

A background image showing a family law consultation. A man in a suit and glasses is seated at a desk, looking at a computer monitor. Two women are seated across from him, looking at the monitor. The monitor displays the text "St. Mary's FAMILY LAW SPECIALISTS". The entire image is overlaid with a dark blue tint. There are decorative vertical lines in the top right and bottom left corners.

# St.Mary's

# Private FDR

A guide to the Private FDR services we offer

[stmarysfamily.co.uk](http://stmarysfamily.co.uk)

# What is a Private FDR?

A Private FDR involves the use of an independent third-party evaluator, adopting the role of “judge” to assist the parties in reaching an agreement in their financial remedies case. This takes place outside the court forum at a time and location convenient to the parties. The evaluator will read all the papers submitted by the parties in advance of the hearing and on the day hear submissions from each parties' legal representatives before giving their view as to the likely outcome of the case.

A Private FDR is an effective means to negotiate a settlement and thus avoid the cost and delay of a contested court hearing.

## Why choose a Private FDR?

- 01 A whole day is allocated to assist the parties.
- 02 It can take place at a day, time, and location convenient to the parties.
- 03 The process is more informal and less intimidating than going to Court.
- 04 The parties can choose their evaluator, who will be someone with specialist financial remedies expertise.
- 05 The evaluator will have had time to fully prepare for the hearing and will only be dealing with that case on the day.
- 06 A quicker resolution can be reached with respect to parties' finances as delays in the Court process can be avoided, which in turn can be far more cost effective.
- 07 The Farquhar Report stated that the success rate for negotiating settlement court-based FDR is less than 50%, our Private FDR service has a success rate of just about 80%.
- 08 A Private FDR can take place prior to Court proceedings being issued or at any stage of the proceedings.
- 09 The settlement agreed at a Private FDR will be submitted to the Court as an order and formally approved.

# When to use a Private FDR

- There are no strict rules on when a Private FDR can be used.
- There is scope to use a Private FDR before proceedings have been issued as a means of resolving matters before costs start to build up.
- It can be as part of ongoing court proceedings and can replace the normal court-based FDR hearing.
- It is particularly useful where the court has vacated an FDR hearing at short notice and the parties are facing having to pay counsel's brief fee for a hearing that isn't taking place.
- There may also be other wasted costs associated with vacated hearings as valuations may need updating ahead of an adjourned date which could be some months away.
- In such circumstances a Private FDR can normally often be arranged at short notice, potentially on the same day as the adjourned court hearing.
- This can potentially save clients large sums which would otherwise be wasted.

