Stages of Mediation and Funding Options*(Updated 1 June 2026)*

For more information visit:Children First Family Mediation – Step by Step Guide

Step 1 – Make a Referral
Complete the contact form on our website. You will then receive:

- A brief free telephone call
- Information about the mediation process
- An initial check to see whether you may qualify for free mediation through Legal Aid

Step 2 – Attend a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting (MIAM) What is a MIAM?
Your MIAM appointment lasts up to 1 hour and will:

- Explain mediation and assess suitability
- Discuss how best to approach the other person involved
- Complete any Legal Aid assessment
- Explain other funding options such as the Family Mediation Voucher Scheme
- Explore alternatives if mediation is not suitable or the other person will not engage

Step 3 – The Other Person is Invited
If you wish to proceed, the other person will be contacted and offered their own MIAM as quickly as possible.
Step 4 – Starting Mediation
If both people agree to mediate, sessions can begin with a trained family mediator.
Types of Mediation

- **Joint Mediation** Both people meet together with the mediator.
- **Shuttle Mediation** You and the other person remain in separate rooms (or online spaces). The mediator moves between you to discuss ideas and proposals separately.

Shuttle Mediation Guide explains the advantages of each option
Step 5 – Outcome Statement
At the end of mediation, a written summary can be prepared with the outcome of your mediation sessions
Costs
FREE for children's matters
£150 for financial matters
If Mediation Does Not Proceed

- The other person does not attend, or
- Mediation breaks down

the relevant signed section of the Family Court application form can be provided. This is included within the MIAM fee for the applicant/referrer(chargeable at £130 if requested by the other party)
FREE if eligible for Legal Aid
Note Court fees are separate from mediation fees.
Further information: Family Court Fees Information

How Long Does Mediation Take?
Children Matters typically 1–2 sessions.
Financial Matters usually require additional sessions depending on complexity.
Session Lengths
Children mediation: 1 hour
Financial mediation: 1½ hours
Shuttle mediation: 1½ hours

Funding Your Mediation

Legal Aid

Legal Aid will cover all mediation costs
This is usually available for people:

- Receiving benefits
- On a low income
- With savings less than £8,000

Eligibility is assessed before the MIAM appointment.
Normally, proof of benefits is sufficient but the Legal Aid form MUST be signed following your MIAM session to finalise eligibility

Family Mediation Voucher Scheme

The Government Voucher Scheme provides:
£500 per family for children matters only not financial matters
The Mediation service applies for the voucher if mediation proceeds.(simple process)
Note The voucher does not cover MIAM fees but can help reduce ongoing mediation costs

Fee Paying Mediation Costs *(All fees include VAT)*
MIAM Fee
£130 per person
This also includes the cost of a MIAM for the other person if they are willing to attend.

Mediation Session Fees per person
Discounted Rate
£135 per hour For those earning below the Living Wage threshold (under £26,436.80 gross per year)
Full Fee
£195 per hour For those earning the Living Wage or above
Children Matters Only
The £500 Voucher Scheme can normally be used to offset mediation costs (up to £250 per person).

Child Inclusive Mediation (CIM)

Child Inclusive Mediation allows children to meet safely with a specially trained mediator where appropriate.
CIM Fee £90 per session
The mediation voucher may also be used towards this cost where eligible.

Payment Information

All sessions must be paid in advance
Payment is usually made via secure debit/credit card Worldpay link
MIAM fees are payable upon booking
Mediation fees must be paid before each session

Cancellation Policy

At least 2 working days' notice is required to cancel or rearrange an appointment.
If insufficient notice is given, or you do not attend:
A £40 cancellation charge will apply

Contact Us
admin@childrenfirstfamilymediation.org.uk
0161 763 8793 Children First Family Mediation Website