

Consultation: domestic abuse screening and assessment resource for family mediators

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Deadline for responses 27 May 2025



FMC Registered family mediators are required to assess whether mediation is safe and suitable for all participants. This assessment happens first at a pre-mediation meeting or MIAM (Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting) but mediators also have an ongoing duty to assess safety and suitability throughout the mediation process.

In every case, mediators must therefore seek to understand if abuse is a factor, to understand power dynamics between participants, and avoid exacerbating abuse participants have experienced or putting participants at further risk. If mediation is not suitable, mediators must help participants understand and signpost to their next steps; if mediation is possible even though there is evidence of abuse, mediators must know how to put measures in place to ensure participants remain safe throughout the process.

There is no published suitability assessment resource specifically designed for use by family mediators in England and Wales to assist with this process – mediators use different tools and processes, often developed from other material or assessments used in other professions.

Domestic abuse survivors report different experiences (good and bad) of the mediation process, and of mediator approaches, suggesting practice is inconsistent and at times risks not meeting FMC standards.

The Family Mediation Council is therefore developing a universal resource to set a benchmark for assessment of safety and suitability in relation to domestic abuse, so that family mediators consistently adopt a comprehensive approach to identifying domestic abuse. If any domestic abuse is identified, the resource will guide mediators as they help participants determine their steps in addressing child/financial arrangements following separation, and to signpost to relevant support services.

As well as safer mediation practices for individuals, it is hoped that the use of this resource will generate confidence in family mediation, which will lead to greater use and less conflict in separating families.

We have now published the draft resource, which can be found [here](https://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Mediation-Screening-and-Assessment-Resource-draft-for-consultation-28.4.25.pdf) (<https://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Mediation-Screening-and-Assessment-Resource-draft-for-consultation-28.4.25.pdf>).

We would welcome feedback on this draft by way of responses to the consultation below.

The FMC would like to thank [The Family Mediation Trust](#) for funding the development of this resource through its [Impact Fund](#), and consultants Adrienne Cox FMCA, Dr Liza Thompson and members of the FMSB's Domestic and Child Abuse Panel for their work on this resource.

Consultation

We have separate consultations for family mediators, and domestic abuse advisors/other professionals. Please choose the consultation most suited to your experience.

We also conducting separate conversations with survivors of domestic abuse.

You can participate in this consultation by to attend one of our online consultation sessions (see details below) or by sending written responses to the questions below to executive@familymediationcouncil.org.uk by **27 May 2025**.

Consultation for domestic abuse advisers and other interested professionals

Please consider the draft screening and assessment resource which can be found [here](#) before attending a Zoom question or answering the consultation questions.

Register for one of two Zoom sessions:

[Wednesday 14 May 10am – 11.30am](#)

[Friday 16 May 1pm – 2.30pm](#)

The same material will be covered in each session, and so there is no need to attend both.

Consultations questions:

1. Do you think the questions outlined in the toolkit are the right questions for mediators to be asking clients in the MIAM?
2. Do you think that the correct indicators are included to identify risk of mediation taking place?
3. Would this resource give you confidence that the mediator will be able to identify risk of harm and safely assess suitability of mediation in this context?
4. What other questions/indicators (if any) should be included?
5. Do you have any comment on the language used? If any concerns, what alternatives might you suggest and why?

Please send written responses to executive@familymediationcouncil.org.uk by **27 May 2025**.

Consultation for family mediators

Please consider the draft screening and assessment resource which can be found [here](#) before attending a Zoom question or answering the consultation questions.

Register for one of two Zoom sessions:

[Wednesday 7 May, 1pm – 2.30pm](#)

[Friday 16 May, 10am – 11.30am](#)

The same material will be covered in each session, and so there is no need to attend both.

Consultation questions:

1. How will this resource fit with your current MIAM practice?
2. What might prevent you from using the toolkit?
3. What do you think might work better (if anything) and why?
4. Are there other behaviours/indicators/questions that you feel should be included?
5. Is there anything in the resource that you think should not be included?
6. Do you have any comment on the language used? If any concerns, what alternatives might you suggest and why?
7. Do you consider the information gained as a result of using the resource will support you in more accurately identifying risk of harm and to safely assess suitability of mediation in this context?
8. Do you consider the information gained as a result of using this resource will support you in discussing next steps with the participant, whether or not mediation is going ahead?

Please send written responses to executive@familymediationcouncil.org.uk by **27 May 2025**.