

Appendix 1 – Question guide

Opening questions

1. Please tell us your name, the names and ages of your children and the most recent thing that made you feel good about being a parent (or one thing that your child does that makes you smile).
2. When you first heard you were coming here to talk about patterns of contact with children after separation, what was the first thing you thought about?

Introductory question

1. So, first of all, could you tell me a bit about how your particular arrangement works? [Probe: when, where, and how do changeovers occur?]

Transition questions

2. Why this pattern of contact?
3. Would you change anything about it?
4. Have there been any major changes in this pattern over time? [Probe: for those of you for whom there have been changes: what would you say was the main reason for that change?]

Key questions

5. Now I want you to think about how the overall pattern of contact is working for everyone – I'd like you to think separately about how it's working for you, your former partner, and the children.
6. Can you talk about any of the things that make your arrangements work well?
7. And what about any things that make your arrangements difficult?
8. [Time permitting: Do you think that children should be involved in any of the decision-making?]
9. What are the main activities that you and your children do together?
10. What sorts of things have affected your contact arrangements? [Probe: what about money, relationship issues, travel, costs of contact, child support?]
11. What arrangements do you have for school holidays? [Probe: what about special days, like Christmas and birthdays?] [Supplement: How do you come to these arrangements?]

Closing questions

1. Is there any information you wish you had at the time of separation that might have made contact with your children after separation better?
2. What advice would you give to other separated parents in making arrangements for children after separation?
3. Have we missed anything, or is there anything else you'd like to add?