

METHODS OF NCDR

(NON-COURT DISPUTE RESOLUTION)



ALTERNATIVES TO THE FAMILY COURT PROCESS



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NON-COURT DISPUTE RESOLUTION: OVERVIEW

When disagreements arise, court isn't your only option. In fact, it's often the last one you need. NCDR (Non-Court Dispute Resolution) offers practical and constructive ways to resolve disputes without the stress, delay and cost of litigation and court proceedings. We will guide you through these options but have also created this helpful guide for you to consider.

MEDIATION

Mediation brings everyone to the table with the support of an independent, neutral mediator. Their role isn't to take sides or make decisions, but to guide constructive conversations, keep discussions focused, and help you explore realistic solutions. You stay in control of the outcome. The mediator simply helps you find a way forward that works for both parties. Everything discussed remains confidential, creating a safe space for open and honest dialogue.

Best for: Situations where both parties are open to discussion and willing to work towards a practical, mutually acceptable resolution.

Talk it out, find common ground, move forward

COLLABORATIVE LAW

In the collaborative process, each party has their own specially trained solicitor, and everyone makes a shared commitment to resolve matters without going to court. Through a series of structured joint meetings, you work together openly and constructively to find solutions that meet the needs of the whole family. The focus is on respectful problem-solving, where the parties are in control of the process and aims to reduce conflict and stress. It is cost and time efficient, aimed at finding creative solutions and reaching and practical agreements that are built to last.

Best for: Couples who wish to retain control over the process & find tailored solutions customised to their specific needs. Unlike mediation, families have their own trained lawyer by their side at all meetings to provide advice.

Work together, protect relationships, prioritise children

ONE LAWYER

Both parties jointly appoint one neutral solicitor to guide them through the process and help shape a fair and workable agreement. Rather than representing one side, the solicitor remains impartial throughout, ensuring everyone is heard and that discussions stay balanced, focused, and constructive. This approach is often more streamlined and less adversarial, with both parties quite literally working from the same page towards a shared solution.

Best for: Straightforward, amicable matters where there is trust, openness, and a genuine commitment to cooperation.

One guide, shared understanding, quicker resolution

ARBITRATION

A neutral specialist arbitrator is appointed to consider the issues and make a binding decision. It offers a private process that is typically quicker and more flexible than going to court, while still delivering a clear and enforceable outcome. Although there are limited rights of appeal, the decision brings certainty and finality, allowing parties to move forward without prolonged proceedings.

Best for: Those seeking a definitive, enforceable resolution without the delays, publicity and costs often associated with court.

Decide it privately, settle it definitively

EARLY NEUTRAL EVALUATION

An independent expert provides an early, impartial assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each party's case. This objective overview can bring much-needed clarity, helping everyone understand the likely range of outcomes. By reality-testing positions and identifying the key issues, ENE often narrows the dispute and creates a stronger foundation for meaningful settlement discussions.

Best for: Those seeking clarity at an early stage and looking to avoid the cost, stress, and uncertainty of unnecessary litigation.

Know your options, make smarter choices early

PRIVATE FDR

A privately appointed senior barrister or solicitor provides a non-binding indication of the likely outcome, helping parties reassess their positions and focus on settlement. Since it is arranged privately, it can usually take place far more quickly than a court-based hearing. With the benefit of experienced, independent insight, discussions often become more productive, and many cases resolve on the day.

Best for: Situations where negotiations have stalled and a fresh, expert perspective is needed to break the deadlock.

Break the deadlock, get expert insight fast

ROUND TABLE MEETINGS

Both parties and their solicitors come together to negotiate directly in a confidential, focused, and non-adversarial setting. Discussions take place face-to-face (or virtually), allowing issues to be addressed openly and constructively. The aim is to resolve matters wherever possible, or at the very least narrow the issues and make meaningful progress.

Best for: Practical negotiations where communication remains possible and there is a willingness to work towards resolution.

Open conversation, practical solutions, progress achieved

MEET OUR TEAM



SHELLEY



JANE



STEVEN



AROJ



LAURA