

Foort Tayler- Child-Inclusive Mediation (CIM)

What is CIM?

Child-Inclusive Mediation (CIM) is a way for children to be involved in the mediation process, giving children a “voice” in relation to decisions that are being made about them and which affect their future.

CIM can be helpful when parents wish to find out how their separation is impacting their child/children, and whether there is anything that they might be able to do as parents to make things easier for them. It can be helpful when parents want to ascertain their children’s wishes and feelings, as it is not unusual for parents to have differing views on what their children may be saying or feeling.

It is not uncommon for a child whose parents are separating to feel guilt, to position themselves to take sides, or to say or do things to please one or other parent. This can lead to conflicting messages to or between parents, and cause confusion.

CIM provides the children with an opportunity to talk about their situation with a neutral person. We will only speak to a child with the prior consent of BOTH parents and the child.

CIM could be helpful where:-

- We are conducting family mediation for the parents, and they wish to provide their child(ren) with a voice during the process;
- Parents are going through mediation with another provider but the mediator isn’t CIM trained. Our CIM service can be utilised during this process (alongside such mediation);
- There are court proceedings but parents would like to have an indication of the child(ren)’s wishes and feelings on a less formal basis than with CAFCASS involvement.

How it Works

Our discussions with any child through CIM are confidential (except for if any safeguarding issues arise) and parents will not be in the room when the child(ren) meet with the mediator. Any meeting between a lawyer and a child will generally be conducted with another member of staff informally present in the room, for safeguarding purposes.

The possibility of CIM needs to be carefully explored prior to any meetings and will be fully discussed with parents prior to any meetings being agreed and arranged. If both parents wish the mediator to carry out a CIM meeting, a letter inviting the child(ren) to attend will be sent to the child(ren). The meeting will only take place if the child(ren) agree to meet with the mediator.

The child will not be asked pointed questions such as “where do you want to live” but will be given the opportunity to air their feelings and, for example, to discuss what is working well for them and what is perhaps not working so well. The purpose of such meetings is to enable a child to have input during the mediation process (if they wish to be heard), however, ultimately it is still the parents who will make the decisions.

Feedback to parents is available, generally, very quickly. However, we will only provide feedback with the child(ren)’s consent.

Our accredited mediators, Sarah Horseman and Helen Kirkham, are both trained in child-inclusive mediation and are DBS checked.

For further information on child inclusive mediation please contact Sarah Horseman or Helen Kirkham on 01371 875200