**Family Mediation Complaints Procedure**

Aberystwyth Family Mediation complies with the Family Mediation Council’s Codes of Practice and Standards Framework.

Our aim is to offer our clients the highest standard of professional service in accordance with the Codes of Practice and Standards Framework of the Family Mediation Council. However, in the event of your being unhappy with the service you have received, we do hope that you will raise your concerns at the earliest possible time and that we will be able to resolve them to your satisfaction.

If you are a client, a former client or a qualifying third party (see below) you may make a complaint that relates to breaches of the FMC’s Codes of Practice or Standards Framework that occurred within the last three months. For avoidance of doubt, where complaints relate to the way a mediation was conducted as a whole, the date the three months runs from is the last mediation session. Complaints that appear to be vexatious or of a purely personal nature do not have to be investigated (see below).

In the event of your feeling it necessary to make a formal complaint, we ask you to put your concerns in writing and send them to us at info@aberystwythfamilymediation.co.uk. On receipt we will deal with your complaint as follows and in accordance with the Family Mediation Council’s Codes of Practice:

We will respond by acknowledging the Complaint within 10 working days of receipt, and will try to resolve it informally.

Where this does not prove possible we will within 30 working days of receipt, investigate and respond to your complaint in writing.

Where the Complaint is resolved at this stage, the Complaint will be closed.

Your Complaint may be resolved in mediation where both you and the mediator wish this to proceed.

On occasions further time may be required, in which case you will be notified in writing.

If your Complaint is not resolved in the timescale above, we will advise you in writing that the Complaint will, within 5 working days, become formal and that, when it does, we cannot continue with any Mediation (if it is still ongoing) and the Other Party to the mediation will be informed that there has been a Complaint although the Other Party will not be entitled to know any details of the Complaint.

You may then refer a complaint which constitutes a breach of the Codes of Practice or Standards Framework to the Family Mediation Standards Board at:

The Family Mediation Council – 2 Old College Court, 29 Priory Street, Ware SG12 0DE

info@familymediationcouncil.org.uk

**Qualifying third parties**

The following qualify as third parties who can make a complaint against a mediator:

- A prospective client who has been directly affected by a mediator’s professional behaviour,

- A person who has been invited to participate in a mediation process, for example another

professional who attends a mediation.

For the avoidance of doubt, it is common for a mediator to contact a potential mediation participant

after seeing the other potential mediation participant. Complaints about a mediator making contact

with a potential participant do not therefore need to be investigated by mediators and will not be

accepted by the FMSB.

Likewise, mediators may sign court forms to say one person has attended a Mediation Information

and Assessment Meeting (MIAM) without notifying a potential second mediation participant or

inviting them to attend MIAM themselves. Complaints about a mediator not making contact with a

potential participant do not therefore need to be investigated by mediators and will not be

accepted by the FMSB.

Please note that neither mediators nor the FMSB will be able to disclose any information to you

that is confidential between the mediator and the mediation participant(s). It is therefore normal

that as a third party, you will only receive a limited amount of information in response to your

complaint, even in circumstances where it is considered by the FMSB.

**Complaints that appear to be vexatious or of a purely personal nature**

Complaints that appear to be vexatious or of a purely personal nature do not have to be

investigated by mediators.

Complaints can be considered vexatious when:

- the purpose appears to be to intimidate, disturb, disrupt and/or unduly or unfairly pressurise

the mediator or the FMSB;

- they are persistent/repetitive, and repeating the same or substantially similar complaints

which have already been investigated;

- they are clearly unfounded and unsupported by evidence;

- they are irrelevant and relate to matters other than mediation;

- abusive or offensive language is used.

Complaints can be considered of a purely personal nature if they are discriminatory or focus on

the personal attributes or circumstances of a mediator rather than their actions as a mediator.