conflict of interests

5. Mediation cannot take place if I have prior knowledge of the situation through a previous involvement as a solicitor, counsellor or in any other professional role. If any other conflict, potential conflict or perceived conflict of interest arises or emerges, I will not continue to act as mediator.

Confidentiality and privilege

6. I will treat all matters in the mediation as confidential, except as otherwise agreed, and subject to the terms of this Agreement, in particular Paragraphs 10, 11 and 12. I ask you to agree that the mediation and any summaries may be reviewed on a strictly confidential basis by a Professional Practice Consultant/Supervisor and/or other appointee of my mediation organisation and that anonymised details about your case may be used for mediation training purposes.

7. Information, written or oral, which either of you may provide to me will not ordinarily be maintained confidential [the reason for this, is because it would be unfair if I am aware of matters not known to you both] as between yourselves, with the exception of any address or telephone number either of you ask me to keep private, or otherwise as you may both agree with me. For these reasons I discourage any emails or communications to be sent to me during the mediation process. Please note any emails sent to me during the mediation process may be shared with you both.
8. All financial information is provided on an “open” basis, which means that it can be used in court. This may be in support of a consent application made by either of you or in contested proceedings. Such disclosure will assist your individual legal adviser and will avoid information having to be provided twice over. This reinforces the importance of full and accurate disclosure, as your individual legal or financial adviser before advising you on any settlement terms will need to check with you as to the completeness and accuracy of all information received.
9. However, communications about possible options, proposals and terms of financial settlement are conducted on a “without prejudice” basis, so cannot be referred to in court. Also, an evidential privilege will ordinarily be claimed for all attempts to resolve issues in the mediation including those relating to children. Where an evidential privilege exists, it can only be waived by agreement.
10. These provisions for confidentiality and privilege will not apply if it appears that a child or other person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. In this event, I would normally, as far as practicable and appropriate, seek to discuss the action to be taken with both of you before taking any action to contact the appropriate authority/ies in line with The Family Mediators Association Code of Practice. These provisions are also subject to any overriding obligations of disclosure imposed by law.
11. These provisions for confidentiality and privilege will also not apply if information is communicated to me with the intention of furthering a criminal purpose. I am required by law to comply with the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (‘the Act’), The Terrorism Act 2000, the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 and Money Laundering Regulations 2003 and 2007 and all other regulations made under the Act (‘the Regulations’). The Act may cover your partner’s conduct as well as your own. It also covers overseas conduct, which, although lawful outside of the UK, may be or would have been unlawful if committed in the UK. Furthermore, if I become aware in the course of acting for you as a mediator, that you have engaged or may engage in any criminal conduct, I am obliged to report that knowledge or suspicion to the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and by entering into this agreement, you authorise me to make such reports to SOCA as are appropriate under the Regulations.
12. You both agree not to call me (or co-mediator if applicable) to give evidence in court. Further, you will not seek to have any handwritten notes made by me or my colleague in mediation, brought into court and used as evidence.

Online mediation services

13. If mediation is undertaken online, you both agree that no one else will be present in the room with you during the sessions. Due to the confidential and legal privilege nature of discussions we will never record any meetings and you both agree to not record any part of the discussions.

Financial and other information

14. You both undertake to provide complete and accurate disclosure of all your financial circumstances, with supporting documents where necessary. I will try to help you to identify what information and documents would help the resolution of any issues, and to consider how best these may be obtained.
15. I do not verify the completeness and accuracy of the information you provide but if required, I can help you to consider the ways in which you may make such enquiries or obtain such verification. I will ask you to sign and date a statement in confirming that you have made a full disclosure. If it should emerge that full disclosure has not been made, any agreements flowing from the proposals reached

in mediation based on materially incomplete information could in some cases be set aside and the issues re opened.

Professional advice and qualified nature of agreements

16. Any significant decisions arrived at in mediation (including any settlement proposals) will not ordinarily be turned into a binding agreement until you have each had the opportunity to seek advice on them from your separate legal advisers. However, decisions on matters that are not materially significant to your respective positions or to the substantive outcome, may be entered into as binding agreements without legal advice. If during the course of the mediation it would be helpful for me to draw up an Interim Summary on a without prejudice basis to record interim decisions on minor matters or options/proposals discussed, I would do so. Such a document would be privileged and could not be produced in evidence to a court.
17. Mediation meetings are commonly conducted without lawyers present. However, your legal advisers may, by agreement between you both and me, participate in the mediation process in any useful and appropriate way.
18. You may each consult with your individual solicitors as the mediation progresses. I may help you to consider the desirability of seeking assistance from other professionals such as accountants, expert valuers or others, or from counsellors or therapists.

