

FMC Newsletter

June 2021



Recent FMC Developments

Mediation Voucher Scheme

The MoJ's mediation voucher scheme which is being administered by the FMC is now well established, with about a third of vouchers having been allocated. Mediators are strongly encouraged to continue to tell clients about the scheme if the mediation concerns child arrangements. The FMC will notify mediators when vouchers have all been allocated.

Please remember that mediators working towards accreditation can conduct mediation under the scheme if supervised by an accredited mediator who is present in the room and takes responsibility for applying for the voucher. Please also remember that the voucher can cover fees for mediation sessions but not paperwork such as parenting plans or memoranda of understanding.

For more details about the voucher scheme, please see [here](#).

MIAMs Standards Consultation

Thank you to all the mediators who have responded to the FMSB's consultation on MIAMs standards. Over one hundred mediators have responded, either in writing or by joining one of the two Zoom discussions hosted by members of the MIAMs working group, and we have also had responses from the FMC's Member Organisations. The MIAMs working group will now consider all responses carefully, before determining and publishing details of its next steps.

FMC Board Update

As well as working to establish the MoJ voucher scheme, the FMC Board has agreed a marketing and engagement plan to promote the benefits of mediation. We know that the FMC advertising directly to the public is not cost-effective, as people are interested in finding out more about family mediation only when it is relevant to their particular circumstances and, unlike with services, we cannot use targeted advertising and track this to see if results in direct conversions to clients. The FMC has therefore agreed that an indirect approach is required in its marketing and engagement work and so will focus its work in the following areas:

- **Making Information Available to the Public** Whilst targeting members of the public with adverts about mediation is costly and may be more 'miss' than 'hit', we can identify the places that people who face issues relating to separation or parenting apart may go for information, and try to ensure they can access reliable information about mediation which is easy to understand.
- **Educating Potential Referrers** Educating potential referrers to mediation – including courts, lawyers, social workers, and teachers
- **Increasing Engagement and FMC Standing** Expanding the FMC's network and overall influence
- **Empowering Mediators** Ensuring FMC Registered Mediators have the skills to promote Family Mediation
- **Changing the Culture** Seeking to challenge the culture of relying on court to resolve disputes and persuading people instead to consider resolving issues through mediation

As part of its work to increase its engagement with other members of the family justice community, the FMC has recently had a Zoom meeting with CAFCASS to discuss how closer relationships can be built between mediators and CAFCASS officers, and to ensure the FMC is involved in the development of pilots being designed to encourage people to resolve disputes outside of the family courts. The FMC and FMSB Chairs have also met the Chair of the Institute of Family Law Arbitrators, and discussed how mediators and arbitrators might be able to signpost cases to each other when appropriate.

[FMSB Update](#)

The FMSB was delighted to welcome two new members to its meeting in May. Professor Lisa Doodson and Michael Mack have both joined as lay members, following the FMC's decision to increase the membership of the FMSB from seven to nine. This has also created a vacancy for a mediator member of the FMSB, and the FMC will recruit for this later in 2021.

As well as its work on MIAMs, the FMSB has been working with FMC Member Organisations to streamline the existing complaints process, to make it easier for members of the public and for the mediation community to understand. This work will continue over the summer. The FMSB has also been considering how to clarify CPD requirements for PPCs and ensure the CPD system allows for the training and support needs of PPCs to be met, as well as continuing its usual work such as considering applications to return to practice and for training course approval.

[Annual Registration 2021](#)

The vast majority of mediators have now taken the first step in the new registration process, by logging on to the new registration system and paying the Registration Fee, or requesting an invoice for the Fee. We are attempting to contact those

mediators who have not yet completed the process, so please do get directly in touch with us if you know you haven't been able to log on to the new system.

Once you have completed the first step, you should receive an e-mail asking you to let us know further information to enable us to complete your registration (eg change of PPC or practice details) – if you have not sent this further information in, please do so now.

In the next few weeks, we will be writing to PPCs to ask that they confirm their ongoing support for those mediators who have re-registered as their consultees.

To contact us about registration please e-mail register@familymediationcouncil.org.uk or telephone on 01707 594055.

Reminders about CPD and Renewal of Accreditation

FMCA mediators need to renew their accreditation status every three years (see [here](#) for further information about the requirements and how to do this), and we will write to you when your re-accreditation date is approaching, to remind you to submit your application.

Please remember that CPD must be relevant to your practice, result in relevant learning and benefits to you as a mediator and, taken overall, provide an adequate level of updating. The three compulsory areas to cover at present are: changes in family law; changes in pensions, benefits and personal taxation; and developments in family mediation practice and theory. There are lots of online courses available at present to ensure mediators can access training to support their development needs (please see below for a link to CPD listings).

When completing your re-accreditation form, please read the guidance carefully before completing the form and signing the right declaration. It takes us longer to process and consider re-accreditation applications if we have to revert to mediators to clarify information included on the form, such as what unusual acronyms mean, and whether individual and group PPC support which is being listed on the same day is accidental double-counting or, in fact, there were two sessions which took place.

Volunteers

We are continuing to look for accredited mediators to join our PPC and Accreditation Panels. The FMSB's panels meet about once a quarter, to consider issues of policy, on which they make recommendations to the full FMSB, and also make decisions on delegated matters such as return to practice applications or non-standard extension requests (in the case of the Accreditation Panel), and support for PPCs (in the case of the PPC panel). Please contact Helen Anthony at executive@familymediationcouncil.org.uk for more details.

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.

Listings include a free event hosted by NFM, which brings together colleagues from the UK, US and Ukraine, allowing mediators to see how financial issues mediation works in different countries, and to share good practice. See [here](#) for more details.

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