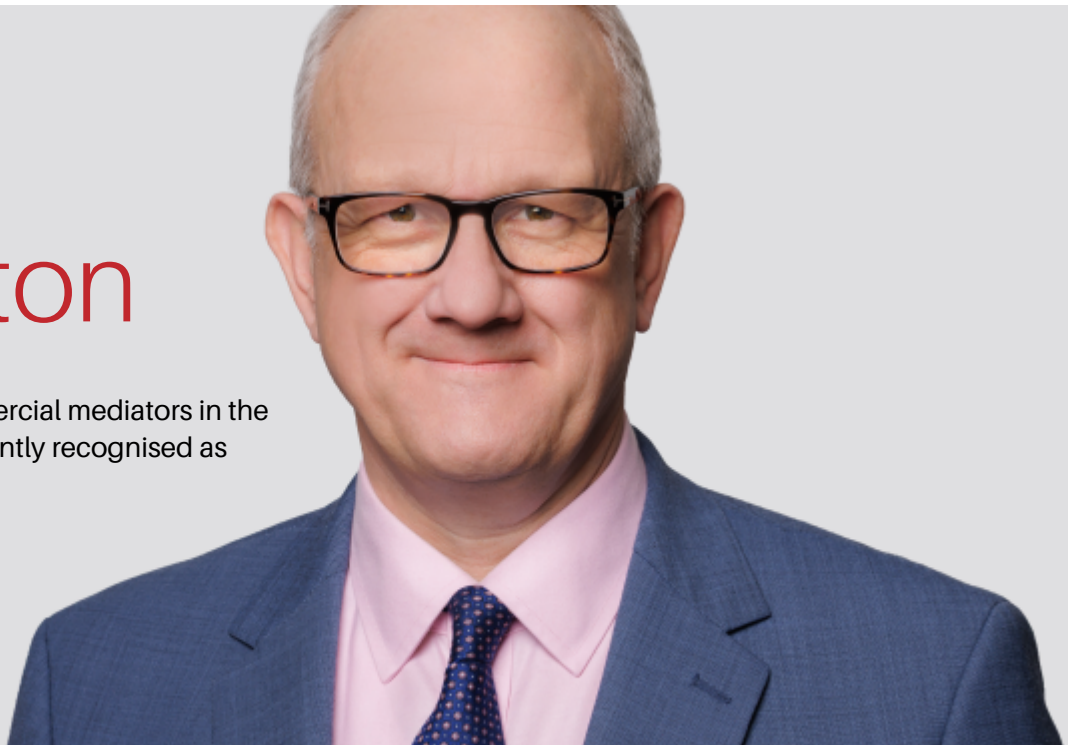
IPOS Mediation

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Chris Fitton

Chris is one of the top 50 commercial mediators in the UK today and has been consistently recognised as such by the legal directories.



Background

Chris is one of the top 50 commercial mediators in the UK today and has been consistently recognised as such by the legal directories. Chris spent 20 years as a busy commercial disputes partner with national / international firms. He now mediates full time, mostly with large corporates, insurance companies, banks and pension providers. He has mediated 150 mediations in the last five years, 30 of which were over £1m.

In 2018 Chris was included in the Legal 500 Hall of Fame for excellence as a mediator.

Chris was, until 2014, still active in private practice as a solicitor, where he had day-to-day dealings with mediators from the perspective of a client. This experience means that he is very aware of what solicitors and their clients want from the mediator, and actively responds to that.

Mediation Style and Approach

Chris is driven by a single objective – to 'unlock' the dispute. He does this by identifying and asking those questions which improve a party's understanding of the case. That means the party exploring the case not just from their own viewpoint, but also from the other side's. Helping people see things differently enlarges the space in which a deal can be done: Chris's style is to create that space, and then proactively help the parties do the deal.

Chris lives by the principle of mediator impartiality. However he knows that the input of a seasoned and confident legal practitioner can be what is needed in many cases. Although his style is not pushy or partisan, he will not dodge the difficult questions, nor allow the parties to.

