



Annual Report 2019

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13 October 2020

1. Foreword

This is the fifth annual report of The Family Mediation Council (FMC), which was incorporated in 2015. It covers the period from 1st January to 31st December 2019.

2. Who we are

The FMC is dedicated to promoting good practice in family mediation. Our central aim is to ensure the public can confidently access family mediation services that offer high quality mediation provided by family mediators who meet our standards.

The members of The Family Mediation Council (FMC) in 2019 were:

College of Mediators
The Law Society
Family Mediators Association (FMA)
National Family Mediation (NFM)
Resolution

Each member organisation appointed a director to the FMC Board of Directors. In accordance with the Articles of Association, up to three other directors can be co-opted.

The directors of The Family Mediation Council in 2019 were:

John Taylor (Chair)
Allan Blake
Ewan Malcolm, appointed by College of Mediators
Caroline Bowden, appointed by The Law Society, from 3rd June 2019
Jane Robey, appointed by NFM
Daniel Ronson
Beverley Sayers, appointed by FMA
Sally Jane Wilson, appointed by Resolution

The Company Secretary was Allan Blake.

The FMC was supported in its work by an Executive Officer and an administrative office.

3. Governance

The FMC is a Company limited by guarantee. Its Articles of Association can be found at: <http://www.familymediationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/FMC-Articles-of-Association-1.pdf>

The Company registration number is 9560220 and the registered office address is International Dispute Resolution Centre, 70 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1EU.

The board met four times in 2019 to consider matters of common concern and invited observers from the Ministry of Justice, the Family Justice Council and the Family Mediation Standards Board (“FMSB”) as appropriate, in addition to holding a joint meeting between the FMC board and members of the FMSB.

4. Our achievements in 2019

An important part of the FMC’s work is working with and supporting the work of the FMSB, whose annual report is published at Annex 2.

In 2018 the FMC put in place a two-year strategic plan, and identified four strategic issues to address in 2018 and 2019.

Strategic Issue 1 – Standards Review

The FMSB’s annual report (at Annex 2) records the progress on this.

Strategic Issue 2 – Timely Awareness of mediation, the FMCA quality mark & public access to FMCAs

The FMC continued to build relationships with key agencies to promote the use of mediation and FMC registered mediators, liaising with Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Legal Aid Agency (LAA), Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) and Her Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). It responded

to consultations from the President of the Family Division's Private Law Working Group, the MoJ and the Family Justice Council.

The FMC continued to provide a service online and by phone to help members of the public find family mediators. Use of the "Find A Mediator" search on the FMC website increased by 15% from 2018 to 2019.

The FMC adopted a marketing and communications plan to increase awareness of family mediation and the FMC Register, and conducted a survey of mediators with the aim of using the information gathered to update its website and to support Family Mediation Week in 2020.

Strategic Issue 3 – Turning the outcome of mediation into a final settlement

The FMC aimed to work with judiciary and mediators to endeavour to find a way for mediation participants to turn agreed proposals into a binding settlement, without the need for redrafting. During 2019, the FMC decided to incorporate this issue into the Standards Review, but it was not an area it was able to progress significantly, as other aspects of the Review were prioritised.

The President of the Family Division's Child Arrangements Programme review provided an opportunity to address this issue in relation to children's matters, with a proposal that parenting plans could be noted by the court.

Strategic Issue 4 – good governance

The FMC continued to ensure it had good governance mechanisms in place. It met its statutory responsibilities, had a Code of Practice for individuals working or volunteering with the organisation, and had appropriate insurance.

In 2019, the Chair of the FMC, a co-opted director and the Chair of the FMSB met representatives of its five Membership Organisations to gain a better understanding of their priorities. The FMC held a joint meeting with the FMSB to discuss progress on its strategic priorities.

The FMC started the recruitment process to fill a mediator vacancy on the FMSB, and to recruit an additional mediator to fill a vacancy that would arise during 2020.

5. Financial overview

The FMC's Annual Accounts for 2019 were approved on 9th September 2020 and are attached at Annex 1.

The FMC managed its resources well in 2019, making a surplus of £4,356 after tax.

By far the greatest part of its income came from family mediators' registration fees. The vast majority of these fees were used throughout the year to meet the running costs of the self-regulatory system, including administrative and executive support.

The FMC also continued to receive membership fees from its Member Organisations, which paid for the majority of the cost of FMC board meetings, including the travel expenses of its co-opted directors. FMC Member Organisations continued to bear the travel costs of their appointed directors attending FMC board meetings.

The FMC aims to retain a minimum of £20,000 by way of general reserve every year. The FMC also aims to reserve an additional £10,000 each year from the general budget. This may be used for specific projects, provided (1) such projects are agreed by the board and (2) they do not already form part of the usual day-to-day running expenses of the FMC.

Any part of the additional reserve which is not used for specific projects will be held as an addition to the general reserve.

6. Future work

The FMC has identified the following four strategic areas in which to make progress, in 2020 and 2021:

I. Ensuring High Standards

The FMC will support the work of the FMSB, including its work in progressing the Standards Review.

II. Administrative Processes

The FMC will seek to make its administrative processes more efficient by bringing the registration process online. It will work towards this in 2020, and aim to have an online process in place for the 2021 re-registration period.

III. Marketing & Promotion

The FMC will support Family Mediation Week in January 2020, conduct a trial using social media to promote mediation direct to the public, and host a workshop for registered mediators - to help them market mediation.

The FMC will continue to liaise with the MoJ, LAA, CAFCASS, HMCTS and other organisations as relevant to use opportunities to promote mediation, and to provide a telephone and online service to help members of the public to find a mediator.

IV. Ensuring Good Governance

The FMC will continue to ensure good governance throughout 2020. It will ensure spending in line with its budget which reflects its priorities, and will implement a policy review timetable. The FMC will also meet representatives from each of its five Member Organisations in autumn 2020, with a view to ascertaining their priorities for 2021.

Annex 1

[FMC Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 2019](#)

Annex 2

[FMSB Annual Report 2019](#)