



If you have other questions about family mediation,
or need help to search for a family mediator in your
local area, please visit our website
www.thefma.co.uk.

Answering your questions about family mediation

There are a lot of myths surrounding family mediation, and this leaflet provides answers to some of the most common questions our members are asked. For further information, please visit the Frequently Asked Questions section of our website www.thefma.co.uk.

What is a MIAM?

A Mediation Information Assessment Meeting is a meeting with a specially qualified family mediator. Most divorcing and separating couples in England and Wales who want to use the court process to resolve any questions about children or money must show that they have attended a MIAM before applying for a court order.

The purpose of the meeting is to give you an opportunity to find out whether going to court would be the best way of resolving those issues and, in particular, whether mediation could be an effective alternative. As things stand, only one of you is required to attend a MIAM.

How is family mediation different to other options?

Unlike going to court or arbitration, family mediation recognises that you are the experts about your own family and leaves the decision making to you. Rather than negotiating through lawyers, family mediation allows you to speak directly to each other so that you can both explain what you are feeling and what is most important to you, letting you focus on the things that really matter to you as a family.

You do all that with the professional input of a family mediator who is an impartial third party who will give legal information and will help you to reality test your options.

How will I be kept safe during a family mediation?

Many people find talking to their partner about what should happen after a separation or divorce very stressful and upsetting. Family mediation can give you a safe place to resolve your differences at your own pace. Family mediators are specially trained to look out for domestic abuse issues and other problems that might make negotiation especially difficult. Family mediators will not allow you to mediate if they do not believe you will be safe.

How do I find a good mediator?

It is very important to find a qualified mediator. All qualified family mediators belong to one of the six organisations that together make up the Family Mediation Council. The FMA is one of the Family Mediation Council organisations and our full members are all qualified mediators. If you have any queries about a mediator's qualifications check with the mediator's member organisation, which should be able to help. You should also always feel free to ask a mediator about his or her experience and qualifications before the mediation starts.

How much does mediation cost?

Different mediators charge different rates so, if you are paying privately it's important to check the rates of individual mediation services. Some charge an hourly rate. Some charge on a sessional or case basis. The rates that family mediators charge are generally much lower than the rates family lawyers charge, but it is very important to be clear from the beginning what the costs of mediation are likely to be. If you are financially eligible you may be entitled to legal aid to cover your costs of mediation. The mediator should check whether you are likely to be eligible. Not all mediators offer legal aid but any who do not, should be able to point you in the right direction to find a mediator who does.

Can I involve my children in family mediation?

Many FMA members are specially qualified to involve children directly in the mediation process through child consultation which is a meeting between a child or children and a specially qualified mediator. There are many things to think about when deciding whether or not it is appropriate for an individual child to be involved directly but, with the right preparation, involving children can be very useful. If you are interested in child consultation as part of mediation, look for a mediator who is trained to work directly with children and they will be able to explain more about this.