Character self-assessment: Open and positive, curious and thoughtful, empathetic but independently-minded. Professional and proactive. Genuine, patient, tenacious.

Personality: Energetic, but calm in a crisis. An intuitive peacemaker. Principled but pragmatic. Robust in holding others to account when necessary. Humour has a role, from a position of balance and perspective.

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Practice Areas

Chris's mediation practice takes in an unusually wide range of disputes, but he has a particularly strong reputation in these areas:

Professional negligence

Financial services, banking and pensions

Insolvency

Insurance disputes, including coverage

Business disputes, shareholder and partnerships

private client

He also mediates disputes in the following areas:

Commercial contracts

Construction

Employment

Pensions & life assurance

Probate & inheritance

Shareholder disputes

Public sector matters (public authorities, charities, educational establishments)

A peculiar feature of Chris's career has been its pluralism/lack of one-sidedness. So for example with insurance work, he has acted for claimants bringing claims as well as insurers defending them. And in financial services, he has acted for the individuals bringing mis-selling claims; IFAs facing claims; PI insurers paying claims (or not); the broker caught in the middle; the reinsurer at the end.

Chris has a close knowledge of the Civil Procedure Rules. He has experience in the Court of Appeal and the House of Lords, and of conducting matters before FOS and the Pensions Ombudsman.

Legal Directories

The most recent editions of the legal directories say the following about Chris:

Chambers and Partners, 2025: (Band 1)

Christopher Fitton of IPOS Mediation maintains an excellent mediation practice centred on the resolution of professional indemnity, property and financial services-related cases. He is experienced in mediations concerning public sector bodies. "He had a great bedside manner and won the trust of both sides. He was very fair."

Chambers and Partners, 2024: (Band 1)

Christopher Fitton of IPOS Mediation maintains an excellent mediation practice centred on the resolution of professional indemnity, pensions and financial services-related cases. He is experienced in mediations concerning public sector bodies. "He is very tenacious. He doesn't give up, which is what you need in mediations. He is a go-to person for me." "Charming, patient and persuasive. His calmness in complex mediations allows settlements to be reached even when they're not anticipated. He's excellent." "Christopher has a very good way of breaking down

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complex legal issues when it comes to litigants in person."

Chambers and Partners, 2023: (Band 1)

Christopher Fitton of IPOS Mediation maintains an excellent mediation practice centred on the resolution of professional indemnity, pensions and financial services-related cases. He is experienced in mediations concerning public sector bodies. "He approached the matter in a really inventive way and kept things going in the right direction." "He's patient and tenacious in reaching a settlement." "Chris was very good, patient, calm and very good at getting the client on side. He was good at the stress testing in mediation and got the client to think about the issues."

Chambers and Partners, 2022:

Chris Fitton of IPOS Mediation maintains an excellent mediation practice centred on the resolution of professional indemnity, pensions and financial services-related cases. He is experienced in mediations concerning public sector bodies." He won the collective trust of the parties through taking an even-handed approach while also quickly sizing up the key risk areas to try and unlock things." "He is calm, impartial and quickly cuts through the information to identify the most important issues to each party."

Chambers and Partners, 2021:

Chris Fitton of IPOS Mediation maintains a excellent mediation practice centred on the resolution of professional indemnity, pensions and financial services-related cases. He is experienced in mediations concerning public sector bodies." He understands the wider context of the case, which enables him to build a rapport with clients."

Chambers and Partners, 2020:

Chris Fitton has built a reputation as an “excellent mediator” who impresses with his ability to remain “calm and assured throughout the process” and be “effective in persuading both sides to look at matters differently.”

Chambers and Partners, 2019:

Chris Fitton is a highly regarded mediator who receives instructions from leading law firms, insurers and corporate entities. Interviewees say: “He did an excellent job of getting parties to see the challenges they faced, while being empathetic and maintaining a friendly yet professional and firm approach.”

