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We cannot provide legal advice or issue MIAM certificates. [Find an FMC-accredited mediator](#)

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# What is a MIAM?

A MIAM (Mediation Information Assessment Meeting) is a required meeting with a mediator before you can apply to family court. The mediator explains mediation, assesses suitability, and issues your FM1 certificate. This guide covers everything you need to know.

**45-60 min**

Meeting Length

**£90-£150**

Typical Cost

**4 Months**

Certificate Validity

**Compulsory**

Before Court

 Download MIAM Guide (PDF)

## What Does MIAM Stand For?

**IMPORTANT: Only FMC-accredited mediators can issue valid MIAM certificates.**

For mediation services: [familymediationcouncil.org.uk/find-local-mediator](http://familymediationcouncil.org.uk/find-local-mediator)

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**MIAM** stands for **Mediation Information Assessment Meeting**. It is the legally required first step before you can apply to family court for orders about children in England and Wales.

## What is a MIAM?

A MIAM is a meeting with an FMC-accredited family mediator where:

- ✓ The mediation process is explained to you
- ✓ Your situation is discussed (confidentially)
- ✓ The mediator assesses whether mediation is suitable
- ✓ Your options are outlined (mediation, court, other routes)
- ✓ Costs and legal aid eligibility are discussed
- ✓ You receive your **FM1 certificate**

The MIAM is **not** mediation itself – it is an information and assessment meeting. You attend alone (the other party has a separate MIAM). The meeting is confidential.

## Is MIAM Compulsory?

Yes. Attending a MIAM is **compulsory** before you can apply to family court using a **C100 form**. This requirement was introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014.

The court will not process your application without either:

- ✓ A valid **MIAM certificate** (Form FM1), OR
- ✓ Evidence of a valid **exemption**

## MIAM Exemptions

You do not need to attend a MIAM if you have a valid exemption. Common exemptions include:

- ✓ **Domestic abuse** - You have evidence of domestic abuse (police report, court order, refuge letter, etc.)
- ✓ **Urgency** - There is a risk to the child that requires immediate court action

- ✓ **Child protection** - A local authority is involved in child protection
- ✓ **Previous MIAM** - You attended a MIAM in the last 4 months
- ✓ **No contact details** - You genuinely cannot locate the other party

See our full [MIAM exemptions guide](#) for the complete list.

## What Happens at a MIAM Meeting?

### 1 Welcome and Explanation

The mediator introduces themselves, explains confidentiality, and outlines what will happen during the meeting.

### 2 Your Situation

You describe your situation - the dispute, what you want to achieve, and any concerns. This is confidential.

### 3 Mediation Explained

The mediator explains how mediation works, what it can achieve, and how it compares to going to court.

### 4 Suitability Assessment

The mediator assesses whether mediation is suitable for your case. They consider safety, power imbalance, and willingness to negotiate.

### 5 Costs and Options

The mediator explains mediation costs, legal aid eligibility, and the [Family Mediation Voucher Scheme](#) (£500 towards costs).

### 6 Certificate Issued

You receive your [FM1 certificate](#) recording the outcome. This is valid for 4 months.

## How Long Does a MIAM Take?

A MIAM typically lasts **45-60 minutes**. It is a single meeting, not multiple sessions. The meeting can be conducted:

- ✓ **In-person** - At the mediator's office
- ✓ **Online** - Via video call (Zoom, Teams, etc.)
- ✓ **By telephone** - In some circumstances

Online MIAMs are just as valid as in-person meetings and are often quicker to book.

## How to Arrange a MIAM Meeting

Arranging a MIAM is straightforward:

- ✓ **Find a mediator** - Search the [Family Mediation Council directory](#) or contact a local mediation service
- ✓ **Check FMC accreditation** - Only FMC-accredited mediators can issue valid FM1 certificates
- ✓ **Book an appointment** - Most mediators can see you within 1-2 weeks
- ✓ **Choose format** - In-person or online/video
- ✓ **Attend alone** - The other party is contacted separately

Most mediation services have online booking. You can also call directly.

