

Alternative Dispute Resolution ('ADR') options for represented family finance clients offering affordable, responsive and quality routes to settlement.



If you are representing a party involved in a family finance dispute (financial provision on divorce, Schedule 1 proceedings and trust of land claims), Andrew Commins of St John's Chambers' Family Practice Group offers you and your clients two forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution ('ADR').

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The two methods are Represented Mediations and Private Financial Dispute Resolution Meetings ('Private FDRMs').

Represented Mediation

Andrew works as an impartial mediator on the joint instruction of the parties to facilitate their discussions and negotiations. Mediation can offer parties an empowering, predictable and economical route to a workable settlement.

Unlike 'traditional' family mediation sessions that are often spread over a number of weeks with clients reverting to their solicitors on each occasion, at the represented mediation clients benefit from their own legal advice throughout the negotiations and in drafting an agreement in the event that a settlement is achieved.

An agreed bundle of relevant documents is sent to Andrew in advance. The mediation takes place at Chambers and is normally scheduled for a day. The parties are provided with their own rooms. Clients attend for the mediation with their respective lawyers.

Private FDRM

Andrew provides both parties with a [non-binding] indication as to the most likely outcome should their dispute(s) proceed to court.

An agreed bundle of relevant documents is sent to Andrew in advance.

An indication may be given on one or more issues and on one or more occasions during the day. The clients attend for the FDRM with their respective lawyers and are provided with their own rooms during the day.

The FDRM is a rapid, flexible and responsive tool that adapts to the particular circumstances of each case.

The benefits to clients of both forms of ADR are numerous:

- **Cost:** the parties split the cost of the ADR sessions between them.
- **Focus:** each ADR method is tailored to the circumstances of each case and the nature of the dispute.
- **Time:** the ADR sessions are scheduled for the day; on a date to suit the parties; faster than a court listing and the time pressures of court attendance are removed.
- **Quality:** all papers will be read in advance and the parties can be assured of a fully-informed mediation or FDRM.
- **Flexibility:** each ADR method can respond to the nuances of the particular dispute and the direction and pace of negotiations on the day.

Andrew Commins, Family Barrister



“Andrew has a very calm and approachable manner which works very well with clients.” **Legal 500 (2015)**

Andrew Commins is a family finance specialist with 11 years of practice in courts throughout Wales and the South West. He has experience of complex disputes involving discretionary, constructive and resulting trusts, company interests, partnerships, pensions, farms, nuptial agreements, set-aside applications and variation of settlement claims. He has worked as a mediator for four years and he also is author of 'Maintenance Matters' (Jordans Publishing) and the family-finance contributor to the Red Book (Family Court Practice).

Further information

For further information in any of these services, please contact St John's Family Clerks on 0117 923 4720, email: familyclerks@stjohnschambers.co.uk or visit: www.stjohnschambers.co.uk/family



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