



CEDR Accreditation: 2019

CEDR Panel 2022

Languages: English

Location: United Kingdom

“Julia has a real talent for resolving difficult, complex and emotional disputes. I am endlessly impressed with her ability to quickly grasp the issues and go above and beyond to guide the parties to a successful resolution. She is highly creative in finding win:win solutions and is refreshingly committed to resolving disputes as constructively as possible”

Client Feedback

Julia Burns

Overview

Julia Burns is a mediator and conflict coach. She specialises in helping families to resolve inheritance disputes. Julia is known for having a high degree of empathy and emotional intelligence. She is comfortable and sensitive when working with emotional situations and, in addition to mediation, often works with families or individuals as a conflict coach. Having been a lawyer specialising in the field of contentious trusts and probate since 2007, Julia is highly regarded as a mediator in this area of work and has a national reputation. She prides herself on the careful and thoughtful preparation she does for every mediation, dedicating significant pre-mediation contact time to both lawyers and clients. Julia passionately believes that the most important thing for a client is to be given a space to be truly heard by the mediator before the mediation day itself starts.

Julia regularly handles multi-party family disputes, recommending co-mediation for 4 parties or more. As well as face to face mediation, Julia enjoys mediating online, which is particularly suitable for emotional family disputes where the parties feel anxious about physically being in the same building. Julia also has experience of “project mediation” for families, which involves working with a family on a longer-term basis through online and face to face meetings.

Professional Background

Julia qualified as a solicitor in 2005. Before setting up Dove in the Room in 2019, she worked as a contentious trust and probate solicitor for 12 years, including 6 years with a national firm. Julia was the first solicitor in the country to become a CEDR certified private client mediator and is the only solicitor/mediator with this specialist CEDR qualification. Julia is one of the small number of mediators ranked in the UK wide Chambers High Net Worth Trusts Mediators Spotlight Table and is also ranked in Legal 500. She is a member of the Association of Contentious Trusts and Probate Specialists (ACTAPS) and is an active member of the Contentious Trusts Association (ConTrA). She regularly speaks at contentious trust and probate conferences on the topic of mediation and dispute resolution.

Expertise

Mediation of All Areas of Private Wealth Disputes Including:

- Contested probate including will validity on the grounds of testamentary capacity, lack of knowledge and approval, undue influence, lack of due execution and fraudulent calumny
- Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 claims
- Contentious Court of Protection including Statutory Wills and Lasting Power of Attorney disputes
- Constructive trust and proprietary estoppel
- Trust disputes
- Farming and agricultural disputes
- TLATA claims, including those arising after relationship breakdown
- Missing will disputes

Conflict Coaching for private individuals and families:

- 1-2-1 coaching for individuals experiencing family conflict and/or involved in litigation
- Family conflict coaching (without lawyers) over several months



Personal Style

Julia is at ease when working with the strong emotions which are regularly present in family inheritance disputes. She has developed a mediation model that enables clients to be given a space to be truly heard before the mediation day itself starts. She dedicates 90 minutes to a pre-mediation call with each party before the mediation, including half an hour with the lawyer and up to an hour with the client. The pre-mediation call greatly enhances the mediation experience for the clients and helps them calm their nerves before the day. It also saves hours on the day and tends to lead to shorter and less painful mediations. It is an opportunity to hear from the client about what is important to them about the dispute. A few open questions tend to get to the heart of the matter immediately. Julia believes that giving a client the space to speak their truth from their core before the mediation day, without any attempt to persuade or defensive posturing is crucial.

Parties who come to mediation, especially to resolve an inheritance dispute, are not just coming to resolve the financial aspects of the matter. They are often seeking something more, whether it be acknowledgment, closure, peace, or something else. Inheritance disputes always involve some form of loss, whether it be the loss of a loved one, a relationship or a fundamental belief. Julia believes that when done well, mediation plays a part in a client's healing journey.

Julia likes to start her mediations as close to 9am as possible. Having dedicated so much time pre-mediation, clients often land on the mediation day ready and willing to look forwards to resolve the situation. Negotiations often start by mid-morning and her record settlement time is 11:30am.

When a firm hand is required, Julia takes the approach of an "empathetic provocateur". She is not a believer in dwelling too much on the law and all the weaknesses of a client's case. Mediation is not about who is right and who is wrong. Julia believes it is possible to move a client towards settlement without assertively telling them all the reasons why they may lose.

Feedback

- *"Julia is a calm presence and an effective and efficient mediator gaining the parties trust easily and quickly. She is like a captain steering the ship safely and skilfully through stormy seas."*
- *"My most painless mediation experience to date has been with Julia as the mediator. The parties reached an agreement in principle extraordinarily quickly, after just a few hours. As Julia had spoken with the parties ahead of the mediation, she understood exactly what my client's situation was and what the money in the estate meant to her. It also meant that my client felt that she had been heard and understood."*
- *"The matter was highly sensitive and her skill in dealing with the parties helped us bring the matter to a resolution that had previously been beyond the emotional capacity of those*

involved. Julia's own experience in trust and probate matters added extra strength to her role"

- *"We cannot thank you enough for your kindness and for having listened to us so attentively and with such sensitivity. You are wonderful, both as a professional and as a human being."*
- *"You achieved something that I honestly never thought possible and I am glad to tell you that your professionalism and caring attitude to both parties has started us on the road to healing our relationships and that so much more than any monetary value is priceless. I cannot thank you enough."*
- *"Julia's caring approach and bed side manner, allowed the parties to settle with relative ease and I look forward to instructing her again shortly."*
- *"Thank you SO MUCH for everything you did yesterday. That was an incredibly challenging day, fraught with emotion on both sides, and you showed such tenacity, steering both parties to settlement with such care and sensitivity. You were amazing and we are incredibly grateful to you."*
- *"Julia has first class communication skills. She was forceful when she needed to be, in what was a very difficult and upsetting dispute that required a tactful yet very firm hand."*
- *"Julia is an excellent mediator who deals with extremely emotional disputes sensitively but firmly. Her intimate action has been instrumental in settling two cases which had both appeared to be beyond settlement."*
- *"Julia was an effective mediator that put my clients at ease from the minute she walked through the door. Our matter was a highly sensitive dispute between family members and Julia managed the variety of personalities effectively and allowed everyone to feel like they had been heard and therefore feel comfortable in settling the dispute."*
- *"A very steady pair of hands. Julia was great at managing my clients' expectations for the mediation and for putting them in the right mindset to reach a resolution. Julia has a natural ability to get to the underlying issues in the dispute which ultimately meant the mediation resolved the 2-year dispute."*