Session 6 Assignment – A Week for Whitcombe Ashby Family Law LLP

5 November 2026 · Nkiruka Onyiri

1. Family-law meeting types and where I found them

A family week at Whitcombe Ashby (England and Wales) is built around ten meeting types. Six come from court procedure and rules I checked online; four (initial consultation, client conference, signing appointment, internal review) are firm routines, so they have no outside source. Where no source gives a length, the figure is my own estimate and is marked as such. Checked 5 November 2026.

Meeting type	What it is, in one line	Who attends	Roughly how long	Where I found it
Initial consultation	First meeting where the solicitor hears the client's situation, explains the options and takes ID	Client, supervising solicitor	About 60 minutes (my estimate)	Firm routine, no outside source
MIAM (mediation information and assessment meeting)	A one-to-one meeting with an accredited mediator that is usually required before applying to the family court	Each person separately, with the mediator. The firm does not attend, but diarises the date	About 45 to 60 minutes (my estimate)	Resolution: MIAMs
Client conference	A planned meeting to take instructions or go over documents before a step	Client, supervising solicitor, sometimes counsel	About 45 to 60 minutes (my estimate)	Firm routine, no outside source
FHDRA (first hearing dispute resolution appointment)	The first hearing in a children case, where the court decides what is in dispute and how to move on	Both parties, their lawyers, sometimes Cafcass. Arrive at least an hour early to try to	Court allows about an hour	Weightmans: FHDRA

Meeting type	What it is, in one line	Who attends	Roughly how long	Where I found it
		narrow issues		
First Appointment (financial remedy)	The first court hearing on money and property after divorce, where the judge sets directions	The parties and lawyers. Excused if directions are agreed	About 30 to 60 minutes (my estimate; the listing notice gives the exact time)	Weightmans: financial remedy flow chart
FDR (financial dispute resolution appointment)	A without-prejudice, judge-led hearing to try to settle the money dispute	Parties, lawyers, the judge. A different judge hears the final hearing	About half a day (my estimate; the listing notice gives the exact time)	Weightmans: financial remedy flow chart
Directions hearing	A short hearing to set the next steps in the case	Lawyers, sometimes the parties	About 30 minutes (my estimate; the court sets the time)	Weightmans: financial remedy flow chart
Signing appointment	The client signs a statement of truth, consent order or Form D81 before it is filed	Client, supervising solicitor or VLA as witness	About 30 minutes (my estimate)	Firm routine, no outside source
Pre-hearing meeting at	The client meets the solicitor at court before	Client, supervising	About an hour	Weightmans advises

Meeting type	What it is, in one line	Who attends	Roughly how long	Where I found it
court	a hearing to go through the plan	solicitor	before the hearing	arriving an hour early (FHDRA)
Internal diary and deadline review	A weekly check of every hearing and deadline	Supervising solicitor, VLA	30 minutes (my estimate)	Firm routine, no outside source

Three timing rules I will use as deadline entries, all from the same sources:

- **Form E:** each party exchanges and files it at least 35 days before the first appointment (Family Procedure Rules 9.14).
- **Cafcass safeguarding letter:** due at least three working days before the FHDRA (Weightmans).
- **FDR papers:** the applicant files offers, schedules and the case summary at least 7 days before the FDR (Weightmans).

2. The week: Monday 9 to Friday 13 November 2026

The week has 14 entries across seven types, including one court event (the FHDRA on Wednesday), two deadlines (Tuesday and Friday) and a prep block before the hearing (Tuesday afternoon). All times are UK time (GMT). Every matter, party and date is invented.

