

NATIONAL FAMILY MEDIATION AND THE CO-OPERATIVE JOIN FORCES TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY DIVORCE MEDIATION

National Family Mediation and the Co-operative have joined forces to provide high quality family mediation nationwide. The deal will enable couples planning to separate or divorce to access highly trained solicitors and mediators without the need to go to court. Mediation is cheaper and quicker than going to court and reduces the conflict in divorce. National Family Mediation is the largest provider of mediation in the country and has 83% success rate in helping people make their own arrangements for property and finance, and seek long term arrangements for their children as separated parents.

Jane Robey, CEO, National Family Mediation says "We are delighted to be working with the co-operative legal services team to provide cost effective mediation for families going through the painful process of divorce. We have 47 services throughout England and Wales and our mediators are the most experienced and highly trained in the country. Working with the co-op is a logical partnership for us, and we are dedicated to reaching people during the early stages of their separation or divorce. Our experience shows this is the best way to prevent costly and highly conflicted court battles."

Government figures show mediation costs approximately 25% of what it costs to go to court and takes a quarter of the time. Families will still be able to access legal aid for mediation after legal aid for family solicitors is cut in April 2013.

Vivienne Keys, a mediator for National Family Mediation says "It is always better for the children if parents can agree on planning for the future after separation. We work with families from all kinds of backgrounds from those on legal aid to those with one million pound pension pots. The key is to reduce the conflict in divorce and avoid going to court." For more information and interview requests please contact JudyAslett@nfm.org.uk

Notes to editors:

National Audit Office figures on legally-aided mediation show that the average time for a mediated case to be completed is 110 days, compared to 435 days for court cases on similar issues.

Mediation is also cheaper than going to court - data from Legal Aid cases show the average cost per client of mediation is £535 compared to £2,823 for cases going to court.