



The Family Mediation Council seeks to appoint members to its newly formed Family Mediation Standards Board

Since early 2010 increasing importance has been placed on family mediation. Policy makers and government have moved this non-confrontational out of court dispute resolution option centre stage. In April 2013 significant changes to legal aid were introduced which, together with the introduction in April 2014 of the requirement that in order to apply to the court in most matters relating to separation or divorce the applicant must attend a MIAM have ensured that family mediation now has an increasing importance in the resolution of family based disputes.

The Family Mediation Council (FMC) was set up with the aim of harmonising standards for family mediation in England and Wales. The FMC is the umbrella body for family mediation organisations in England and Wales and to belong to the FMC each organisation must meet and adhere to its standards as set out in its constitution. The FMC's founder members currently maintain registers of family mediator members who meet those standards; starting in January 2015 a central register of trained and qualified mediators will be operated by the FMC.

The FMC is dedicated to working to promote best practice in family mediation and to ensuring the public can confidently access family mediation services offering exacting professional and training standards.

In anticipation of the changes brought in earlier this year and in order to increase public confidence in family mediation delivery the FMC commissioned an independent review of its standards led by Dr Stan Lester. Dr Lester's review was finalised in July this year and his recommendations were accepted by the FMC. A key recommendation was that a separate Family Mediation Standards Board should be set up to monitor and regulate family mediation standards of the FMC member organisations in England and Wales. This is an independent board within the FMC and will perform its regulatory function. A copy of the approved standards framework can be found at http://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/fmc_standards_framework_manual.pdf.

The FMC is now seeking to appoint six members to sit on the newly formed board. FMSB members will be at the forefront of the introduction and implementation of the new standards and self-regulatory framework of the FMC. Members will include both family mediators and lay members with experience of working with professional, academic or service standards. Members may not simultaneously serve on the FMC, chair an FMC member organisation, or have a role within another organisation that is likely to result in a conflict of interest with their role with the FMSB.

These roles are not remunerated although reasonable travel expenses to meetings on FMC related business will be reimbursed. It is anticipated that they will involve a time commitment of 1 day per month. Subject to an initial review after three months, it is anticipated that the appointment will be for a period of two or four years (FMSB members will normally serve for four years, but to prevent the entire Board changing at the same time it is anticipated that half the initial members will stand down after two years).

Role & Responsibilities

The FMSB is responsible strategically to the FMC for the operation of the professional standards and self-regulatory framework for family mediation in England and Wales. This is a non-statutory professional framework that mediators are nevertheless required to comply with if they wish to undertake legal aided work or sign official documentation relating to mediation information and assessment meetings (MIAMs), and that FMC member organisations will require their mediator members to come within. The Board's remit includes:

The primary functions of the PSAB are to do the following, in accordance with the professional standards and self-regulation framework:

- Maintain the professional standards for family mediation.
- Consider initial training courses for approval, consider any appeals relating to courses that are not approved, and monitor the ongoing quality of courses.
- Oversee the accreditation process that leads to qualified (FMCA) status, including: making decisions on the accreditation of individual mediators, including reaccreditation and suspension or removal of accreditation; appointing, training and deselecting assessors; ensuring a common standard of assessment; considering appeals against decisions to refuse or remove accreditation; and maintaining a register of accredited mediators and those registered as working towards accreditation.
- Ensure that the Law Society Family Mediation Panel accreditation scheme operates comparable standards to the FMC scheme.
- Maintain a register of Professional Practice Consultants who have completed training, including operating the registration, re-registration and deselection procedures.
- Consider and make decisions on complaints and disciplinary matters that have been escalated from FMC member organisations, and where necessary investigate potential shortcomings in member organisations' procedures.
- Monitor any other member organisation functions that have a direct bearing on the quality of the professional standards and self-regulation framework.
- Maintain management information to enable the Board to carry out its responsibilities effectively and to provide statistics relating to the professional standards and self-regulation framework.
- Review the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the Board's operations.

The Board will be supported in these functions by the FMC Director and staff or service providers.

FMSB board members will:

- Assist the board in upholding high standards of integrity and probity;
- Assist the board in the development of standards for mediation that are robust and defensible;
- Scrutinise the performance of the board in meeting agreed goals and objectives and monitor the reporting of performance;
- Monitor progress towards the timely and effective achievement and implementation of the objectives, policies and strategies set out by the board ensuring that appropriate decisions are taken promptly;
- Work to ensure best practice in relation to the principles of corporate governance;
- Help the board to promote the development of high-quality information for circulation in advance of meetings and at those meetings to support the full exploration of agenda items in a timely manner
- Devote time to developing and refreshing relevant knowledge and skills.

In addition board members will be expected to:

- Be actively involved in the work of the board both inside and outside the board meetings.
- Serve on and chair a subcommittee when requested to do so by the Chair of the FMSB.
- Attend regular board meetings (c. 6 per year) as well as attendance at/participation in subcommittee meetings. Attendance may be required in person or by email/telephone conference.
- Volunteer for and willingly take on specific board roles and assignments as requested by the Chair and complete board related tasks thoroughly, conscientiously and within the timescales laid down by the Chair and/or board.
- Ensure they are properly informed on all matters concerning the board and any subcommittees, preparing themselves well for meetings, and reviews and commenting in a constructive and timely manner on minutes and reports.
- Establish an effective and collegial working relationship with other committee members which contributes to board consensus.
- Participate actively in the board's annual evaluation process and any board planning and strategy events.

To apply you should have:

- Excellent communication skills
- The diplomacy, tact and enthusiasm required to work constructively with other board members



- Excellent writing skills with the ability to draft clear, concise briefs, reports and other documents on complex issues;
- A good record of attendance at and contribution to board-level or similar meetings.
- An interest in, good understanding of, and relevant experience of professional standards, governance and self-regulation;
- A proven record of working within a budget and in a timely manner in high profile operational roles;
- Experience of working in small groups in an independent manner;
- Experience of successful facilitation of strategic proposals and decision making;
- An ability to challenge other board members in a constructive and facilitative way.

Board members will be selected to ensure a balance of strengths, backgrounds and areas of experience.



How to Apply

Closing date for applications: 5pm on 12 February 2015

Interviews held during : On 17 and 18 February 2015

Applications should be sent by email to sarah.lloyd@resolution.org.uk by 5pm on Wednesday 11 February 2015 and should include:

1. A supporting statement no longer than two pages that explains:
 - Why the role interests you
 - How you meet the criteria outlined above
 - What specific strengths you would bring to the post.
2. Your CV with education and professional qualifications, employment history and current or recent membership of any relevant boards or committees. Please include your daytime and evening telephone contact numbers and e-mail address(es), which will be used with discretion. Please also include the names of two professional referees. Please note that referees will not be approached without your prior knowledge, and only following a successful application and interview.
3. A completed equal opportunities monitoring form (attached). Please note that this is voluntary.

We're a very small team and, unfortunately we'll only be able to acknowledge shortlisted applications.

Interviews

Applicants with the most appropriate mix of qualifications and experience will be invited to participate in the selection process.

Those selected at that stage will be asked to come for interview. The interview will be with the Chair and Director of the FMC and an external observer who has been involved in the FMC standards project.

Appointments will be made subject to satisfactory references.

Further information

If you have any questions about the appointment or the process, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Lloyd on sarah.lloyd@resolution.org.uk.