

Dealing with the Practical Issues of Separation and Divorce



Yorkshire
Family Mediation
Service



About YFMS

Yorkshire Family Mediation Service specialises in family mediation for divorcing and separating parents and couples. We have been providing mediation across Yorkshire for over 30 years.

We are an independent, not for profit organisation, affiliated to the National Family Mediation (NFM), the largest provider of family mediation in the UK and an accredited trainer for family mediators. NFM is a member of the Family Mediation Council (FMC), which oversees the standards and qualifications for all professionally recognised and accredited family mediators.

We aim to offer a sensitive, unbiased and helpful service to everyone who uses our organisation.



To learn more about us please visit our website at www.yfms.co.uk

Contact details

Email: office@wyfms.co.uk
Tel: 01274 732768 / 0113 245 2986

Registered Charity No: 1057519

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What is ‘family mediation’?

Voluntary

Mediation is a process of negotiation. It works for most people. It gives the two of you the opportunity to agree things that fit your family and your situation – this can be a plan for your children’s support and care or an agreement how finances and property will be divided between you. However, it is voluntary, and if at any point you feel you are unable to participate fully, the process can be closed.

Impartial

The mediator doesn’t represent just one of you; rather the mediator works with you both to help you reach an agreement that, in the end, is acceptable to you both.

Confidential

Anything said in mediation sessions is confidential and legally privileged. It may not be divulged to others, including the courts, by the two of you or by the mediator. The only



exceptions to confidentiality are where information provided raises concerns that a child or other person is at risk or potential risk, or where financial information divulged may contravene the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Safety in mediation

As extra care must be taken when considering mediation, with those that have had an oppressive or violent relationship, it is important that you make us aware of this.

Providing an excellent service

We want to provide a professional and considerate service. If you should have a complaint about the service you receive, please tell us; we will try to deal with any concerns there and then. We aim to ensure that all clients concerns and complaints are properly and constructively dealt with and that we learn from things that clients say to us.

Who is mediation for?

Family mediation is for couples who have decided to separate; for married, co-habiting, same sex couples and parents who have made the decision to go their separate ways and for those who are considering separation.

Mediation is not just for those experiencing this, it can also help those who have been separated for some time and who want to re-visit arrangements for children, discuss parenting or sort out unresolved matters of finance and property. It is also for other family members, such as grandparents who have lost contact with their grandchildren or to help with other family matters.



Why mediate?

There are many reasons why a person will consider mediation rather than attending court. It is far less stressful, being conducted in a mediation suite rather than a court room, it is usually a much quicker process, thereby alleviating the stress and anxiety a lot of people feel with an impending court case. It is a process where those involved, rather than a

judge will decide how they will co-parent and how to fairly resolve issues surrounding any assets. Also, in most cases, mediation is much cheaper than engaging solicitors and attending court.

Family Mediators – who are they?

Our mediators are experienced, qualified professionals, trained and fully accredited to help separating couples and their families sort out practical issues around their children or about their property and finances in line with the law. They are from backgrounds in family law, finance and family support.

Remote/Online Mediation

We offer a choice between face to face mediation in one of our mediation suites and remote mediation where the service is delivered online using a video messenger service such as Zoom or Teams. Remote mediation is confidential and completely secure.

Both face to face and remote mediations are popular with clients and each have their own benefits.

What does it cost?

We hold a Legal Aid Agency contract which means, if both parties are eligible for legal aid, the mediation process is provided at no cost to the individuals. If only one person is eligible then that person does not have to pay toward the process and the other party receives their initial individual meeting and first joint mediation meeting at no cost to them. Any further mediation sessions would be charged to the non-eligible person.



If neither party is eligible for legal aid, or one party is not eligible, YFMS ensures that our fees are kept to an absolute minimum. Please contact us for our current fees or visit our website (www.yfms.co.uk).

How long does it take?

Settling matters through mediation

On average takes between 3 and 12 months

Settling matters through court

On average takes between 16 months and 2 years

Mediating arrangements for children

Usually involves 1 – 2 mediation sessions with our service

Mediating property and finance issues

Usually involves 3 – 4 mediation sessions

Do I need a solicitor?

Our mediators will not provide you with legal advice. This is not their job; however, the mediator will talk to you both about obtaining independent legal advice, particularly if you are mediating a settlement on finances and property. At the rear of this brochure and on our website, you will find a directory of family law solicitors in your area.

What if there is already a court case?

Courts fully support the use of mediation to resolve family matters and time can be allowed for this in the court process. Let the court know if you want to mediate. The court may propose that you try mediation if it is felt that this could help you reach your own decisions.

What if I cannot attend your offices?

As with all mediation services, we do prefer to conduct mediation face to face with the parties involved. We do, however, understand that on occasion, for example geographical reasons, it is not possible for one or both parties to attend our offices. In such circumstances we can arrange for the mediation to be done over Skype. We do have to ensure that certain criteria is met before we are allowed to authorise remote mediation and any person considering this is recommended to contact us for further information.