Day	Time	Entry	Type	Reminders I would send
Mon 9 Nov	09:00–09:30	INTERNAL | Weekly diary and deadline review | Office	Internal	None. It is a recurring weekly entry
Mon 9 Nov	09:45–10:00	TASK | WA/2026/0211 | Check Cafcass safeguarding letter is on file (due Fri 6 Nov)	Task	Alert to me at 09:45. If it is not on file, chase Cafcass and tell the supervising solicitor
Mon 9 Nov	11:00–12:00	CLIENT | WA/2026/0230 |	Client meeting	Email to client Fri 6 Nov, text at

Day	Time	Entry	Type	Reminders I would send
		Initial consultation, client | Office		08:30 Mon. Solicitor gets the ID-check note Mon 08:30
Mon 9 Nov	14:00–14:45	CLIENT | WA/2026/0198 | Conference: check Form E | Video	Client meeting	Email with the video link Fri 6 Nov. Text 30 minutes before
Tue 10 Nov	09:00	DEADLINE | WA/2026/0198 | Last day to exchange and file Form E (35 days before First Appointment on Tue 15 Dec)	Deadline	Alerts to me and the solicitor Thu 5 Nov (three working days before), Mon 9 Nov 16:00 and Tue 10 Nov 09:00. The one-week alert (Tue 3 Nov) fell before this diary was built
Tue 10 Nov	14:00–16:30	PREP | WA/2026/0211 | FHDRA prep: bundle, position statement, client brief | Desk	Prep block	Alert to me 13:45. Draft to the solicitor by 16:30
Wed 11 Nov	09:00–10:00	CLIENT | WA/2026/0211 | Pre-hearing meeting, client | Central Family Court	Client meeting	Email Mon 9 Nov with the address, what to bring and where to meet. Text Tue 10 Nov 17:00
Wed 11 Nov	10:00–11:00	COURT | WA/2026/0211 | FHDRA, children case | Central Family Court, First Avenue House	Court event	Alerts Mon 9 Nov (two days before) and Tue 10 Nov 16:00. The one-week alert (Wed

Day	Time	Entry	Type	Reminders I would send
				4 Nov) has already passed. Solicitor gets the bundle checklist Tue 16:30
Wed 11 Nov	13:00–13:30	CLIENT | WA/2026/0211 | Post-hearing call: explain what the court directed | Phone	Client meeting	Client email Tue 10 Nov: "I will call you at 13:00 after the hearing"
Thu 12 Nov	11:00–11:30	SIGN | WA/2026/0174 | Consent order and Form D81 signing, client | Office	Signing appointment	Email Mon 9 Nov listing what to bring (ID). Text Wed 11 Nov 17:00
Thu 12 Nov	15:00–15:45	INTERNAL | WA/2026/0187 | Check FDR offers, schedules and summary with solicitor | Teams	Internal	Alert to me 14:45. Papers saved to the matter file by Wed 17:00
Fri 13 Nov	12:00	DEADLINE | WA/2026/0187 | Last day to file FDR documents (7 days before FDR on Fri 20 Nov). I file by 12:00	Deadline	Alerts Fri 6 Nov, Tue 10 Nov, Thu 12 Nov 16:00 and Fri 13 Nov 09:00
Fri 13 Nov	15:00–16:00	INTERNAL | File review, time recording and next week's diary | Office	Internal	None. It is a recurring weekly entry
Fri 13 Nov	16:00–16:15	TASK | WA/2026/0187 | Send the client the FDR attendance letter	Task	Alert to me 15:45

3. Naming convention and reminders

Every entry follows one pattern: **TYPE | Matter ref | Short title | Place**. The type is in capitals so the week scans at a glance. The types used are INTERNAL, TASK, CLIENT, DEADLINE, PREP, COURT and SIGN. No client or party names appear in entries, so nothing confidential shows on a shared screen. The matter ref is left out of firm-wide entries and the place is left out of deadlines and tasks.

Reminder rules I would actually send:

- **Client meetings and signings:** confirmation email at least two working days before (three where the diary allows, and the Friday for a Monday meeting), then a text or email the day before, or on the morning for a Monday meeting. Video meetings get the link in the first email.
- **Court events:** alerts one week, two days and the afternoon before. The supervising solicitor gets the bundle checklist the afternoon before.
- **Deadlines:** alerts one week, three working days, the day before at 16:00 and the morning itself. I aim to finish by 12:00 on the last day, to leave room for a failed upload or a missing signature.
- **Prep blocks and tasks:** one alert to me 15 minutes before.