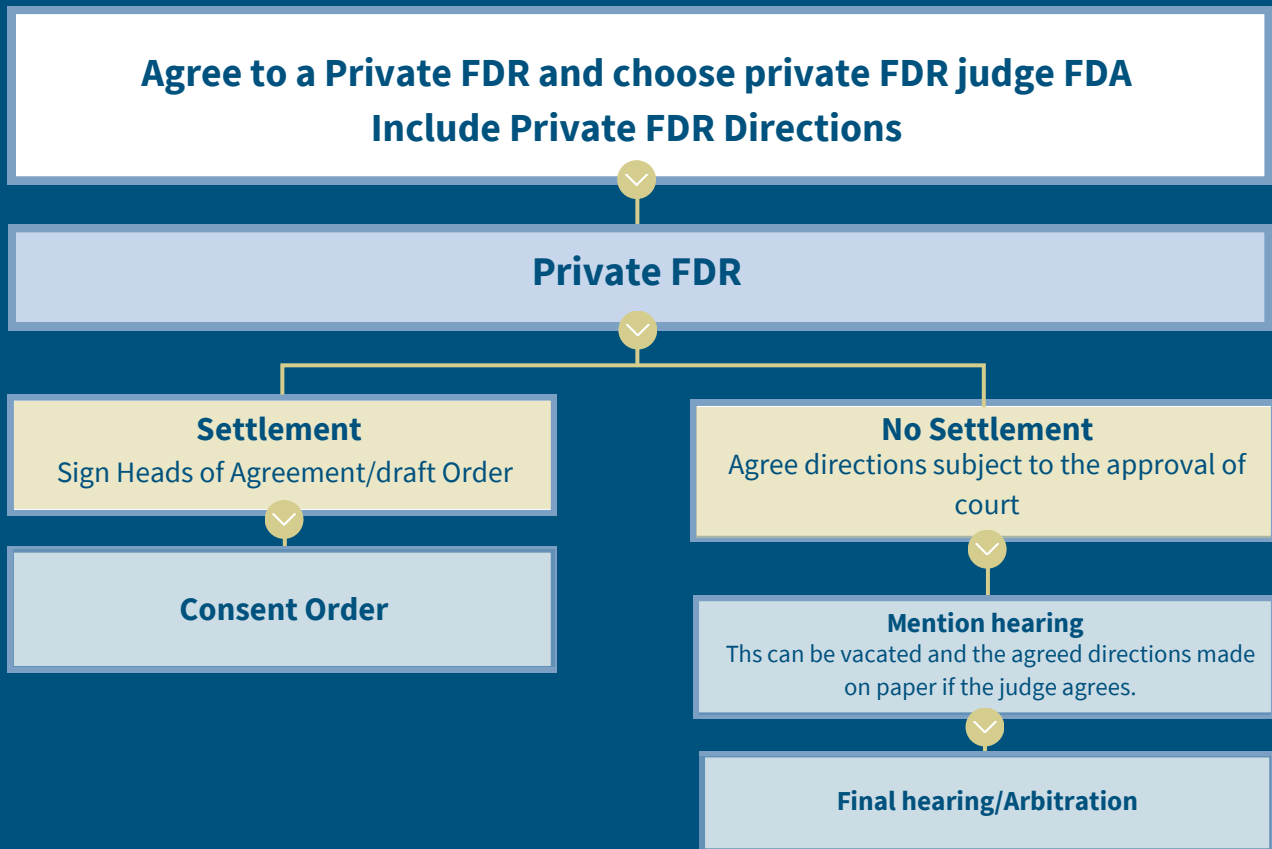
**“At present, demand on court resources has led to instances of over-listing of FDRs. A high settlement success rate is not likely to be achieved if the district judge's list for the day has more than five FDRs in it.”**

