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DIVORCE • MEDIATION • COLLABORATIVE LAW • FAMILY LAW



## **COLLABORATIVE LAW**

The Collaborative Law process is an additional option available to separating or divorcing couples, as to how to approach dealing with all the issues that arise with a relationship breakdown, such as parenting arrangements and finances. It can also be used by couples who are already separated or divorced, and who need help resolving an issue that has cropped up – such as varying maintenance payments, or changing their parenting arrangements as a result of the children having grown up and having different needs now they are older.

In simple terms, you and your Partner sit down and, with the help of your own solicitors, all together in the same room; you work out all these issues face-to-face. So, rather than dealing through solicitors, you work with them and your Partner to reach the best solutions for you and your family.

There is usually very little correspondence where the collaborative process is undertaken, as everything is dealt with and discussed at a series of meetings. It does not suit everyone however, and it does need to be approached with the right frame of mind, in particular:

- A genuine desire to make it work and to seek a fair solution for everyone
- A willingness to disclose, fully and honestly, information about all assets and circumstances
- An agreement that you will reach a solution without going to Court

What can also make it successful for you is that you remain in control and set the pace and agenda – you have your own independent legal advice available, but there are no Court proceedings hanging over you, and you are not governed by Court dates and appearances.

You maintain contact with your former Partner, which gives you the best chance of understanding each other and finding the right solutions. If you have children, you will both remain parents and it can help enormously for the children to cope with the separation if they see you working things out together.

For the Collaborative solicitors, they sign an agreement with you both which disqualifies them from representing you in Court if the collaborative process breaks down, so they are also committed to helping you find the best solutions by agreement.