

Is mediation confidential?

Discussions in Family Mediation are confidential. This confidentiality can only be breached if a crime is alleged against a child or the mediator considers someone to be at serious risk of harm.

Will I need a solicitor?

The mediator can record your decisions and summarise them in a written Memorandum of Understanding. This is not binding, but can form the basis of a legal agreement. In mediation you do your own negotiating, removing the need

for lengthy solicitor negotiation and legal action. Your solicitor may be consulted at any stage and to make any agreement legally binding, if you so wish. Mediators do not at any time give legal advice.

What next?

If you anticipate difficulty using mediation, eg. because you have a disability, please let us know so that we can make any necessary arrangements. Otherwise, to make an appointment, please get in touch with Family Mediation Northern Ireland - contact details below.

telephone: 028 9024 3265

fax: 028 9033 1576

email: enquiry@familymediationni.org.uk

www.familymediationni.org.uk

7 University Street, Belfast BT7 1FY

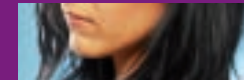
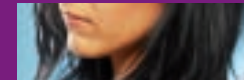
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All individuals shown in photographs are models for illustration only.

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separation mediation

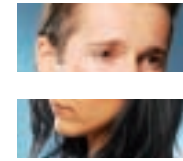
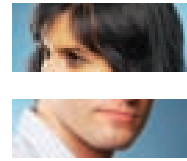


to assist families managing the issues arising from separation and divorce

Separation, divorce or family conflict? Mediation can help.

What is Family Mediation?

- Family mediation offers separating couples the opportunity to take control of their future arrangements by helping them find solutions that suit their family circumstances.
 - It is a confidential, voluntary process using an impartial professionally trained mediator who assists with the negotiation process and aims to reduce the emotional, financial and social cost of separation.
 - Family mediation can help separating parents to identify the issues particular to their family that are in dispute and help explore available options and arrive at proposals that meet the needs of the children.
 - Mediators will help each person to speak and be heard and will work towards improving communication and reduce levels of conflict.
 - Direct child consultation is also offered to assist the voice of the child being heard.
 - Issues causing concern or conflict may include, best arrangements for the children i.e., contact, residency, child maintenance, how to tell the children about the separation, introducing new partners, access to grandparents and extended family, holiday arrangements and the division of assets.
- FMNI is a non-judgemental, registered charity and has received funding from the Health & Social Care Board to provide free mediation to parents who have not yet entered into court proceedings. Other separating couples who are in the court process will be charged a fee to cover costs, if not legally aided. Contact us for more information.
 - First appointment is an individual appointment lasting one hour, subsequent joint mediation appointments are on average 1½ hours and are offered at neutral venues throughout NI.
 - Family Mediation is also appropriate in many other family circumstances, for instance disputes in relation to the care of an elderly or disabled relative, disputes between adult siblings or between generations, for example, a disputed 'Will'.
 - Family Mediation is not a couple reconciliation service.
 - Family Mediation aims to assist in finding private solutions to private problems.



Who are the Family Mediators?

Our team is professionally trained in child focused, financial, and all issues mediation, and aim to offer a high quality and accessible service throughout Northern Ireland. We are a voluntary organisation independent of the statutory services. We work to the standards and code of practice of the UK Council of Family Mediators and are members of the national, professional bodies for mediators.

Do I have to use Family Mediation?

- Family Mediation is voluntary and nobody can be compelled to take part against his or her will. It is very helpful in enabling people to reach their own negotiated settlements.
- The first appointment is always an introductory one so you can consider whether mediation is a way forward at this time.
- Joint appointments are never arranged without prior discussion and without including individual discussion with each person
- If you have any concerns about taking part in mediation or are worried about meeting your partner or ex partner - perhaps due to violence, harassment

or intimidation - please convey this to us. We will ensure that your concerns are addressed. We can offer a 'shuttle' process, with each party in a separate room initially. Your safety is our priority.

Will our children be involved in mediation?

If you have children we can help you discuss how to talk with them to ascertain their views and help them to understand what is happening. We will gladly see your children in mediation, if you wish, and will discuss this with you. Children may have very different concerns to their parents. It is important for them to be able to express these and think about the implications for the future. Parents are often better able to reassure and help their children once they know what their children are thinking.

While you are attending a mediation appointment, it will be necessary for you to make arrangements for someone else to look after your children (unless, after discussion with you, the mediator has arranged an appointment to meet with your children in mediation).

families separation + mediation = Better outcomes