

## **Andrew Sims - Family Mediation Profile**

### **Summary**

An experienced independent family mediator in full time practice, Andrew specializes in mediating sensitive and complex cases. He has a degree in Social Psychology and a business background.

His range of skills, knowledge and experience are used to maximise the parties' ability to reach agreement, enabling them to face the future with a greater degree of confidence, clarity and certainty.

Andrew practices mainly in London, but mediates regularly in other parts of the British Isles. He is married with three children.

### **Expertise**

Andrew's main focus is on helping separating or divorcing couples agree about the future, with regards to their children, housing and finances.

He has helped couples to discuss and reach agreement on a wide range of matters including: the future of the family home and any other property or assets, including pensions and endowments; maintenance payments (including child maintenance and spousal maintenance); issues relating to debts; sharing possessions; arrangements for dependent children, such as spending time with them ('contact' arrangements); where and with whom they will live ('residence'); their care ('shared parenting'), education & holiday arrangements; differences in parenting styles (including parenting plans); and options for ending the marriage or relationship and the consequences of doing so.

Andrew also mediates on issues other than separation and divorce, which can include a combination of family and commercial mediation models. These include family business disputes and inheritance disputes, including disputed wills.

In addition, Andrew has experience of mediating disagreements between parents and children, siblings and other family members. He has also mediated conflicts arising from the placement of children in foster care.

### **Family Mediation Practice**

Andrew is a Principal Mediator with Mediating Futures, [www.mediatingfutures.com](http://www.mediatingfutures.com) a family mediation practice based in London.

He regularly co-mediate with Wells Family Mediation, a child-centred mediation practice, based in Kent.

He is also an Associate with Lorraine Bramwell Associates (LBA) [www.bestwayforward.com](http://www.bestwayforward.com), a national mediation and dispute resolution service.

Andrew also mediates family cases for Southwark Mediation Centre and Wandsworth Mediation.

## **Approach**

Andrew is acutely aware of the profound impact a separation or divorce has on people's lives and the difficult process of re-adjustment that needs to take place.

He is mindful that when couples come to mediation, there are expectations of reasonableness placed on them, at a time when reason can often be overwhelmed by emotions such as anger or grief or feelings of hurt or loss.

He appreciates that couples are often at different stages with regards to coming to terms with the end of their relationship; and that any discussions about future arrangements can make the ending of that relationship more real and painful.

This is where his skill and experience in easing communication and encouraging meaningful dialogue proves to be invaluable.

Andrew brings clarity and structure to often confusing situations. During the process of separation and re-organization, he helps couples to think through what options they have; what the implications may be and what choices are available to them. He supports them in making informed decisions about the best way forward, for all concerned

Andrew not only draws on his wide experience of family cases and his knowledge of the latest research in the family field, but he also brings to bear his understanding of the dynamics of conflict and his broad experience in many other fields of mediation.

In his experience, by far the most effective approach is co-mediation, (with a combination of male / female and lawyer / non-lawyer mediators), with face-to-face meetings with the parties. However, he accepts that there are sometimes circumstances when shuttle mediation (with clients in separate rooms) may be necessary.

## **Personal style**

Andrew is approachable, engaging and empathetic. His style is clear-sighted and practical.

He is highly skilled in creating the right atmosphere for openness during discussions. This also applies to financial disclosure.

Andrew is proactive in his conduct of mediations. He aims to keep the sessions moving at a purposeful pace and to build momentum towards agreement. He is authoritative, but with a small 'a'.

He speaks and writes in plain English, avoiding jargon and legalese at all times. He makes sure that any agreements reached are realistic and clearly drafted.

## **Training**

Andrew received his training in Family Mediation from Tony Whatling through Key Mediation Training & Consultancy. This mediation programme is recognized by the Family Mediation Council and the European Family Mediation Forum.

Andrew is also an accredited and practicing Civil & Commercial Mediator.

He is qualified to conduct Mediation Information and Assessment meetings (MIAMS).

## **Membership of Professional Organizations**

Andrew is an Approved Mediator with the College of Mediators ([www.collegeofmediators.co.uk/](http://www.collegeofmediators.co.uk/)).

He is a non-lawyer Affiliate Member of Resolution (<http://www.resolution.org.uk/>) and an individual member of the Civil Mediation Council.

## **Accountability to mediation standards and ethics**

Andrew is governed by the College of Mediators and mediations are conducted in accordance with the College of Mediators Code of Practice.

The College requires its members to keep up with current developments; to be supported during practice with a Professional Practice Consultant; to be properly insured and to have an adequate complaints procedure. The College also has its own complaints procedure for those few cases that cannot be resolved locally.

## **Other**

Andrew is registered as a data Controller with the Information Commissioner's office (ICO).

He has enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance.

His current certificate of Professional Liability Insurance is available upon request.