

Consilia Mediation Take Part in Government Voucher Scheme

On 26th March 2021, the Government announced that it is investing £1m in family mediation in order to support separated families to resolve issues relating to children. Under the scheme, the Ministry of Justice will contribute up to £500 per family, to resolve issues relating to children following parental separation. To qualify for the scheme, the Mediation must be provided by Family Mediation Council Accredited (FMCA) mediators and the fund will reduce the costs of mediation for at least 2000 families.

The scheme is not means tested and therefore families do not need to pass any financial eligibility assessments. The only criteria for families to qualify is that they are engaging in mediation to resolve a private law matter concerning children.

John Taylor, Chair of the Family Mediation Council said *'This government investment in mediation is much welcomed by the Family Mediation Council. It will help separated families agree solutions that are best for their children, taking into account what is going to be important for them as they grow up. Family mediation is a proven cost-effective way to resolve differences following separation. This voucher scheme will make it even more accessible, and will help families resolve issues for themselves, without having to go to court.'*

The mediator will discuss the availability of the voucher scheme with participants at their initial mediation information and assessment meeting (MIAM) appointment. The voucher cannot be used to pay for the MIAM but it can be used towards future joint mediation sessions with both participants.

Head of Family Mediation, Laura Clapton (FMCA,) welcomed the scheme stating *"The mediation voucher scheme is a fantastic initiative which will help a significant number of families going through mediation by lessening the financial strain that private law disputes can put on separated families and will encourage more families to seek professional help outside of the court process. I have already discussed the scheme with a number of parents who are considering mediation and it has come as a huge relief to them knowing that there is financial support available to them when they so desperately want to seek a resolution out of court."*

1. Further information about the scheme, aimed at families who may benefit, is published here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/family-mediation-voucher-scheme>
2. The Family Mediation Council is a not-for-profit organisation whose aim is to promote the use of family mediation for the benefit of the public. It does not offer mediation itself. Family Mediation Council Accredited mediators meet rigorous professional standards. Find out more: <https://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/>

3. For more information about anything contained in this press release or family mediation in general, please contact Laura Clapton at laura@consilialegal.co.uk or on 0113 322 9222.