Chambers and Partners, 2018:

Christopher Fitton is an experienced mediator who receives regular instructions from law firms and insurers to deal with high-value claims. He ably deals with a wide range of disputes, including those involving commercial contracts, financial services, professional negligence and insurance.

Chambers and Partners, 2017:

Singled out by market sources for his skill at “breaking through all the detail and getting to the heart of the matter quickly.”

“very patient and pragmatic”

Chambers and Partners, 2015:

"...very good way of dealing with people"

Chambers and Partners, 2013:

“stands out for financial services disputes...intellectual and constructive”

Chambers and Partners, 2012:

"highly thorough...impressive...gains the trust of clients”

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Chambers and Partners, 2011:

"Informal and amiable style...friendly yet robust"

Chambers and Partners, 2009:

"Extremely talented and reliable"

Chambers and Partners, 2008:

"Keeps things moving at a cracking pace...Good humour and great instincts"

Legal 500 2026, Band 1:

Chris Fitton 'works very hard to try to close a deal, which is appreciated. Chris is all over the detail, quickly gets into testing the parties and their respective cases, and speedily builds a rapport with clients'. Fitton's practice is predominantly UK-based, but he also mediates cases with international aspects, including four recent international arbitration disputes. Conducting 55 high-value cases during 2024, Fitton is repeatedly mandated by professional indemnity and property insurers (via panel solicitors) to mediate insurance disputes. He also handles multi-party construction mediations, as well as professional indemnity cases involving solicitors and construction professionals. Other notable areas are shareholder conflicts, and banking and insolvency recovery matters. Recent highlights include an approximately £9m misrepresentation and warranty claim, in relation to the purchase of an IT agency.

Legal 500 2025, Band 1:

Chris Fitton at IPOS Mediation is 'always well prepared and shows clear insight into each party's position, getting to the nub of the dispute and enabling parties to resolve their differences. He is also particularly determined and robust in his efforts to achieve settlements'. In 2023, Fitton mediated over 60 high-value cases in relation to professional indemnity claims involving solicitors, accountants, and construction professionals. He also recently mediated property-related conflicts, as well as cases that were brought against shareholders and directors by liquidators and banks. Highlights include a recovery claim of approximately $30m, commenced by the liquidators of 15 overseas companies that were allegedly involved in laundering the proceeds of a $1bn banking fraud.

Legal 500 2024, Band 1:

Chris Fitton's practice predominantly covers commercial, insurance and banking disputes; and he is 'open and friendly and puts clients at ease, whilst also having a firm grasp of the facts and legal aspects of the dispute'. Although he mostly mediates UK-based claims, Fitton handled, in a recent 12-month period, over a dozen matters involving overseas attendees. Recent workloads include a dispute between competing factions of a deceased's family concerning the distribution of a London property business; and a claim by the owners of a Scottish shopping centre against the construction company that built and maintained it.

Legal 500 2023, Band 1:

Chris Fitton 'does an excellent job, at times in the face of obstructive and unprepared parties, and is proactive and pragmatic. He really drives mediations forward, and is not afraid to test and challenge all parties' positions'. In 2021, Fitton mediated approximately 50 high-value cases, including several cases with three or more parties (and one involving over 100 claimants). A notable feature of his practice is his ability to mediate cases remotely, with over 75 mediations concluded via video link to date; and recent highlights include a claim against accountants for a failed tax avoidance scheme, and a financial services mis-selling class action against a bank.

Legal 500 2022, Band 1:

Chris Fitton is 'a good communicator for opening up the discussions, probing at the issues, and finding alternative paths for unblocking areas of dispute'. He mediated approximately £70m-worth of disputes in 2020, predominantly focusing on commercial and insurance matters; and his Scottish practice has also continued to grow. The practice areas where Fitton has recently been most active are professional indemnity claims against solicitors, accountants and construction professionals; public sector infrastructure projects; and disputes between shareholders, and claims against shareholders/directors by liquidators and banks.

