

Integrated Mediation with Expert Legal Support

27th March 2025





About Family Solutions

- Founded in 2007, Family Solutions is a large family mediation practice with six offices across Hampshire.
- Our offices are in Southampton, Fareham, Havant, Emsworth, Petersfield and Isle of Wight.
- Family Solutions receives 1,000 referrals and mediates 600 families per year.
- Referrals are received from social services, the court, CAFCASS, lawyers and other local agencies.
- Family Solutions offers Legal Aid mediation.
- All mediators are members of Resolution and the Family Mediation Council, and promote a constructive approach to resolving issues



- Family mediation
- Integrated mediation, benefits, process, cost





Family SolutionsTM

Your Solution Your Way



What is Family Mediation?

Family mediation is a voluntary and confidential process, where a trained mediator helps family members have discussions and find solutions to their problems. The mediator is a neutral person who does not take sides or make decisions for the family.

Mediation is NOT:

- relationship counselling – it is accepted the couple has separated
- a trawl through the past
- a therapeutic process – you can refer parents to counselling/other support at the same time
- a legal advice service
- neighbour dispute resolution

CONFIDENTIALITY IS BREACHED WHEN SAFEGUARDING ISSUES ARISE



Who is it for?

Family mediation is typically used for resolving issues related to family matters around divorce/separation such as division of finances and arrangements for children

BUT you can also use family mediation to resolve disagreements between other family members. Any family member affected can attend mediation.



What do you talk about at mediation - children

Mediation can help when separated parents/carers disagree about arrangements for the children:

- Where the children will live
- Contact arrangements for children incl. arrangements for supervision, transport and handovers
- School holidays
- Trips abroad, who holds the passport
- Concerns about the child (behaviour, education, medical, mental health, bullying, social media)
- Support for child (counselling, medical)
- Which school child should attend
- Problems in implementing court orders
- Anything else you want!



Child consultation

- With a specially trained mediator
- Children tell the mediator about their wishes and feelings
- Children should have a voice in the process
- This is now part of the Family Mediation Council's Code of Practice
- It can help parents focus on their children's needs

Children will only attend if:

They wish to participate. The child's welfare and comfort are paramount, and their participation would not be forced

With everyone's agreement

Where it is appropriate






The process

Individual appointments (MIAM)



Joint sessions (as many as needed)

- Mediation sessions are at times and dates which suit both people
- Most people attend 2-3 joint mediation sessions
- Mediation can be stopped at any stage by one or both people
- Mediation can be in the same room or separate rooms if that helps people feel safer

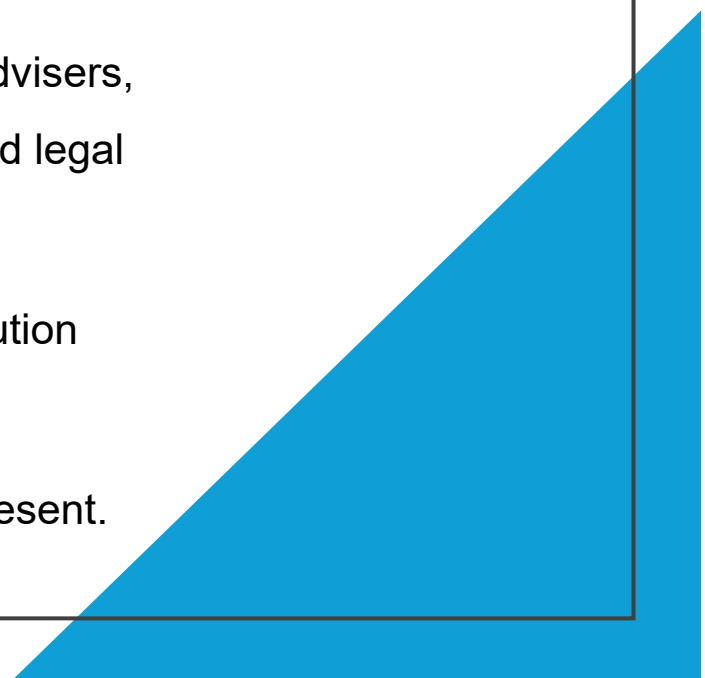


Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting

- Individual appointment - attend by yourself (with a friend/supporter if you wish)
- Lasts about 1 hour
- The mediator screens for abuse and safety
- The mediator explains the mediation process
- The mediator will answer any questions you have
- The mediator might refer client to other organisations which can help, such as counselling or debt advice
- Client is given time to decide whether they want to go ahead

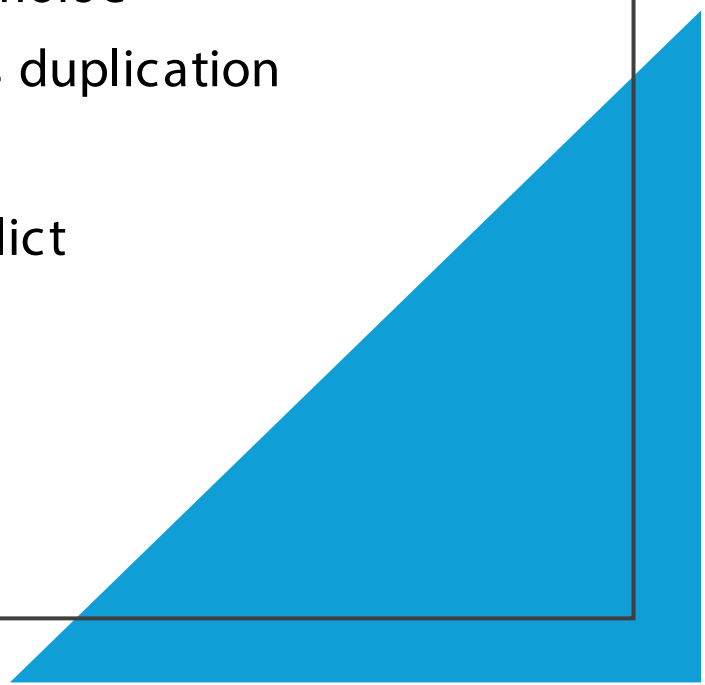


What is Integrated Family Mediation?

