

Context
 External environmental factors.
 This includes assumptions i.e., expectations or beliefs that underpin intervention success

Interventions
 What activities are delivered to beneficiaries

Mechanisms
 by which the activities lead to the outcomes.
 This might include changes in attitudes, thinking or behaviour

Outcomes
 The changes you expect or hope to see because of the intervention

The Family Court child protection process is an adversarial system in which decisions are made that are life-changing for families.

The nature of this system can create unnecessary tension, suffering and trauma for families who are already under immense strain.

There is widespread support amongst family professionals (eg social workers, CAF/CASS, legal professionals and the judiciary) for a more dialogical system which works in partnership with families to achieve the best outcomes, in a fair and timely manner, for children.

Children benefit from a reduction in conflict between all adults involved in the process.

Child Protection Mediation is a confidential process in which a specifically trained neutral third party who has no authoritative decision-making power (the mediator) assists the child's parents (and where appropriate other interested parties such as the child's extended family, caregivers, social workers and lawyers) to discuss their concerns in a safe environment and establish a way of moving forward in the best interests of the child.

There is support from Portsmouth Local Authority, for a Child Protection Mediation Pilot.

Child Protection Mediation needs to be facilitated by experienced (accredited) mediators with knowledge of the Child Protection system and who are trained in Child Inclusive Mediation.

Research suggests the mediation process by itself has proved disappointing in significantly improving communication between parties. Therefore this project will be run by mediators who have been internally trained to provide communication skills coaching.

There will be a Steering Group consisting of senior representatives from the Judiciary, CAF/CASS, the Local Authority and family law firms.

Attendance at MIAM and mediation is always on a voluntary basis and cannot be ordered by the court.

