

## What is the aim of mediation?

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Mediation is a dispute resolution that works very well for many couples. The mediator is a neutral person who can help you both to make decisions. Mediation is one of the most cost effective and time effective ways to resolve a dispute. It is non-adversarial and so may reduce antagonism between you. You also retain more control over decisions about the future.

## What happens after mediation?

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If agreement has been made between you and your ex partner in relation to financial matters and any arrangements for your children a Memorandum of Understanding can be drawn up by the mediator setting out the agreement.

If the mediation sessions have not resulted in total agreement, the mediator can recommend taking further legal advice. In this situation you will find that the issues have been narrowed and it will be easier to present to your legal adviser the points which are in dispute. This will reduce the cost of any further action.

## Ongoing Legal Advice

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You will be encouraged to take legal advice from us throughout the process and it is very important that you do so before finalising any agreement. Once an agreement has been reached within mediation we will advise you whether it is reasonable and assist in converting any agreement into a court order if necessary.

## Will I have to pay for mediation?

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You will be assessed to see if you are eligible for "Approved Family Help: Help with Mediation". If you qualify then the Legal Aid Agency will fund your cost for mediation. If you do not qualify we will provide you with full details of our charges. If you are eligible for Legal Aid for mediation you may also be eligible under a CWS - Help with Family Mediation which will enable you to obtain legal advice during the mediation process.

## How long will mediation take?

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It is difficult to set out a timetable for each individual case, but generally between 2-4 sessions. Each session lasts approximately one and a half hours. You will be asked at the end of each session if you wish to have another meeting. If you have complicated financial matters to sort out you may need at least three or four sessions.

## Conclusion

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Family Mediation may help you take control of your situation and sort out practical matters in an open and co-operative atmosphere. It can help avoid high legal costs and it generally shortens the length of time you are involved in legal proceedings and this can considerably reduce the emotional strain on you. Please look at the video available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-mediation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-mediation) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYhWdwazCZA> which will give you a good idea of what mediation is and what mediators do.