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Legal 500 2021:

Chris Fitton is 'always very well prepared and has a very good manner, as he facilitates the discussion'. Fitton mediated over £50m of disputes in 2019, focusing on commercial and insurance disputes. Highlights include a dispute between two food processing companies as to the relative responsibility for alleged contamination of foodstuffs destined for livestock use; and a claim by a government agency against a contractor and design consultants, who were instructed to build a marine research centre in Scotland.

Legal 500 2020:

In Place of Strife's Chris Fitton facilitated 42 high-value commercial and insurance mediations in 2018; his Scottish practice also continued to develop during the year. Fitton's most active practice areas have been professional indemnity (particularly construction), financial services (including pensions) and public sector matters.

Who's Who Legal, 2022:

Chris Fitton mediates on large commercial disputes for a wide-ranging clientele and is widely recognised as "one of the very best mediators in the Midlands"

Legal 500 2019:

With 'a user-friendly and commercial style that is well received', In Place of Strife's Chris Fitton is 'a reliable mediator whose genuine and personable approach during mediation is very useful for bridging the gap between parties'.

Legal 500 2019:

With 'a user-friendly and commercial style that is well received', Chris Fitton is 'a reliable mediator whose genuine and personable approach during mediation is very useful for bridging the gap between parties'.

Chris has also been recognised in The Legal 500 Hall of Fame for 2018.

Legal 500, 2017:

'well prepared, has a good manner with clients, and comes across as having credibility'. Fitton facilitated approximately 40 high-value commercial mediations in 2016, the most active practice areas being professional indemnity, financial services pensions, insolvency, and high-value commercial disputes. Highlights included a tracing claim by the liquidators of a collapsed hedge fund.

Legal 500, 2016:

"A good and experienced lawyer, he is such a nice person that he can shame parties into behaving sensibly."

"Persistent and does not give up on reaching a deal, even when things look hopeless."

Legal 500, 2014:

"tenacious...gets right to the heart of the matter...strong in insurance"

Legal 500, 2014:

"unlocks seemingly intractable problems"

Who's Who Legal 2019

Chris was recognised as a leading mediator.

Career History

2014 - Independent commercial mediator 2009 - 2014: BLM; partner 1994 - 2009: Pinsent Masons; partner 1992 - 1994: Reynolds Porter Chamberlain; in-house barrister 1991 - 1991: Hogan Lovells; in-house barrister

Chris' career history means that he has a wide knowledge of the law and how it operates in practice. In the particular field of financial services, he has a detailed understanding of the FSA regime, including DISP Rules, FOS/FSCS, FSA supervision and enforcement. A chancery barrister before qualifying as a commercial litigation solicitor means that he also has good probate expertise.

Professional Qualifications and Affiliations

Association of Midlands Mediators – Chair since 2012

1997 ADR accredited mediator

1996 Solicitor Advocate

1995 Solicitor

1991 Barrister

Case Examples

Financial Services & Banking

Mis-selling

A £3.6m mis-selling claim by the estate of a High Net Worth deceased industrialist against his former financial advisers, in respect of an allegedly unsuitable geared off shore property fund.

Claim brought by nine claimants alleging to have lost £440,000 in the collapse of a property investment scheme in Florida in 2008.

A £1.2m claim by the bank under a Interest Rate Swap contract. Counterclaim that it was mis-sold.

A £1.7m pension dispute, alleging professional negligence against the financial advisers.

Bank recovery actions

A £255,000 claim by a corporate customer against a bank for misrepresentation in relation to a loan facility for a hotel (misunderstanding about the applicable interest rate).

A £1.5m personal guarantee recovery claim by a bank against the former director of a substantial construction company, by now in Administration. Also a further £260K PG claim in respect of a second construction company. Substantial differences of opinion about valuation of a property portfolio.Alleged impecuniosity also a factor.

A bank's £640,000 claim against one of four personal guarantors of a defunct company's invoice discounting/finance arrangement.

A £350,000 bank's claim against the alleged debtor under a stock finance agreement (caravans/motorhomes).

