

FMC Newsletter

September 2020



Recent FMC Developments

MoJ Response to FMC Proposals to Assist Families

We are continuing to work with the MoJ about the proposals we made in May: to instigate a pilot project to fund MIAMs for all and to improve court gate-keeping/ensure referrals are made to mediation where appropriate. Our third proposal - an online at-court mediation scheme - is not something which the MoJ is actively considering at present.

One important issue for the MoJ when considering whether to fund MIAMs more widely is whether there is capacity within the mediation profession to take on additional work. The view of the FMC board is that there is a significant amount of extra capacity, but to help the MoJ have confidence in this assessment we are working on a joint survey which we anticipate will be sent out to you in October.

We know that it is frustrating that we cannot report more significant progress, but the fact that the MoJ continues to explore these first two options is positive news.

Online Working

We understand that, whilst some mediation is now taking place in person, most continues online. The FMC is seeking to learn about mediators' and clients' experiences of online mediation, to support mediators in delivering mediation in this way, and to ensure that our policies and standards remain relevant and appropriate. In addition to asking you about capacity to take on additional work (see above), we will also shortly be asking you to share your experiences of working online.

On a related note, if you offer mediation online and are not already listed on our register as doing so, please e-mail register@familymediationcouncil.org.uk to let us know. We can then update the FMC Register, so that you can be found by members of the public who are using the Find A Mediator search to look for a mediator working online.

Overview of Current Work

As part of its work to promote mediation, the FMC has arranged an online marketing workshop for mediators, and its working group has started to plan Family Mediation Week 2021. More details of both will follow in due course.

In addition to its day-to-day work (for example, improving the way that we communicate and support PPCs), the FMSB is continuing to work on a range of initiatives including the development of standards, with a particular focus on the accreditation process, complaints, MIAMs and online working.

Approved minutes of FMC Board Meetings are available [here](#), and of FMSB Meetings are available [here](#).

Legal Aid

In the summer, the MoJ started an exercise to look at the sustainability of legal aid. In addition to participating in an initial discussion on the subject, the FMC was invited to collate views from individual mediators with legal aid contracts. An anonymised overview of these responses can be read [here](#).

In addition, the FMC is due to meet the Legal Aid Agency in October. We will be focussing on issues relating to the changes made due to coronavirus, and in particular trying to ensure that all the LAA's auditors are aware of the changes in practice that the LAA allowed, and that the LAA is aware of the need to continue to allow the vast majority of applications for legal aid to be made remotely.

Developments from Elsewhere

Serpent Child

Patricia Riley, who as a child suffered family conflict and parental alienation, has authored *Serpent Child*, with the aim of raising awareness of the impact of such experiences on children. A short video about the book, introduced by former CAFCASS CEO Anthony Douglas CBE, is available [here](#). The author is happy to speak to mediators about her experiences and can be contacted via the [publishers](#).

Opportunities for Mediators

Please see the FMC website [here](#) for information about opportunities for mediators.

Upcoming Events & Training

The FMC aims to bring you information about training, courses and workshops related to family mediation, to aid professional development. Courses are listed on our [website](#), where you will find more details about submitting events to be included.

Course listings are currently being updated in light of the coronavirus crisis, and we intend to show courses that will be run online as well as in person. Please do therefore check this page regularly.

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