

# Arbitration for a fixed fee, but what do you get?

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**CATEGORY:**  
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The FLBA and Resolution are supporting an introductory offer by which volunteer accredited Panel Arbitrators will take on appropriate cases for a maximum fee of £1500 (plus disbursements) for arbitrations commenced in October. I can think of a number of Panel Arbitrators whose time and expertise is incredibly good value at the maximum fixed fee. Arbitration has historically been the pursuit of commercial lawyers and although the Family Law Arbitration Scheme has received amazing publicity since it was launched by the Institute of Family Law Arbitrators in February this year, I guess that whilst the majority of family lawyers may now have heard of Arbitration, they may not yet know what's involved. I have been involved in the setting up the IFLA Scheme and now co-run the training and assessment for the newly qualifying Family Arbitrators. I am hugely excited about the potential for Family Arbitration and am keen to spread the word about the range of benefits and the ease with which the arbitration procedure fits with what Family lawyers already know. Together with Victoria Nottage, one of our professional support lawyers in the Family team at Withers, I have just finalised a Practice Note for the Arbitration arm of Practical Law Company which sets out all the basic information about Arbitration from how to initiate the process through to enforcing a decision. The practice note aims to introduce the detail of Family Law Arbitration to all lawyers, and Family Lawyers in particular will notice a certain symmetry with the Court system. Essentially as well as providing for considerable scope to tailor the procedure to the parties, the Scheme Rules also provide a route which mirrors the court's traditional route, a procedure all family lawyers will be very familiar with and should be pretty happy working within. For family law solicitors, there's more scope to be involved in the management of the case and to build in a timeframe that is not subject to the delays and resourcing issues prevalent in the Courts. In addition to this practice note, I am also giving a number of seminars. The first is tonight, when I will be speaking to the London Resolution Group, where I will cover the basics of Arbitration and again generate discussion about the benefits that this new resolution procedure offers our clients. I believe Arbitration has much to commend it, not only can the procedure be tailored to fit the case but in guaranteeing that one adjudicator, chosen by the parties for their particular expertise or style, will remain with the case until conclusion, it also offers a continuity which is lacking in the court system. There's already been some success stories and I look forward to hearing about many more.