Making an appointment

Please visit our website at www.YFMS.co.uk where you can complete an online form and we will call you to book an appointment. Otherwise, contact us at our head office on **01274 732 768** to set up an appointment. We normally answer the telephone personally between:

Monday – Thursday	9am - 4.30pm
Friday	9am – 4pm

There is a 24 hour answerphone service on this line and if you leave your name and telephone number we will get back to you in order to make an appointment.

We also take referrals from solicitors, the courts, other mediation services and other agencies.

Where are your offices?

We have offices in both Leeds and Bradford city centres. Both offices have convenient public parking nearby and both are situated convenient to railway stations.

Property & financial matters

As part of the divorce process all finances and property arrangements need to be resolved for the future. If you have not been married, you should still look at dividing things in a fair way when you decide to separate.



We will help you mediate on financial and property matters. You will need to decide together what to do about:

- **Your home**
- **Pensions**
- **Savings and other assets**
- **Ongoing financial support/child maintenance**
- **Personal items**
- **Pets**

Our mediators specialise in helping separating couples deal with such matters. This can include helping you decide how to settle existing debts and bills with least delay to avoid additional costs. It can involve the division of savings and assets in a way that you both feel is most equitable. Like solicitors, family mediators work within the parameters of family law to help you arrive at an agreement that can be made legally binding.

Typically, mediation concerning property and finances will include:

- looking at your current situation
- identify all of your assets and liabilities
- discuss what needs dealing with immediately so that you avoid getting into further debt
- explore in detail the different options each of you put forward with regard to a settlement
- consider how the suggested proposals will work for each of you individually and, if applicable, how it will best ensure your children's futures

- arrive at an agreement that the two of you feel is fairest and is within the parameters of the law, so that your agreement on finances can be made legally binding

Arrangements for children

The two of you will have to make decisions about how your children will continue to have a supportive and loving relationship with you; how you and your ex-partner will co-parent your children.

This may include where the children will live, how much time they spend with each parent, holiday arrangements and often, the more practical details such as who can make day to day decisions for the children and any restrictions on this.

It is important that parents do speak to their children about their feelings, thoughts, worries and wishes, *without burdening them with decision making arrangements, which are your responsibility as parents.*

Child & young person inclusive mediation

We are an organisation that will always consider the welfare of children to be paramount and have found that overwhelmingly, this is also the view of parents.

Each of our mediators is qualified and experienced working with children and young people and, whenever appropriate we will consider involving them in the mediation process.

If deemed appropriate by the mediator and parents and to be of benefit to the process, then children and young people may be approached and asked to take part in the mediation process. Children and young people often find it easier to talk to 'an outsider'.

If they are seen as part of the mediation process, their views, wishes and feelings can be fed back to the parents. This could be facilitated by the mediator or the children themselves. In some cases children and young people ask that their views are kept confidential from their parents but still find the process itself helpful to their understanding.

Listening ear project

This project falls outside the scope of mediation and it is entirely for the benefit of any children and young people involved in the situation.

Our Listening Ear project offers short-term support for children and young people who are experiencing separation of their parents. In such circumstances, it is recognised that many young people find it beneficial to have the opportunity to share their views and feelings with someone outside of their family.



We offer sessions in a neutral, confidential space where young people:

- will feel listened to
- know their views are validated and respected
- begin to feel less isolated, more secure
- are able to express difficult feelings openly
- can start to make sense of what's happening
- can work out ways of coping and moving forward

Referrals can be made directly by young people aged 16+; for under 16s, referrals may be made by a parent, school or other agency that may be supporting the child and/or family.

For more information, call us on 01274 732 768

Family members

This can be a heart breaking time for all involved and unfortunately, despite a lot of discussion on the subject, the Children's Act does not give family members, including grandparents a right in law to see their grandchildren or take any active involvement in their lives.

Emotions can be raw, those involved can feel betrayed, angry, hurt or confused and this can lead to a complete breakdown of communication between them and their children's extended family.

We have used grandparents as an example but the issue does go much further and can affect other family members such as step-siblings, aunts, uncles and even their own brothers and sisters if they reside with different parents. Mediation can really help to resolve these issues.

Our mediators are trained and experienced with dealing with children. Depending upon their age and the thoughts of their parents then yes, the children can take part in the mediation process. If they are old enough this can, in some situations provide extremely valuable information to all parties involved concerning what the children want. Obviously, the children would have to agree to be spoken to by a mediator.



Directory of Family law solicitors

This directory gives details of solicitors based in West Yorkshire who offer family law advice.

The directory is laid out in geographical and alphabetical order for ease of use.

YFMS cannot recommend a solicitor to you; if you need legal advice on any family matter, you should contact the firm of your choice.

