



#### **Family mediation procedure**

Family mediation is an entirely voluntary process and there is currently no requirement in Northern Ireland to consider resolving a dispute through mediation before making an application to the court. However the courts are supportive and will encourage its use in appropriate cases. Although the process to be applied is not specified statutorily, the courts are likely to permit an adjournment in cases where it appears issues could be resolved through mediation. Parties can also apply to the court to have a mediated agreement made enforceable as if it were an order of the court.

Public funding is available in some cases. The Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland has met the cost of some mediation from legal aid funds and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety currently provides funding for pre-court mediation in family disputes. Further information can be obtained from the website of [Family Support Northern Ireland](#).

#### **Family mediation profession**

Training and accreditation is not regulated by government. The profession is self-regulating and qualification and experience requirements vary across affiliate professional organisations. Further information can be obtained from provider websites and the information booklet Alternatives to Court in Northern Ireland available on the [NI Direct](#) website.

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