



# Collaborative Law

## What is Collaborative Law?

Under the collaborative law process each person appoints their own specially trained lawyer and you, your partner and your respective lawyers all meet together in a series of face to face meetings (these are known as “four way meetings”) to work things out without the involvement of the Court. You, your partner and your lawyers enter into a written agreement that is a commitment by all concerned to try to resolve whatever issues there may be, without making a formal application to the Court. This written agreement also prevents your lawyers from representing you in Court if the collaborative process breaks down. This means that both you, your partner and your lawyers are all totally committed to finding the best solution for your family **by agreement**, rather than going through Court proceedings.

## Why choose Collaborative Law?

Collaborative law is a very different way to sorting out the legal and practical issues which may arise during your relationship. The collaborative law process is not only a solution available upon a relationship breakdown, for example if you are intending to separate, divorce or dissolve your civil partnership, but can also be used to negotiate the terms of a pre-nuptial agreement prior to a marriage.

It is a service that will help you resolve your differences out of Court. Traditionally, when couples separate, they each take independent legal advice from a specialist family lawyer who will try to reach agreement as to how to get the best settlement for their client. If negotiations fail then it is left to the family courts to impose a decision upon the parties which can lead to heartache, delay and uncertainty.

Collaborative law can offer a better alternative as, rather than dealing with your matter through your Solicitors, you actively will work with them in a series of meetings to reach the best outcome for you and your family.

## What are the benefits of Collaborative Law?

- If successful, a collaborative approach will keep your separation, divorce or dissolution of civil partnership out of the Court
- Potentially the collaborative process is quicker because it is not driven by a timetable imposed by the Court. It can therefore be tailored to suit your family’s timetable and priorities
- It can be cheaper than a protracted battle through the Courts
- It is more amicable, and potentially more civilised than proceedings taken in Court. This is especially important if there are children involved as you will need to have an on-going relationship with your former partner in the future – after all, you will both no doubt wish to attend your children’s graduation, wedding and even the christening of any grandchildren!
- Each of you will have your own specially trained lawyer by your side every step of the way and all discussions and negotiations will take place in the four way meetings
- Other independent and impartial advisors who are familiar with the collaborative process can be brought into the four way meetings as required. You can choose, for example, to include a relationship counsellor, a child specialist, an independent financial advisor or accountant.
- Any issues will be discussed at the four way meetings and matters will therefore be decided face to face. This will replace conducting negotiations remotely by letter or telephone through lawyers.

## How does Collaborative Law work?

You and your former partner sit down together in the same meeting room, each with your own specially trained collaborative lawyer and work out your difficulties face to face.

Rather than allowing your lawyers to deal with matters on your behalf, you work with them to reach the best outcome for you and your family.

Sometimes only a couple of meetings may be needed or in other cases five or six. Meetings will follow an agenda set by you and your partner. You and your partner will also dictate how frequently the meetings occur.

Once an agreement has been reached your lawyers will draft the appropriate documentation to be approved by the Court where needed.

## Why choose Rowberry Morris Collaborative Lawyers?

Our collaborative law team are solicitors with many years experience in the practice of family law. We therefore have the necessary expertise to guide couples towards achieving a fair and realistic outcome. Due to our experience as family lawyers we bring a calm, personable and focused approach to our collaborative law practice. We have trained as collaborative lawyers by the organisation Resolution which is vitally regarded as promoting the highest standards in mediation practice. Resolution believes in a constructive, non-confrontational approach to family law matters and also campaigns for improvements to the Family Justice System.

## Our collaborative lawyers are:

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Appointments will be offered at one of our offices above. Additionally appointments can be offered at our Staines or Reading offices. We are happy to arrange our meetings at the location most convenient to you and it is usual that meetings take place at each of the Solicitors' offices involved, alternatively.

To find out more about collaborative law or to arrange an appointment please contact either of our collaborative lawyers by email or telephone as detailed above. Please also visit our website at [www.rowberrymorris.co.uk](http://www.rowberrymorris.co.uk) for details of other legal services offered by Rowberry Morris