

FMC Board Meeting
Monday 30th September 2024
Approved Minutes

Present: Stephen Burke (Chair), Allan Blake, Alison Bull (Resolution), Jan Coulton (The College of Mediators), Sarah Hawkins (NFM), Beverley Sayers (FMA), Caroline Bowden (The Law Society)

Apologies: Ruth Hay (FJC Representative),

Also in attendance: Robert Creighton (FMSB Chair), Helen Anthony (Executive Officer)

Open Session – FMC Board Members and observers		
	Item	Actions
1.	STANDING ITEMS	
1.1	Welcome, introductions, apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everybody.	
1.2	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	<p>The board approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14.8.24.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FJC Voice of the Child Working Group. The board noted that the FJC working group had met to confirm its Terms of Reference and membership. BS to send ToR to HA for circulation. • Number of Registered Mediators. The board noted there had been a slight increase. The board asked for numbers of registered mediators to be circulated on a regular basis. • VAT liability. The board noted that accountants had been asked to provide an estimate ahead of the next Finance Working Group meeting. 	BS to send FJC VoTC WG ToR to HA for circulation.
2.	Items for Decision	
2.1	Financial Viability	
	The board noted the draft key arguments for sustainable funding for mediation, and agreed it should be reorganised, with more emphasis placed on funding mediation for low-income families, and that it should also incorporate child-inclusive mediation. HA & RW to refine & review messages.	HA & RW to refine & review messages
2.2	Good Governance	
	<p>The board approved the updated Privacy Notice and agreed to further review the retention policy at its next meeting.</p> <p>The board approved the Terms of Reference of the Finance Working Group subject to the addition of a list of the type of required members for the group (e.g. FMC board member, FMSB member etc).</p>	

3.	Items for Discussion	
3.1	Increased Awareness of Mediation	
	<p>Pathfinder Pilot</p> <p>The board noted that there was a concern that cases in Pathfinder Pilot courts in which there are no safeguarding concerns may not be referred to mediation, even though this may be the most appropriate method of addressing issues. It was agreed that the FMC should seek to understand more about the pilot by talking to CAFCASS and CAFCASS Cymru in the first instance.</p> <p>The FMC noted there may be an opportunity to work together with Resolution on this, as it was interested in understanding more about the impact of Pathfinder courts too.</p>	
3.2	Strategic Development	
	<p>The board welcomed the list of the FMC's achievements in 2023-2024, and agreed that this should be expanded to include more information about the impact of the achievements. The board agreed to share these achievements with mediators, perhaps in an annual report.</p> <p>The board noted the first list of suggested priorities for 2025 onwards, and that this would be subject to development throughout the autumn, with input from directors, FMSM members, MOs and mediators. The board noted that the decision about the future strategy and priorities would be made at the joint FMC/FMSB meeting on 11 December.</p>	<p>HA to revise list of achievements</p> <p>HA & RW to consider how to share with mediators</p>
4.	Items for Information	
4.1	Increased awareness of mediation	
	<p>Sunderland Academic Symposium</p> <p>The board thanked Beverley Sayers for speaking at the Sunderland University Symposium on Family Dispute Resolution, and Jan Coulton for attending. The board noted that the FMC's open approach had been welcomed, and that a number of contacts had been established with academics conducting upcoming relevant research projects. HA to work with JC & BS to follow up with those academics.</p> <p>The board noted that research was important in helping the FMC better understand the family mediation landscape. The board noted that this had been suggested as a priority for 2025 onwards and that the contacts made at Sunderland may be helpful in this context.</p> <p>The board noted that it may be able to use a recent volunteer to conduct a literature review.</p> <p>The board noted that it was often difficult for mediators to access research that may be relevant to their work, as this was behind a</p>	<p>HA, JC & BS to follow up with academics</p> <p>HA to contact possible volunteer re literature review</p>

	<p>pay wall. The board noted that the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory may be able to help in disseminating messages from relevant research. HA to follow up with Nuffield FJO.</p> <p>Family Mediation Week Update The board thanked the Family Mediation Week working group for its work on inviting speaker submissions for FMW 2025. The board noted plans for a Westminster reception and that the working group was seeking sponsors.</p> <p>Communications – use of social media The board noted that it had previously asked Richard Wyatt, its marketing consultant, to advise whether the FMC should be using TikTok and Instagram. The board noted that RW had advised against this, due to the image/video-based nature of these platforms, as it was difficult and expensive to produce relevant images and videos relating to family mediation.</p> <p>Letters to ministers and autumn event The board noted that the Chair had had response from letter sent to the DfE, DWP and MoJ, and that as a result meetings with DWP officials and Lord Ponsonby were being arranged.</p> <p>The board noted that the potential autumn event at Westminster had been postponed, and that the FMC was now looking to host this during Family Mediation Week 2025.</p>	<p>HA to contact Nuffield FJO</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p>Confidence in Mediation & Sector Capacity:</p>	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the FMSB meeting held on 3.7.24. In particular the board noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At 2.1, the FMSB had highlighted the issue of mediators who were working towards accreditation whilst the sole mediation practitioner in their firm. There FMC board would like to ensure that any changes in this area ensure that people are still able to become mediators in these circumstances. - At 2.3, a number of MOs expressed an interest in being involved in CIM work. - At 5.2, Resolution had expressed an interest in being involved in the DCA Panel as its work is relevant across the family justice profession. The Executive Officer will raise this with the Panel. <p>The board noted that the FMSB was intending to review policy and procedures relating to DBS checks, where these result in disclosures, to ensure these were clear.</p> <p>The board noted that the FMSB’s consultation on the MIAM Guidance had closed and the FMSB would be updating this in the autumn, and this will include revising the guide to NCDR.</p>	

	The board noted that the FMSB was addressing a concern regarding a training course run by a formerly approved provider.	
4.3	Financial Viability	
	<p>The board noted the written legal aid and voucher scheme updates.</p> <p>The board noted that the FMC would ask the LAA to review its complex procurement process following the news that some mediation organisations lost their legal aid contracts due to small administrative mistakes made by the applicant firms during the process.</p>	
4.4	Good Governance	
	The board noted that the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Team had been re-established.	
5.	Next meeting dates	
	<p>11 December 2024 Joint FMC/FMSB Meeting – In person, in London</p> <p>NB MO Meetings 1 October, 12 November, 15 November 2024</p> <p>---</p> <p>Proposed for 2025:</p> <p>12 March 2025 – In person 18 June 2025 – Online 17 September 2025 – In person (NB Also AGM) 10 December – Online</p>	