**Sir James Munby, Former President of the Family Division**

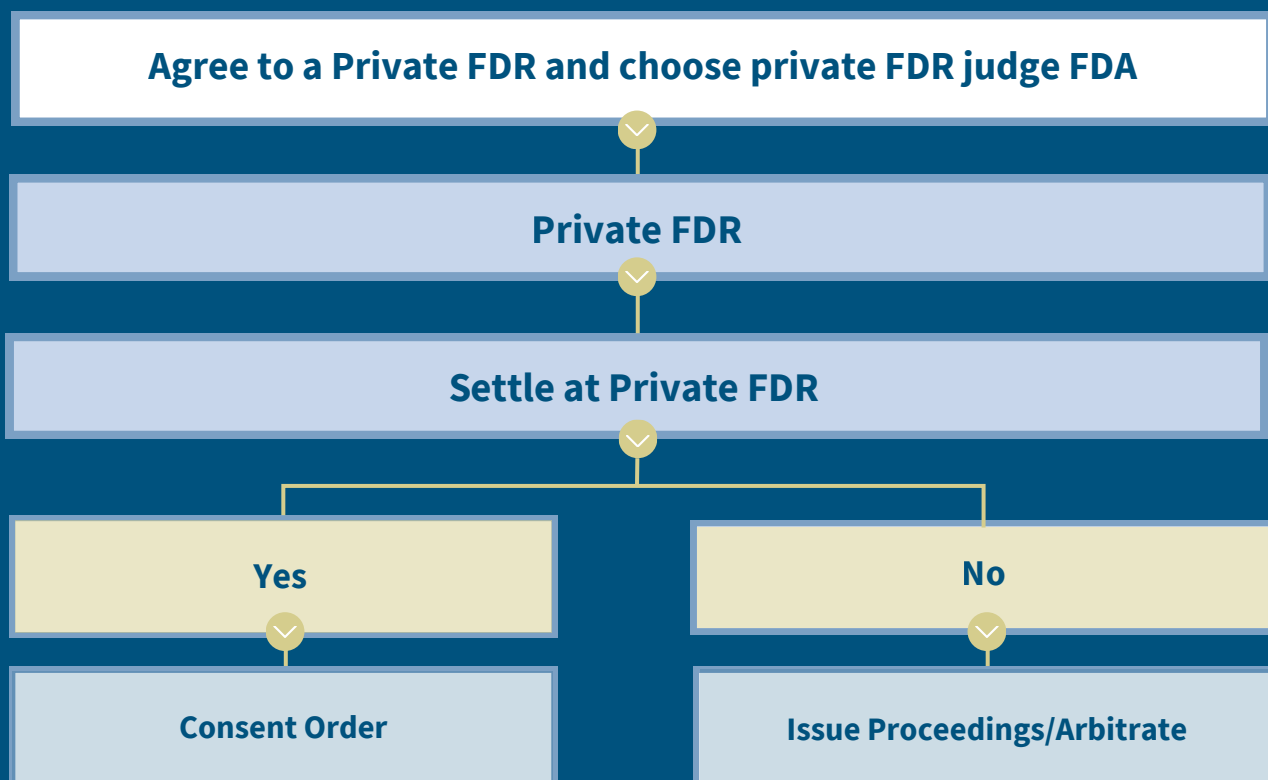
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# What is the process?

## Financial Remedy proceedings



## No proceedings



# What are the costs?

The cost of a Private FDR evaluator normally ranges from £1,500 to £6,500 (plus VAT were applicable. For exceptionally complex cases we may need to agree a fee outside this scale. If you have a case with very few assets where the parties are working to a tighter budget, we may be able to accommodate a lower fee than the normal scale.

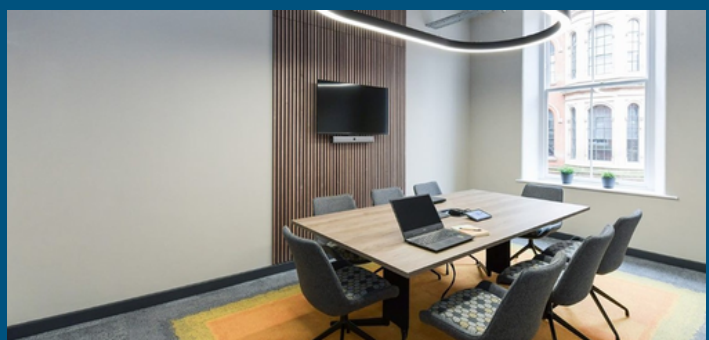
The fee covers the evaluators attendance for the entire day at the Private FDR hearing. When it is held at our office, there is no limit to the time the parties can stay to negotiate and attempt to resolve matters.

Where the Private FDR is held at our offices the fee also includes room hire, refreshments, and lunch.

Each individual evaluator has their costs set out on their profile on our website. Click the relevant links in the Private FDR Evaluators section of this brochure for more details.

We have a modern, purpose-built office in Nottingham City Centre which the facilities to host a Private FDR in person, remotely or on a hybrid basis.

Each party has their own conference room, a hearing room, and a room for discussions between the advocates. Our clerks will be on hand to assist with any technical arrangements, and lunch and refreshments are provided throughout the day.