Summaries and recording of agreements

- 19.1 During the course of the mediation, usually once financial disclosure is complete, I will ordinarily draw up:-
 - **An Open Financial Statement/Summary** of your financial circumstances which will be on the record (and could be used in evidence in a court if need be).
- 19.2 At the end of the mediation (or earlier if appropriate), I will also ordinarily draw up:
 - A privileged summary called a **Memorandum of Understanding** of your mutually acceptable proposals for the settlement of matters discussed in the mediation, outlining the context in which those proposals have been reached. This document will be prepared if children and financial matters are discussed. This is a without prejudice document.
 - In children only cases a privileged summary called a **Summary of Outcome** will set out your mutually acceptable proposals and detail the parenting plan that you have reached together.

These documents are generally provided to enable you both to obtain separate and independent legal and/or other advice before entering into a legally binding agreement. You will need such independent advice to assess how the proposed settlement terms may affect your own individual position.

20. Your solicitors will usually undertake the formal recording of any agreements that may be reached after you have each been able to seek their advice, including for example the drawing up of any Separation Agreement or draft court consent order.

Termination of mediation

21. Under the Code(s) of Practice to which I subscribe, I will be concerned to ensure that each of you enter into the mediation process able to discuss and plan freely together and without risk of threat or harm. I ask that you inform me if there are concerns for you about your ability to negotiate freely.
22. Either of you may terminate the mediation at any stage. I may also terminate the process if I do not think it appropriate or helpful to continue. In either such event, I will if required provide information as to other options available to you.

Mediation fees

23. **As one of you is legally aided the first mediation session will be free for both of you. Any further sessions will also be free for the legally aided person however please note that you are under a duty to inform us of any change in your personal or financial circumstances as this could affect your eligibility for legal aid now / or future.**
24. **Any sessions after the first will have to be paid for by the non-legally aided person. Our charges are £100 per hour plus VAT. Sessions are generally 90 minutes so are £150 plus vat. Any monies paid for your initial assessment can be credited towards the cost of your second mediation meeting. If there is only one, after legal aid confirmed and paid, monies can be refunded.**
25. If either or both of you cannot keep a mediation appointment, you agree to notify the other and Allison Family Mediation Service at least 48 hours in advance wherever possible. If such notice is not provided a cancellation fee which will cover any room hire charges incurred. A fee of £25.00 plus VAT will be charged.
26. The hourly rate also applies for any work that may be required between sessions, for example in drafting documents. This does not include preparation of the final documentation. These will be agreed in advance.
27. Fixed fees are charged for final documents. For a Memorandum and Open Financial Summary the cost will be £150 each plus VAT each. This reflects the time I spend preparing this document.
28. If your issues are particularly complicated or you require interim documentation for consultation with your personal adviser/s, the cost will be negotiated separately and in consultation with you both. I will provide you with cost estimates wherever practicable to assist your planning of likely costs.

Mutual commitment

29. I will do my best to help you both. I ask you both to give your commitment to the mediation process and to co operate as fully as possible in looking for workable solutions.

Complaints and Compliance

30. I hope that I will work with you as a Mediator in a manner fully satisfactory to you both. Any concern you may have as to my practice or the service provided by me should be referred to me in the first instance. If I am unable to resolve this with you directly or otherwise, any complaint you have, if it is still unresolved you may refer your complaint to my Supervisor Judith Scott or The Family Mediators Association for consideration in accordance with their complaints procedure. Please let me know if you would like a copy of the Complaints and Compliance Rules and I would be happy to provide this to you.

Name **Tracy Allison - Accredited Family Mediator**

Date _____

Signature _____

To maintain quality, files may be subject to audit by the Legal Aid Agency (LAA). Any LAA representative reviewing files is bound by the legal requirements of confidentiality. If you are a fee paying client, please check the box alongside your signature if you do not wish to have your file audited. Similarly, the file may be used for quality and training purposes provided that the clients are neither identified nor identifiable in any materials used.

Name _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Consent for the use of personal data by Allison Family Mediation Services [AFMS]

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 (“Act”) and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018, I consent to AFMS using my personal data for the purpose of processing Mediation Services:

Processing your data is necessary for the performance of a contract to which you are a party or in order to take steps at your request prior to entering into a contract. In particular, we will use information we hold about you for the purposes of providing mediation services, responding to your enquiries and complaints.

By signing below you consent that we may process personal data (including sensitive personal data) that we collect from you in accordance with our Privacy Policy (a copy of which is available on request and also available on our website www.allisonmediation.co.uk).

AFMS will hold your personal data securely and keep it confidential at all times. The legislation gives you the right to access information held about you. Your right of access can be exercised in accordance with the legislation.

This consent form and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.

Name _____

Date _____

Signature _____