- It is a holistic approach to resolving family conflicts which incorporates mediation with other support services.
 - It brings together professionals from multiple disciplines—such as financial advisers, solicitors, social work and counselling - to address the emotional, financial and legal aspects of family disputes.
 - The integration of different expertise helps create a more comprehensive solution which considers all the dynamics affecting the family.
 - The term “hybrid’ is used by Resolution to refer to mediation with solicitors present.
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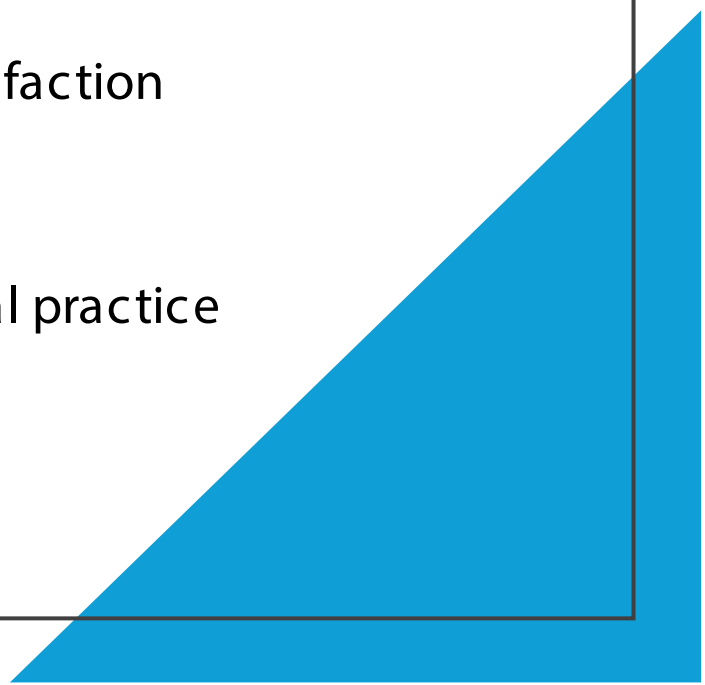



Benefits – for clients

- Informed decision-making
 - Increased confidence in the process
 - Reduced risk of 'buyer's remorse'
 - Faster resolutions with less duplication
 - Reduced costs (long-term)
 - Minimises adversarial conflict
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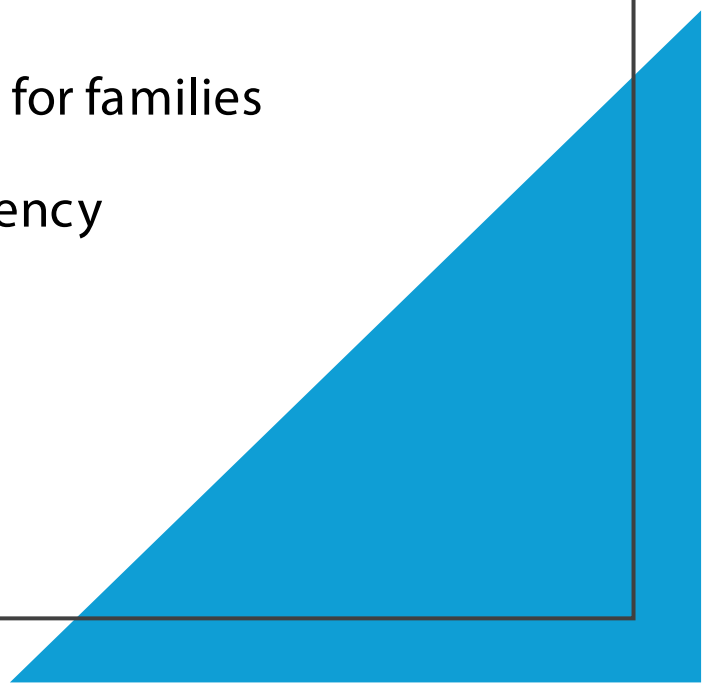



Benefits – for lawyers

- Maintaining an active role in dispute resolution
 - Builds client trust and satisfaction
 - Risk management
 - Supports collaborative legal practice
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Benefits – Family Justice System

- Alleviates pressure on courts
 - Aligns with policy priorities
 - Better long-term outcomes for families
 - Encourages systemic efficiency
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How does it work?

1. Mediation information and assessment meeting (MIAM)
2. Agreeing on the integrated model
3. Mediation sessions with legal input



How does it work?

4. Developing proposals
5. Drafting Heads of Agreement/order
6. Finalising the settlement
7. Post-mediation support



Legal Aid is still available for mediation!

- If both people are eligible for legal aid – all of the mediation will be paid for by the Legal Aid Authority
- If only one person is eligible for legal aid:
 - the MIAM is free for both people
 - the first mediation is free for both people
 - from the second mediation onwards:
 - *all mediations are free for the legally aided person*
 - *the **non** legally aided person must pay “half” of the mediator’s private rate (but remember the voucher scheme where government contributes £500 towards costs)*





In summary...

- Collaboration
- Flexibility
- Efficiency
- Clients retain ownership of decisions

Any questions?

www.familyolutionsnow.co.uk