Don't take our word for it, hear from the barristers and solicitors who have used our Private FDR service:

**I was not at all sure that the parties would be able to settle. That they did so was largely due to the evaluator's thoughtful and measured indication.**

**The FDR was a very tricky one, and I'm sure that the comfortable surroundings helped both clients and us to negotiate.**

**Good amount of space between rooms so no concerns about being overheard.**

**I was very pleased with the set up at St Mary's. Everyone we dealt with was friendly and helpful, the rooms were well-appointed and everyone on my team enjoyed their lunch.**

**Really nice quiet and calm space to work in lovely to have a window in each room, bizarrely it really makes a difference to energy levels**

**Great IT infrastructure, lovely rooms and general atmosphere, very helpful staff, great Wi-Fi.**

# Private FDR Evaluators



## His Honour Mark Rogers

HH Mark Rogers was called to the Bar in 1980 and was previously a member of Chambers and sat as a Deputy District Judge and Recorder before he was appointed as a District Judge in 2007.

He was appointed as a Circuit Judge in 2009 and a Deputy High Court Judge in 2011. He was the Designated Family Judge for Lincolnshire from 2014 to 2019 and for Nottinghamshire from 2017 until his retirement in June 2021. He was also the lead Financial Remedies Judge for the East Midlands during that time.

[More details](#)



## Duncan Brooks KC

Duncan specialises in financial provision following separation. He represents high and ultra-high net worth individuals and is used to dealing with complexities arising from trusts, business accounts, taxation and international disputes. He regularly deals with cases involving the music, art, finance, private equity, legal, farming and business industries. He is often instructed where there are knotty points of law.

Duncan has been a Family Law Arbitrator since 2013 and has concluded over 35 arbitrations as arbitrator. He has conducted more than 100 Private FDRs as the evaluator.

Duncan is a door tenant at St. Mary's and his main practice is at QEB in London.

[More details](#)



## Nick Davies

Nick was called to the Bar in 2006 and was appointed as a Deputy District Judge in 2015. He practiced as a financial remedy barrister at a set in Cambridge until his retirement in 2022. He now sits as a Deputy District Judge and as a Private FDR Evaluator.

Prior to joining the Bar Nick qualified as an accountant and used the experience gained here in his practice at the Bar which focussed on cases involving complex business arrangements, trusts, farms, pensions and overseas assets.

[More details](#)





## Matthew O'Grady

Matthew's expertise is in division of married and unmarried couples' property after separation. He is a barrister in England and Australia (Victorian Bar) and advises clients on their international family and sports law issues across these jurisdictions.

Matthew can be instructed to support married and unmarried parties in resolving their financial disputes as a neutral evaluator, providing private and without prejudice assistance in separation disputes.

[More details](#)



## Stephen Williams

Stephen has extensive experience in Financial Remedies cases and is known and respected for his detailed knowledge of the law and the relevant facts.

Stephen sits in Financial Remedies as a Deputy District Judge and was appointed as a Recorder in May 2023; he draws on this experience to assist when sitting as a Private FDR evaluator.

[More details](#)



## Joshua Hazelwood

Joshua has significant experience in Financial Remedy proceedings. Joshua has experience in cases involving disposition of assets, freezing injunctions, third party intervenors and foreign property.

[More details](#)



## Charlie Fikry

Charlie has wide experience of financial remedy applications and has worked with clients with asset values ranging from modest amounts into the billions. He has particular expertise in cases involving complex asset structures including private businesses, family trusts and offshore assets and is experienced in cases upholding or attacking prenuptial agreements.

[More details](#)





## Paul Hollow

Paul was a barrister on the South Eastern Circuit for over 30 years specialising primarily in financial remedy cases and now sits part time as a Deputy District Judge.

During his time in private practice Paul served two terms as Head of Fenners Chambers and he was also a trustee of Cambridge Family Mediation.



## Fiona Apthorpe

Fiona is a partner at Geldards where she heads up the family team. She is an experienced family law solicitor, family mediator, family arbitrator, collaborative family lawyer and sits as a Deputy District Judge.

Fiona is known and respected for her down to earth, friendly and pragmatic approach to all aspects of her work.

geldards

## For more information about our Private FDR service:

**Private FDR**