Pension scheme disputes

A £960,000 claim by pension scheme trustees against their former advisers for failure to properly equalise scheme benefits post-Barber.

A £700,000 pensions dispute, alleging delay against the administrators/scheme actuaries resulting in stock market/annuity rate losses.

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A £310,000 pension scheme maladministration claim. The administrator had overstated the member's transferred-in service. The issues in dispute centred around the correct measure of loss (contract or tort/estoppel).

A dispute between uncle and nephew about their respective shares in a £800,000 pension fund/SSAS.

An £80,000 professional negligence claim against SSAS pension trustees.

A £1.7m pension dispute, alleging professional negligence against the former Scheme legal advisers.

Professional Negligence

Claims against lawyers, property, corporate/commercial, litigation mistakes

Three party £400,000 mortgage recovery dispute. The borrower had been duped by her fraudulent brother into allowing her name to be used to purchase a flat and take out a large mortgage (which was never paid). £1.1m professional negligence claim against a firm of solicitors who allegedly failed to flag the availability of BTE before embarking upon ultimately unsuccessful litigation.

£700,000 dispute where a former owner of a London property alleged the negligence of two firms of solicitors had facilitated the fraudulent transfer of that property away from his ownership. The lender was also involved, making this a four party dispute.

£600,000 professional negligence claim by the former FD of a support services company against his former solicitors. The allegations of negligence were around the treatment of PHI benefits in the employment severance contract. Claimant had Alzheimer's.

£167,000 solicitors' professional negligence claim. The existence of a mother-in-law's beneficial interest in a family home had been missed by the conveyancing solicitors, resulting in litigation with the Claimant lost.

Lender claims - SAAMCO caps, scope-of-duty arguments, bank lending practices

£310,000 lender's claim against valuers of a house and mews studio property in west London against which the bank lent.

A £2.5m negligent valuation claim made by a syndicated mortgage lender against a firm of surveyors in relation to a hotel. Contributory negligence/reckless lending was alleged.

A £4.5m claim by a lender that its security had been overvalued by its professional valuer at the time of lending. Competing views of the level of the SAAMCO cap, and how that was affected by the valuer's contributory negligence allegations.

£195,000 professional negligence claim by a lender against the borrowers' solicitor, who failed to flag an agricultural occupancy condition. There was also a £295,000 claim by the borrower against the solicitor for the same negligence.

A four party £350,000 lender's claim where the borrower sought Part 20 recoveries from two others (including alleging fraud). Arguments around quantification of any equitable charge, and much about costs. Effectively three mediations in one.

Pension professionals - Barber mistakes, Trustees' negligence, scheme maladministration

£1.2m pension transfer related claim, against an intermediary now in liquidation. This mediation covered virtually all aspects of pension transfer claims, including method of quantification, causation issues and PI coverage issues (the operation of the Third Party (Rights Against Insurers) Act 1930.

£80,000 professional negligence claim against SSAS pension trustees.

£700,000 pensions dispute, alleging delay against the administrators/scheme actuaries resulting in stock market/annuity rate losses.

A £390,000 pension claim. Allegations that the transfer from an OPS to a PPP was unsuitable advice.

£310,000 pension scheme maladministration claim. The administrator had overstated the member's transferred-in service.

Insurance

Insurance & reinsurance

£350,000 marine cargo insurance claim by a UK steel stockholder against its transit. Issues around the correct valuation of the claim under s71 of Marine Insurance Act.

£525,000 disputed property damage insurance claim. Issues around policy interpretation the validity of an assignment (insured went in liquidation) and quantum (including of a BI claim).

A £240,000 claim by a newbuild house insurer against the directors of the construction company, each of whom gave personal guarantees.

£180,000 claim by a PHI policyholder claiming income protection benefits from the insurers (two policies).

£100,000 fire/smoke damage claim, between the various insurers for the interested parties. Interesting causation and limitation issues.

A £960,000 marine insurance dispute, prompted by the total loss of a vessel off the Spanish Mediterranean coast.