Bradford

Apex Family Law

City Hub
9-11 Peckover Street
Bradford
BD1 5BD

Contact: Parminder Kumari
Tel: 01274 452109
Email: info@apexfamilylaw.co.uk

Atkinson Firth Solicitors

Fenix House
New Kirkgate
Shipley
BD18 3QY

Contact: Shazia Ahmed
Tel: 01274 584305
Email: info@atkinsonfirth.co.uk

Bird & Daniels Solicitors

34 Westgate
Shipley
BD18 3QX

Contact: Jamil Ismail
Tel: 01274 580999
Email: Jamil@petherbridgebassra.com

Eatons Solicitors

The Old Library
34 Darley Street
Bradford
BD1 3LH

Contact: Liz Williams
Tel: 01274 728327
Email:
liz.williams@eatons-solicitors.co.uk

Eatons Solicitors

120 Main Street
Bingley
BD16 2JJ

Contact: Liz Williams
Tel: 01274 562322
Email:
liz.williams@eatons-solicitors.co.uk

Petherbridge Bassra Solicitors Limited

Vintry House
18-24 Piccadilly
Bradford
BD1 3LS

Contact: Jamil Ismail
Tel: 01274 724114
Email: Jamil@petherbridgebassra.com

RDC Solicitors

City Hub
9-11 Peckover Street
Little Germany
Bradford
BD1 5BD

Contact: Judith Fitzpatrick
Tel: 01274 723858
Email: judith@rdcsolicitors.co.uk

RDC Solicitors

30 Park Road
Bingley
BD16 4JD

Contact: Judith Fitzpatrick
Tel: 01274 723858
Email: judith@rdcsolicitors.co.uk

Savage Crangle Solicitors

15 High Street
Skipton
BD23 1AJ

Contact: Mr P J Crangle / Mr J M Eyre
Tel: 01756 794611
Email: mail@savagecrangle.co.uk

Huddersfield

Ison Harrison

60 John William Street
Huddersfield
HD1 1ES

Contact: Jessica Hudson
Tel: 01484 508680
Email: jessica.hudson@isonharrison.co.uk

LEEDS

Apex Family Law

Spark
4 Queen Street
Leeds
LS1 2TW

Contact: Parminder Kumari
Tel: 0113 880 0627
Email: info@apexfamilylaw.co.uk

Consilia Legal

4 Park Place
Leeds
LS1 2RU

Contact: Laura Clapton
Tel: 0113 322 9222
Email: laura@consilialegal.co.uk

Ison Harrison Solicitors

Duke House
54 Wellington Street
Leeds
LS1 2EE

Contact: Shaun Hulme
Tel: 0113 284 5000
Email:
shaun.hulme@isonharrison.co.uk

Ison Harrison Solicitors

29 Main Street
Garforth
Leeds
LS25 1DS

Contact: Emma Beddoe
Tel: 0113 286 1455
Email:
emma.beddoe@isonharrison.co.uk

Ison Harrison Solicitors

48 Austhorpe Road
Crossgates
Leeds
LS15 8DX

Contact: Geoff Lorkins
Tel: 0113 232 6530
Email:
geoff.lorkins@isonharrison.co.uk

Ison Harrison Solicitors

46a The Grove
Ilkley
LS29 9EE
Also in Guiseley & Otley

Contact: Sarah Laughey
Tel: 01943 889100
Email:
sarah.laughey@isonharrison.co.uk

Ison Harrison Solicitors

24 Lidget Hill
Pudsey
Leeds
LS28 7DR

Contact: Nigel Monaghan
Tel: 0113 468 0930
Email:
nigel.monaghan@isonharrison.co.uk

Ison Harrison Solicitors

70a Queen Street
Morley
Leeds
LS27 9BP

Contact: Tara McElvaney
Tel: 0113 252 0331
Email:
tara.mcelvaney@isonharrison.co.uk

Norton Connor Solicitors

145-147 Town Street
Horsforth
Leeds
LS18 5BL

Contact: Mrs Akwal Ryatt
Tel: 0113 239 0088
Email:
akwalryatt@nortonconnor.co.uk

Savage Crangle Solicitors

Royal Oak House
Manor Square
Otley
LS21 3AZ

Contact: Mr C M Storah
Tel: 01943 465050
Email: mail@savagecrangle.co.uk

Wakefield

Ison Harrison

Lexsmith Chambers
Bradley Street
Castleford
WF10 1HP

Contact: Chelsea Bonar
Tel: 01977 557171
Email: chelsea.bonar@isonharrison.co.uk

Ison Harrison

Norwood House

Contact: Chelsea Bonar

Stuart Road
Pontefract
WF8 1BT

Tel: 01977 794395
Email: chelsea.bonar@isonharrison.co.uk

North Yorkshire

To follow