## How Much Does a MIAM Cost?

Situation	MIAM Cost	Standard MIAM	£90-£150 per person
With Legal Aid	Free	Online MIAM	£90-£150 (same as in-person)

The fee covers the meeting AND your [FM1 certificate](#). There is no separate charge for the certificate.

## Legal Aid for MIAMs

You may qualify for a free MIAM if:

- ✓ You are a victim of domestic abuse (with evidence)
- ✓ Your household income is below the legal aid threshold

- ✓ You receive qualifying benefits (Universal Credit, Income Support, etc.)

## What is MIAM Mediation?

The MIAM itself is not mediation - it is an assessment meeting. However, if the mediator assesses that mediation is suitable and both parties are willing, you can proceed to **full mediation sessions**.

Full **family mediation** involves:

- ✓ Joint sessions (both parties present, or **shuttle mediation** in separate rooms)
- ✓ Negotiating arrangements for children, finances, or both
- ✓ Typically 3-5 sessions of 90 minutes each
- ✓ Working towards a written agreement
- ✓ The agreement can be made into a legally binding **consent order**

## Do Both Parties Need to Attend?

Only the **applicant** (the person who wants to make a court application) must attend a MIAM. However:

- ✓ The mediator will contact the other party to invite them to their own MIAM
- ✓ If the other party refuses, the mediator records this on your FM1
- ✓ You still receive a valid certificate regardless
- ✓ The other party's refusal does not prevent you from applying to court

## How to Prepare for a MIAM

To get the most from your MIAM:

- ✓ Think about what arrangements you want for your children
- ✓ Consider what the other parent might want
- ✓ Note any concerns about safety or welfare

- ✓ Think about what you have already tried (negotiation, etc.)
- ✓ Prepare any questions about mediation
- ✓ Bring details of the other parent (so the mediator can contact them)

### Free preparation

Our AI assistant **Miam** can help you organise your thoughts before the meeting - understanding what to expect and clarifying your priorities. It is completely free.

## After the MIAM: What Next?

After your MIAM, you have several options depending on the outcome:

- ✓ **Mediation suitable, both willing** → Proceed to **mediation sessions** (the **voucher scheme** provides £500 towards costs)
- ✓ **Other party won't attend** → You can apply to court using the **C100 form** with your FM1 certificate
- ✓ **Mediation not suitable** → You can apply to court with your FM1 certificate
- ✓ **Exemption confirmed** → You can apply to court

Remember: your FM1 certificate is valid for **4 months**. Don't let it expire before submitting your court application.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Prepare for Your MIAM

Our AI assistant Miam can help you organise your thoughts, understand what to expect, and clarify your priorities before your MIAM meeting.

Prepare with Miam (Free)

Learn About MIAMs



**AI Preparation Tool:** Miam helps you prepare for your MIAM but cannot provide legal advice or issue certificates. Only FMC-accredited mediators can do that.

## Related Guides

### MIAM Certificate

Everything you need to know about MIAM certificates (Form FM1). Learn what they are, what they look like, how much they cost, how long they are valid for, how to get one for your C100 court application,...

### C100 Form Guide

Everything you need to know about the C100 form - how to apply online or by post to family court for a Child Arrangements Order. Includes costs, MIAM requirements, timelines, emergency applications,...

### MIAM Exemptions: When You Don't Need Mediation

Complete guide to MIAM exemptions in England & Wales. Learn if you qualify for exemption due to domestic abuse, urgency, or other valid reasons. Free guidance.

### Mediation Costs UK: How Much Does Mediation Cost?

Complete guide to mediation costs in the UK. Learn how much MIAM and family mediation cost, who pays, and how to get free mediation through legal aid or the voucher scheme.

### What is Mediation? Definition, Meaning & Complete UK Guide

Understand what mediation means in the UK. Complete guide to mediation definition, how it works, types of mediation, and when to use it. Free expert guidance.

## FM1 Form Guide

Complete guide to the FM1 form (MIAM certificate). Learn what it is, what it looks like, who can issue it, what the different outcomes mean, and how it relates to your C100 court application.