

# Proposed Mediation (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to increase the use and consistency of mediation services for certain civil cases by establishing a new process of court-initiated mediation that includes an initial mandatory process involving a statutory duty mediator. The consultation runs from 29 May 2019 to 20 August 2019. All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document. Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer. All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response. Please note that you must complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded. Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here: [Consultation document Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used

## About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation. Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

on behalf of an organisation

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

*No Response*

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Public sector body (Scottish/UK Government/Government agency, local authority, NDPB)

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. We will not publish these details.

## Aim and approach

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of legislating to increase the use and consistency of mediation services for civil cases in Scotland?

Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

SPSO notes that the consultation was issued in advance of the Report of the Expert Group on Mediation in Civil Justice in Scotland (<https://www.scottishmediation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Bringing-Mediation-into-the-Mainstream-in-Civil-Justice-in-Scotland.pdf>). The report supported the need for primary legislation and, given this, we would support a move to put aspects of mediation services for civil cases on a statutory footing. We are, however, aware that the detail of that legislation will be critical to its success or failure. We do not comment on the detail below as, instead, we would recommend that the bill takes forward the recommendations of the Expert group rather than discrete proposals and that the proposer works with them to ensure that it meets their recommendations.

## Details of the proposal

Q2. Which of the following best expresses your view of requiring the parties to a civil court case (unless it is an excluded case) to complete a self-test questionnaire and attend a mandatory Mediation Information Session with a duty mediator?

*No Response*

Q3. Which of the following cases (if any) do you agree should be excluded from the requirement to complete a self-test questionnaire and attend a Mediation Information Session (tick all that apply)?

*No Response*

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view of giving parties who agree to mediate access to a process that can lead to a Mediation Agreement and, where appropriate, a Mediation Settlement Agreement?

*No Response*

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of giving the Scottish Ministers power to extend the mandatory part of the process (the self-test questionnaire and Mediation Information Session) so that it applies to potential litigants who are yet to go to court?

*No Response*

## Financial implications

Q6. Taking account of both costs and potential savings, what financial impact would you expect the proposed Bill to have on:

*No Response*

Q7. Are there ways in which the Bill could achieve its aim more cost-effectively (e.g. by reducing costs or increasing savings)?

*No Response*

## Equalities

Q8. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, maternity and pregnancy, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

*No Response*

Q9. In what ways could any negative impact of the proposed Bill on equality be minimised or avoided?

*No Response*

## Sustainability

Q10. Do you consider that the proposed Bill can be delivered sustainably, i.e. without having likely future disproportionate economic, social and/or environmental impacts?

*No Response*

## General

Q11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions on the proposal?

*No Response*