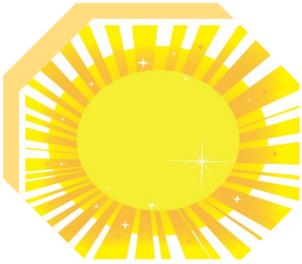


The Future of Mediation in Kent

Sunshine



Join Our Celebrations!

**World Conflict Resolution Day
Thursday 18 October**



We are joining the rest of the world in celebrating the ever growing preference for using 'Alternative Dispute Resolution'.

Our contribution towards this is an **Open Day in Sittingbourne** during which we have invited everybody and anybody who may believe that family mediation could be helpful to them.

Meet the Team!

Our entire team will be here to greet the visitors and to explain how mediation can help all couples and families who are experiencing emotional and financial difficulties associated with the breakdown of their intimate unit.

We are expecting professionals associated with families in distress as well as representatives of their family units. We are also hoping to see a continuing interest from those who have civil partnerships in addition to unmarried couples who have disputes relating to housing and finance.

***"80% of our clients
have received free
mediation"***

Equally importantly, we hope that family members who may have concerns about the welfare of their extended families and who wonder how we can help (older children, grandparents and parents even close friends).

These people can talk to us in confidence and we shall be able to give them information about our service and how to make an appointment. We will also be able to explain about funding and to emphasise that 80% of the clients that we mediated for have received their mediation free of charge, having been assessed as being eligible for legal funding.

Law Society Mediation Practitioner of the Year Award

Winner Announced!

Earlier this year Denise Ingamells joined our team as Deputy Head of Mediation with special responsibility for the SPIP Practitioner Team.

Denise was the winner of the Law Societies Practitioner of the Year Award.

On 10 October at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London, the Family Law Judging Panel presented Denise with this prestigious award in recognition of her creative genius and the positive impact of the course that she authored for separated parents.

Denise is the author of the SPIPS Parent Programme, which is a nationwide Court ordered activity which is aimed at helping parents who have been engaged in protracted legal action and have experienced high levels of conflict between them.

“Thousands of parents have attended these workshops..”

Thousands of parents and grandparents have attended these workshops in the past two years and as a result of this, many thousands of children have benefited from their parents’ participation.



Needless to say, we are all immensely proud of her!

Denise Ingamells

SPIP PLUS

This extension to the original SPIP is now the only Court Order of its type available to the Judiciary. The stand-alone parenting workshop has been replaced by a New Court Order; which is now in 4 parts:-

- The Separated Parents Information workshop in which parents/grandparents attend separately
- An on-line interactive programme which develops the theme of communication and emphasises the skills required to facilitate positive communication.
- A joint plus meeting during which the couple actively practise the skills they have learned on the workshop and from the on line exercise
- A Mediation Information Meeting (MIM).



KFMS is one of the 3 areas that are piloting this scheme and we have been closely collaborating with Cafcass in the design and development of the new format, which should be a nationwide programme in the new year.

New Mediators

We are delighted to announce that we now have 3 new Mediators who are able to carry out legally funded mediation. They are all legally qualified and may already be familiar to you:-

Craig Brookes
Sarah Emmanuel
Martha Monday

This brings our total of accredited Mediators to 10.

Expanded Work Force



KFMS is one of those organisations which have the good fortune to be expanding its workforce in these difficult economic times.

We have been able to offer 4 extra part time positions, which means that we are responding to the needs of the public more efficiently.

Showers

“Legal Aid is almost to disappear in April.....”



Legal Aid

Legal Aid is to almost disappear in April and the rules associated with obtaining legal funding are set to change dramatically. In the majority of cases where there is no involvement of domestic violence, individuals will only be able to access Legal Aid for family matters if they are already engaged in mediation. Solicitors will not be able to seek legal funding for their clients as they did previously.

The Government is keen to help families work together to resolve their disputes relating to divorce or separation through mediation. Mediation and the associated legal help may be either totally free of charge, or based upon subsidised contributions.

New Shoots

Fixed Fee Packages

In response to the showers we are hoping to raise the umbrella of ‘Fixed Fee Packages’.

Working alongside local legal firms, many of whom have been our friends and who have referred their clients to our service, we are exploring fixed fee schemes.



Continued on next page...

Fixed Fee Packages continued..

In November we have a meeting with the representatives of these firms and we are devising packages which will ensure that the clients who come to us can be aware of all of the charges they will be paying for their entire financial divorce package.

Money is normally very short during this difficult period of a family's life and knowing exactly how much they will need to pay will relieve stress and shorten the process for them.



C.A.F

The majority of our Mediators will shortly be qualified to make these important referrals.

Working in partnership with other agencies that provide support for families in difficulty, it had become apparent that we were frequently finding people who needed a little extra help to cope with the immediate stress and hardship they were facing.

The **Common Assessment Framework** is a tool that is used by local Councils in order to identify the extra support the family requires. The focus is the child and it hopes to ensure that more young children are experiencing a positive and supported life.

In identifying these children with the help of partnership organisations, children are being located much earlier so that they and their families can be helped. In the past 2 months we have made 4 very productive referrals and we sense that the qualities of our interventions are improving as a result.

Skype Mediation Pilot



As families move farther apart and the cost of travel increases in common with other mediation services across Britain, we have needed to look at ways in which we can provide effective mediation.

In recent months we have successfully conducted meetings between parents who have lived in England and the Southern Hemisphere. The children were able to travel to stay with their parent who lived many thousands of miles away after those parents had discussed their concerns and put strategies in place which offered assurance to everybody.

Naturally there are conditions and safeguards placed around this form of mediation and the associated agreements to mediate are adapted to include ensuring that no recording takes place the children are not in the room etc.

Our experience in this field has resulted in our being asked, by NFM (National family Mediation) to lead a **Pilot Study** which will help to establish protocols and processes for the profession.

It has always been important for us to innovate appropriately and to test the validity of our new and pioneering activities. **WE** do not expect that mediation between couples who live locally would benefit from this method of communication within the family unit, however there maybe occasions on which parents who live many miles apart may find this service beneficial.

The Future of Mediation

Web Site Launch & Facebook Page



After 2 years in the planning we are now able to ask you to give our site the thumbs up!

The new website will be an enormous asset to those seeking more information about family mediation and we hope that the links that we make will help families further.

In addition to other user friendly features, there are links to all of our PIPS PLUS Programme and mediation venues in Kent; these include maps, nearest parking and even rail and coach timetable!

There are also **online referral forms** to enable Solicitors, other Organisations and self referrers to complete and send referrals to our office from the website at the 'click of a button'!

Please help us to make reciprocal links by adding your organisation to our page and vice versa by letting others know about us. We hope that in time this will become a leading hub for families who need help of any kind.

There are already links with the following:-



Please visit us on www.kentfms.co.uk as soon as possible. If you would like to offer a reciprocal link for both yours and our websites, please email Debbie at kfms@kentfms.co.uk



In keeping with the times of new Social Media, we now also have a Facebook page. If you have a Facebook account, please visit our Face Book page and click on the link to 'Like Us'.

Thank you once again for your continued support and encouragement.

All of the team at Kent Family Mediation Service