

PAI Family Safety Assessments

PAI are an independent organization specializing in assessment and intervention where domestic violence is a child protection concern.

Assessments for Private Law contact proceedings

PAI offer assessments relating to the potential risk arising from residence and contact arrangements in private law proceedings. Referrals may come from family law practitioners or Cafcass workers. Clients can also refer themselves for assessment. Our assessments fully address the factors outlined in the 2008 Practice Direction regarding domestic violence and harm - including risk to child and resident parent, motivation for contact, attitude to past violence and capacity to change.

As an agency, our primary area of expertise is in assessing the potential for direct or indirect harm to children and their parents arising from violence in the family.

Our **Family Safety Assessments** use a comprehensive assessment framework developed specifically for use in the family court arena. We use an evidence-based, structured professional judgement approach to assessing the risk of perpetration of family violence, abuse and coercive control. The report includes a detailed consideration of any developmental, situational, behavioural and social-adjustment factors related to risk, (including the parent's mental health history). Where necessary, it also addresses vulnerability to domestic abuse and capacity to protect children.

A family safety assessment also reports on those aspects of the parent's clinical presentation related to risk, such as understanding of child protection concerns, capacity for empathy, impulsivity/emotional instability, emotional regulation, negative attitudes and capacity for insight.

Treatment and risk reduction recommendations are also included, as well as comments about prognosis and timescales.

Other assessments

Cognitive assessments focus on the capacity of a parent to use and retain information. The findings of a cognitive assessment can ensure that communication and support are provided to the parent in a way that they can understand and use. Cognitive assessments involve a short clinical history taking and the administration of a standardised, validated measure of IQ (the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales IV – WAIS IV).

PAI Family Safety Assessments
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Please be aware that it is not possible to use the WAIS IV with parents who do not have a good command of the English language, even with an interpreter present. In general we do not have access to versions of this test in other languages. However we can explore with the parent whether there have been any indicators of cognitive difficulties in their developmental, educational and employment history, and their literacy and everyday coping skills. This screening exercise can be supplemented with a language-free test, such as the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence Fourth Edition (TONI-4) or the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales (II).

Assessments of psychological functioning

If the referrer has more general concerns about the extent to which mental health difficulties affect a parent's functioning, we can provide formal screening for psychopathology, using well-respected self-report inventories alongside a clinical interview.

Whilst it is beyond the area of expertise of a psychologist to make diagnoses, the report can comment on any observed indications of mental health problems or personality difficulties and make recommendations for treatment to address these.

Please note that a psychological assessment does not replace the need for a risk/safety assessment – the presence of mental health difficulties is not necessarily a risk indicator, and many people who pose high risk do not have an identifiable mental health difficulty.

Also, referrers should be aware that because of the comprehensive nature of our family safety assessments, we cannot provide additional assessments of cognitive and or psychological functioning within the Legal Aid Agency's guideline hours allowance for a single assessment. Such assessments therefore need to be commissioned separately.

Assessments of the risk of sexual offending – we have practitioners who are experienced in assessing the risk of sexual abuse by both adults and young people.

The assessment process

Our assessors meet with each parent on between one to three occasions. The meetings are quite structured, with questions being asked about past and present experiences. Adult clients are also asked to complete a number of questionnaires, with the help of the assessor. We normally spend some five to six hours with each parent. We can usually submit a report within eight weeks of receiving instructions. **However please do not confirm a filing date for a report without consulting us at the time of instruction, as our caseload varies and longer may be needed.**

One or more assessors may be involved in the assessment, depending on the needs of the case and our availability.

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Charges for assessment work

Assessment work is charged at £93.60 per hour, excluding expenses. An accurate estimate of costs can be supplied after receipt of the letter of instruction and court bundle. However as a guideline figure, we allow 25 hours work for a domestic violence assessment where the main focus is on the risk posed by an alleged perpetrator, or an assessment focusing on the vulnerability of the alleged victim. We allow 35 hours work for a family safety assessment focusing on both parents. (For cognitive or personality assessments, please enquire on a case by case basis, see below).

Fees for assessment work and court attendance are derived according to the scale of fees below: Please note these figures do not include VAT

Meetings, interviewing, consulting, supervision, report-writing and all qualifying attendant work are charged at an hourly rate of:	£93.60	Court attendance, per hour (excluding travelling)	£93.60
Travelling, per hour	£40		
Travel expenses, per mile	£0.45		
<p>NB. If a court attendance is cancelled or re-scheduled at less than 48 hours' notice it will incur a cancellation fee.</p> <p>Where clients do not attend interviews which are conducted outside our offices there will also be a cancellation fee of one hours waiting time plus travel time and expenses</p>			

Itemised estimate of costs in a family violence assessment where the primary focus is on one parent (and no travelling on our part is involved).

Please note that the costings in this table do not include cognitive or personality testing, which would need to be commissioned separately.

task	description	Estimated time
Preparation and collating information from bundle	To consider the instruction, to review all documents, to extract relevant information, to compile the interview schedule(s), to prepare questionnaires and psychometric tests, to arrange interviews with clients:	3
Consultations	To consult with other professionals by telephone:	1

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Interviewing	To carry out separate face to face interviews of mother and father. Two interviews with each parent. Please note that extra costs will be incurred if we have to travel to the solicitor's office or client's home.	6
Testing	To analyse inventories and psychometric tests	2
Report writing	To provide a written report, providing detailed evidence for presence or absence of each of the 25 developmental, social-adjustment, situational and attitudinal risk factors linked with risk of family violence recidivism contained in our assessment framework. Also assessing risk of child maltreatment and exposure to other forms of harm, separately for each child and answering specific questions posed by the parties.	13
Travelling	@ £40 per hour travel time.	
Total @£93.60 per hour (excluding VAT)	25 hours	£2340

Estimated costs for other assessments, when commissioned alongside a family safety assessment.

<i>Cognitive assessment</i>	<i>7-10 hours for each parent</i> To include, e.g. a full IQ test and guidance on how to work with individual. 2-3 hours of direct assessment 1 hour psychometric scoring and analysis 1-2 hour reading 2-4 hours report compilation	£655.20 - £936.00
<i>Assessments of psychological functioning and personality</i>	<i>8-10 hours for each parent</i>	£748.80
<i>Assessment of the risk of sexual offending</i>	<i>Please enquire for an estimate of costs</i>	-

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