Subrogated recoveries

£340,000 subrogated recovery claim by a hospital's insurers against a contractor whose actions it said caused water ingress damage its Radiology Department's electronic equipment.

A £340,000 flood damage claim. Insurer Co-Defendants disputed causation of the consequential loss claim in principle. There were also coverage issues generally.

£100,000 claim involving insurance recoveries following a commercial vehicle fire. Interestingly this mediation took place after the trial of the matter, pending the Court of Appeal's consideration of the matter. Very interesting issues around the burden of proof where little or no evidence existed as to which of three possible causes of the loss was the actual cause.

£100,000 flood damage claim against the water company for alleged negligent failure to maintain a sub-pumping station.

£65,000 recovery claim by insurers against the water authority for flood losses. Non-return valves was alleged to be faulty.

Coverage disputes

A £2.6m fire claim, which the property insurer avoided. The insured's broker was also involved.

£450,000 marine cargo claim following damage to steel allegedly in transit from far east. Insurers alleged breach of policy conditions..

A £500,000 declined life insurance claim. Dispute about policy limits and scope.

£150,000 household insurance fire claim brought by the deceased's estate. Alleged non-disclosure and other policy issues.

A widow's life insurance claim, declined for non-disclosure.

A £190,000 misselling claim by the owner of a Bristol property portfolio against his former financial adviser, who had recommended investing in a traded endowment portfolio. Policy coverage issues.

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Commercial

Contract & commercial

£1.6m disputed contract claim, between a public water company and its outsourced water testing/analytical company. Interesting regulatory issues, including competition and water testing standards.

A £ms dispute between an originator of Certified Emission Reductions (carbon credits) and the commodity trader contracted to sell those CERs.

A dispute between benefit consultants on the one hand and a group of former clients on the other. This was predominantly a case about the correct basis for calculating contractual commission/charges.

£660,000 dispute between an IT consultancy company and its suppliers, operating under an outsourcer contract.

A £50,000 passing off dispute, surrounding the décor of competing restaurants.

Chris was one of two mediators in a £300,000 dispute between a plant and machinery hire company and its supplier concerning a supply contract.

£500,000 dispute which was specialist IT design and build supplier and a household name UK sports company, concerning a project which never came to fruition.

Shareholder disputes

A £1.2m shareholder dispute relating to a mostly family-owned industrial chemicals/metals processing company. Issues around unfair prejudice (s994 petition for relief).

£2.5m dispute between shareholder directors in a £30m turnover company.

£3m shareholder/breach of directors' duties claim.

£30,000 dispute between a former director/shareholder and the remaining shareholders. Half-day mediation in view of the value.

£480,000 dispute between former shareholders/directors of a substantial property development company who had fallen out. Unfair prejudice (Section 459) was claimed.

Partnership issues

£500,000 partnership/shareholders dispute between family members in an Indian restaurant business.

£350,000 claim against a former partner in a solicitors' practice asked to repay a loan to that firm/another partner.

A £300,000 dispute between the principal partner of a GP medical practice (since dissolved) and the Primary Care Trust under which the GP practice operated (now the NHS Commissioning Board). Terms of the contract (in the APMS format) were in dispute, as were associated QOF entitlements.

Chris was the mediator in a £230,000 claim between a law firm partnership and an ousted partner. The firm had faced certain negligence claims allegedly from the former partner's conduct/illness.

A £100,000 property partnership dispute, involving a £300,000 counterclaim for shared beneficial ownership and shared rents. The two parties had been long-standing family friends as well as being business partners, making the negotiations particularly difficult.

