

BERWINS

21 September 2009

### **HARROGATE LAWYER WELCOMES GOVERNMENT MOVES ON DIVORCE MEDIATION**

Moves by the Government to boost the take-up of mediation by divorcing couples has been given a warm welcome by Stephen Root, head of the family law unit at Harrogate-based solicitors Berwins.

“In fact, many family lawyers in Harrogate are already actively promoting another alternative to a full court hearing and that’s Collaborative Law,” said Mr Root. “This differs from mediation in that both the parties have their solicitors to hand but, right at the outset, all parties sign a binding agreement not to go to court.”

His comments come in the wake of Justice Minister Bridget Prentice confirmed that the Government is committed to the promotion of family mediation, as in many cases mediation can offer considerable advantages over going to court, particularly in cases involving children.

Mr Root, who was in the vanguard of introducing Collaborative Law to Harrogate, said many lawyers agreed with the Minister as court imposed solutions often do not suit either party and can be very expensive to obtain.

“In Collaborative Law, the parties commit themselves to settle their differences in a series of round table meetings. Face to face discussions are a much better way of trying to resolve differences and Collaborative Law leads to a better understanding of the other parties’ position. This makes it easier to find a solution that suits everybody and creates better relationships for the future.”

He added: “It is now a real option in Harrogate, with so many firms having collaboratively trained lawyers, and fits in with the Government’s wish for people to look at alternative methods of resolving their disputes, rather than immediately running to the courts. The uncertainties of litigation are best avoided wherever possible.” ENDS

**For further information please contact Appeal PR on 01423 569 999**