PAI Family Safety Assessments

*Information for parents*

**What does the assessment involve?**

Because of our considerable experience in the field, PAI are often instructed (usually by a family law solicitor or social services) to carry out an independent assessment in cases where there are concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, usually because of conflict between the parents.

In order to carry out the assessment, we have to review all available records concerning those involved and speak to both parents and to any other individuals who may have relevant information. We then produce a confidential written report which is sent to the solicitors who commissioned the assessment.

The assessment generally tries to answer two questions: what risks, if any, are posed to the children concerned and what steps can be taken to manage or reduce those risks?

**Do I have to participate?**

You are not under any legal obligation to participate in the assessment but if you do not, it will be much more difficult to take your views into account when preparing the assessment. If you are in any doubt, we recommend that you contact your legal advisor.

**What will happen at the assessment?**

So that we can collect as much information as possible from you, and also you can have your say, part of the assessment will include one (and sometimes two) of our staff members meeting with you on one or two occasions. We will be asking you questions about your experience of domestic violence and asking you to compete a number of forms (we can help you with this if you have difficulty reading).

We will keep written notes about the information you give us which we shall draw upon when we prepare our report. We may need to ask you for consent for us to discuss your case with other people and to access information about you held by other agencies.

**How long will the interview take?**

We normally spend about 4 to 6 hours with each parent.

**How long will the report take before it is ready?**

We usually submit our written report within eight to ten weeks of receiving our instructions.

**Where will the interviews take place?**

Where we meet with you depends on the circumstances of the case. Many interviews are held at our interview rooms in Chiswick, but we can also arrange to meet you at other locations (such as your solicitor’s office) if necessary.

**What if I don’t like what the report says?**

You should discuss this with your solicitor.