Client Feedback

"Chis has all the qualities of an excellent mediator. He inspires confidence and handles the issues and the parties very well. He is also very likeable." Solicitor, City Law Firm, May 2024

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"Chris was understanding of the issues and accommodating with the clients. While the mediation did not complete on the day, Chris was happy to assist in subsequent negotiations which ultimately resulted in a resolution acceptable to both parties." Solicitor, City Law firm, October 2023

"I would like to express both our and the client's appreciation for the efforts of Chris Fitton, who was (as always) excellent. Chris is up there with the best mediators I have worked with and one of the first names I think of for a decent sized commercial dispute. I look forward to working with him again in the future." Partner, City Law firm January 2020

"I wanted to say that whilst I know we did not resolve matters yesterday, I thought you were excellent and we were all impressed by your approach to mediation on what is a complex case. I wanted to say thank you again for the effort you made." Associate, City Law firm, October 2019

"Thank you for your efforts today. I think you did the best possible effort for this case to come to a settlement. Unfortunately it was obvious that they didn't come to settle and the reasoning was just to get more personal information and most possible put on the record that they attended a mediation (just for the judge to see). From my part I tried to make a concession but unfortunately it was like talking to a wall. The claimant has so strong personal reasons that clearly affect negatively any objective and reasonable judgement, sorry if I was upset in some occasions today. Thank you very much again." Client, October 2019

"Chris was fully engaged, his preparation and attention to detail becoming apparent early on. He engaged with the clients, had good empathy and kept the energy of the day going." Partner, City Law firm June 2019

"Thank you for your facilitation and running of the day, it achieved a positive result and your approach, energy and manner was no small element in this in my opinion." Executive Director, January 2019

"Thanks for the approach taken, the tools used were really appreciated and I was most impressed with your energy levels being sustained over a long day. You also contributed strongly to finalising the settlement agreement and this was noted too." Partner, City Law firm January 2019

"Chris got to grips with a complex factual matrix very quickly and dealt with an extremely difficult litigant in person who had unrealistic views of his case- we thought this was an unsettle- able case, but with the invaluable assistance of Chris, we got a settlement!" Consultant, City Law firm. November 2018

"Good preparation, identified the complex issues incisively, facilitated discussions well and was patient throughout. Would certainly use Chris again." Associate, City Law firm. September 2018

"Chris was a very good mediator, he had sufficient knowledge of the matter and issues to engage with the parties and understand their varying relevance to the dispute; he was very perceptive. Chris' work certainly helped to bring the parties to a conclusion." Solicitor, City Law firm, September 2018

"Can I send my thanks to Chris Fitton, who mediated a dispute in respect of a personal commercial contract claim with me in May."

"We did arrive at an agreement, even though that was later in the evening, with Chris happy to both commit to the later hours and focused on getting to the agreement."

"He was very polite and I am certain engaged the trust of both parties to be able to find a middle ground. I think that I might have been a tad lippy at times, but Chris kept calm, focused, polite and humorous, to be able to steer us to a conclusion."

"Thanks for the help." (Client, May 2018)

"Very happy with Chris Fitton. Enjoyed his style and approach to what was a challenging day. Got to grips with the issues quickly and diligently set about getting the parties focused on discussing a settlement. Would definitely be looking to use Chris again in the future." April 2018, Director, Regional law firm.

"Chris was excellent from beginning to end of this mediation. I will certainly look to use Chris again in the future." April 2018 Director, regional law firm.

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"Chris was excellent and would definitely use him again. Approachable, likeable and a clear understanding of the issues. Simply excellent." February 2018, Partner, City Law firm.

"Chris was excellent, he asked all the relevant questions to get an insight into the dispute. He was very involved in trying to get the parties to think about their positions and next moves open to them. He was also proactive and did not let the process stall at any time, which I have seen happen on more than one occasion before. It was a tripartite mediation with claims against six potential respondents and Chris handled that very well."November 2017, Associate, Regional Law firm.

"...more effective that anyone I've used before."

"...had a really good grasp of the issues...asked thoughtful questions throughout."

"...yours were outstanding efforts in helping to resolve a tricky and 'unsettlable' case."

"...within a few minutes it was apparent [Chris] was very well briefed and prepared."

"Without your energy, patience and good humoured persistence the parties would have been doomed..."

"Thank you so much... I am frankly stunned it settled, but very pleased."

These comments, taken from direct user feedback, represent a fair and balanced summary of the responses received.