

## FACTSHEET No 16:



### What is MIAM?

A MIAM is a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting. More simply it is a chance for you to meet a mediator to tell them about your situation, and for the mediator to work out with you if mediation might be able to help you.

### MIAM Costs

At Progressive Mediation our fee for a MIAM is £40 (£55 to include the signed court form). Online MIAM costs start from £45 and last between 45 minutes and an hour. As Mediators we cannot give you legal advice, but we can give you an idea of the general legal picture around divorce and separation, and we can point you to solicitors who will give sensible and economical legal advice.

At a MIAM we usually prefer to see people individually rather than together, as it gives each person a chance to speak freely about what they are hoping to achieve through mediation and any concerns they may have. MIAMs are treated confidentially\* (see note below). Some separating couples prefer to have a joint MIAM. We are happy to do this, but we usually ask to have 5 minutes alone with each of you during the course of this meeting.

### MIAMs Now Compulsory before Court

Since April 2014 MIAMs have a legal status. It is now compulsory to have a MIAM before you use the courts to try and resolve your differences. It is not compulsory to attend mediation. If you decide after your MIAM that you do not wish to mediate we will sign off the court form which says that you have met with a mediator, but that you do not wish to proceed with mediation. We charge an additional £15 to sign this form. If you are eligible for legal aid we will do this for free.

### Are you Eligible for Legal Aid?

If you think you might be eligible for legal aid we will carry out an assessment at your MIAM. You may be eligible for legal aid if you are on a low income, working part time, or receiving certain benefits (Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and ESA, Universal Credit). You will need to bring proof of your income to the MIAM in order to qualify for legal aid. This may be a recent benefit award letter and your last month's bank statements.

### Preparing for your MIAM

We are often asked by people if they need to prepare anything for a MIAM. The answer is No. Unless you are being assessed for legal aid, you do not need to write anything down, or bring any documents. We just want to hear from you about your circumstances, and what you are hoping to resolve through mediation.

Your MIAM is one of the only times when it is just you and the Mediator. Once mediation starts, in the interests of fairness, most conversations with the mediator will need to involve your ex-partner. So, the MIAM is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions which are nagging at your mind or express any doubts or concerns you may have about mediation. If there has been any violence in your relationship, or if you are worried about the welfare of your children when they are with your ex-partner it would be a good time to talk about this.

If you have any questions about what to expect at your MIAM do please call Frances Place on **07889039393**.

### **Confidentiality of MIAM**

The content of the MIAM is entirely confidential. Unless we are specifically requested to withhold this information, we reserve the right to:

- Inform the other party that a MIAM appointment has been booked, including the date, but not the time.
- Inform the other party that the relevant page of a court application has been issued and the date.