

NEWS RELEASE

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Family arbitration scheme launched by the newly formed Institute of Family Law Arbitrators (IFLA)

A new scheme has today been launched to enable family disputes to be resolved by arbitration. This scheme has been set up by the newly formed Institute of Family Law Arbitrators (IFLA), a not for profit organisation, created by family lawyers' group Resolution, the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb) and the Family Law Bar Association, in association with the Centre for Child and Family Law Reform.

IFLA will govern and promote the scheme for family law arbitration in England and Wales. This will provide another means of resolving family law disputes relating to finance or property, outside of a formal court process.

IFLA has formed a panel of experienced family lawyers who have been trained as family arbitrators under the scheme. So far the bespoke training course, which has been put together and provided by CIArb, has attracted the retired judiciary and highly experienced specialist practitioners from across the country.

Arbitration under the scheme will be conducted under the family arbitration rules which have been developed by IFLA for the scheme. The parties are free to agree to appoint their own arbitrator or the IFLA can select one for the parties from its register of approved arbitrators. IFLA, which will be formally launched at an event to be held at Inner Temple in Central London on 26 March 2012, is chaired by former Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton. Lord Falconer said:

"Arbitration has a long history in certain areas. For example, many commercial and construction contracts provide for dispute resolution in this way. Arbitration in family law will be another tool in the box of methods of alternative dispute resolution. At a time when there is a need to find solutions in family disputes outside the courtroom, it is a logical next step to offer arbitration as another means of doing so."

The scheme covers: financial disputes arising from divorce; claims on inheritance from a child, spouse etc; financial claims made in England and Wales after a divorce abroad; claims for child maintenance between unmarried parents; disputes about ownership of a property between cohabiting couples and civil partnership financial claims. Disputes will be resolved exclusively by applying the laws of this country, in the same way as the Family Courts.

It should enable parties to resolve financial disputes more quickly, cheaply and in a more flexible and less formal setting than a court room. It is also expected to save court resources and reduce pressure on the already stretched family courts.

Parties and their advisers will be able to find further details of the scheme and how to start a family arbitration at www.ifla.org.uk

-ENDS-

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Notes to Editors

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb)

CIArb is the world's leading professional membership body for arbitration and alternative dispute resolution. A not-for-profit organisation, CIArb promotes the use of alternative dispute resolution internationally through a membership of 12,000 professionally qualified members in more than 110 countries. In addition to providing education and training for arbitrators, mediators and adjudicators, CIArb acts as an international resource centre for practitioners, policy makers, academics and those in business concerned with the cost-effective and early settlement of disputes.

www.ciarb.org

Resolution

Resolution, which was formerly known as the Solicitors Family Law Association (SFLA), is an organisation of over 6,000 lawyers who believe in a constructive, non-confrontational approach to family law matters. Resolution supports the development of family lawyers through its national and regional training programmes, through publications and good practice guides and through its accreditation scheme. Resolution also trains and accredits mediators and is the only body providing training and support for collaborative lawyers in England and Wales. www.resolution.org.uk

The Family Law Bar Association (FLBA)

FLBA is the specialist bar association which represents barristers who practise in all areas of family law. It has a membership of 2250. The FLBA is consulted by government on all areas of family law and policy. The FLBA has with the other partners been involved in the creation of a family law arbitration scheme since inception. www.flba.co.uk