

**Family Mediation is a process,
just as separation is a process.
We are here to guide you
through it.**



"A thoroughly professional and
efficient, yet personal, service was
provided throughout"

What is Family Mediation?

Family Mediation is the first step to take after separation. Mediation as a process facilitates help everyone involved move towards a resolution.

The process involves our impartial and accredited mediator helping you work out arrangements for your children and financial issues. Mediation may also assist if you are looking at a potential change in arrangements for your children and/or financial circumstances.

Family Mediation as a process is voluntary and you stay in control of making decisions. This is very different to if you are in Court. Any solution must be one that works for all parties.

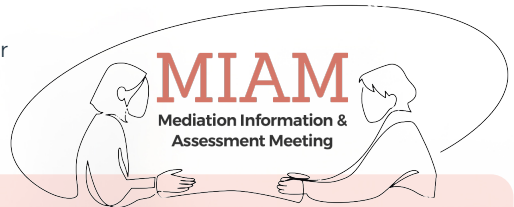
The Family Mediation process

Stage one is an individual meeting with our accredited family mediator. This is known as a Mediation Information and Assessment Appointment – or MIAMS.

This appointment is confidential and gives you the opportunity to provide background to your situation, discuss concerns, hopes and options. The mediator will provide information about different processes available to you to help resolve the issues as well as explaining the family mediation process to you. The MIAMS stage helps you to establish rapport with the mediator and it is an important stage of the process.

Progressing to joint sessions

Discussions within mediation can take place in the same physical or virtual space or in separate physical or virtual spaces, the latter is known as “shuttle mediation”. We tend to use shuttle mediation in cases of high conflict or if there are any safety concerns.



What is MIAM?

The MIAM appointment is the only compulsory part of the family mediation process. By law you cannot (save in exceptional circumstances) issue an application to Court for any private children legal issue or an application to Court for financial remedy unless you have attended a MIAM appointment. If having attended the MIAM appointment you decide you do not want to carry on with the mediation process, or if our mediator considers that mediation is unsuitable, then our accredited mediator can sign the necessary Court form to evidence that you have complied with the pre-Court assessment stage.

to resolve issues following
facilitates conversations taking place to
building a new future.

The process

Family mediation is a process which typically takes place on a number of sessions, often 60-90 minutes in length and usually 2-4 weeks apart. As mediators our role is to facilitate discussions, help you to explore and test out options in a safe environment and move towards an agreed way forward. As mediators our role is not to advise. We can provide legal information where appropriate however any decisions made are yours.

Reaching agreements & making it legal

When we reach an understanding as to the important issues we prepare the documentation summarising these points. For children related issues we prepare a summary whether that is in the form of a parenting plan or memorandum of understanding. For financial issues we prepare a financial statement containing a summary of your assets based upon the financial disclosure which has taken place as part of the process and the memorandum for understanding setting out what has been agreed.

Orders and agreements

In financial mediation cases, your solicitors can file the necessary documentation based upon the mediation outcome with the Court in order to obtain a legally binding agreement, or if you do not have any legal representative you can apply yourself to do this. In divorce this is known as a consent order and in other cases you may consider a separation agreement.

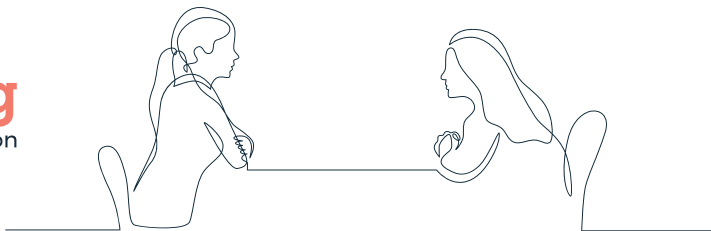
Child arrangements

In law there is something called the No Order principle. This means that unless there is a need for an Order a Court will not make one. This is on the basis that as parents you know your children the best and arrangements for children may change over time. Arrangements for children are much more than a piece of paper which is ultimately what a Court order is.

Mediation is more than about arrangements it is about communication, co-parenting and other issues important to your children.

If you are in Court proceedings and/or you are looking to vary an existing order it may be appropriate to apply for the principles you have reached in mediation to be made legally binding. It is possible to do this.





Always fixed fees

We provide fixed fee rates for all sessions for mediation and preparation time. Fees are payable up front prior to the commencement of the mediation. There are no hidden charges or costs.



We are experts

As family mediators we are skilled in dealing with people. We have been accredited mediators since 2010. Sally is fully FMCA accredited and is Vice Chair of the Family Mediator's Association.



Let's start by talking

We have offices in Harrogate and Liversedge - please contact us using the details below...

Harrogate Office

Windsor House,
Cornwall Rd,
Harrogate,
North Yorkshire,
HG1 2PW

03330 344 646

enquiries@smarttalking.co.uk

Liversedge Office

Hare Park Mills,
Hare Park Lane,
Liversedge,
West Yorkshire,
WF15 8EP

03330 344 646

enquiries@smarttalking.co.uk

