



FMC Board Meeting

Wednesday 2nd December 2020

Approved Minutes

Present: John Taylor (FMC Chair), Allan Blake, Caroline Bowden (Law Society), Paulette Morris (College of Mediators), Jane Robey (NFM), Dan Ronson, Beverley Sayers (FMA), Jane Wilson (Resolution)

Also In attendance: Robert Creighton (FMSB Representative, for items 2.4 & 3.2 onwards), Claire Webb (FJC Representative), Helen Anthony (Executive Officer)

Open Session – FMC Board Members and observers		
1.	STANDING ITEMS	Action
1.1	Welcome, introductions, apologies	
1.2	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	<p>The minutes of the FMC board meeting and the AGM held on 9.9.20 were approved.</p> <p>The board noted that the Annual Report for 2019 included reference to drafting documentation that the at the end of a mediation, and that the FMC may want to ensure that if anything further needed to be done on this issue, at the joint FMSB/FMC meeting in January 2021, when priorities for the year would be discussed.</p>	<p>HA to publish minutes of FMC board meeting and FMC AGM 9.9.20</p> <p>HA to add to agenda for 13.1.21</p>
2.	Reports & Finance	
2.1	Financial Report & Risk Register	
	<p>The board considered the FMC's income and expenditure for the financial year to 31.10.20, noting that the FMC was on budget.</p> <p>The board noted the risk register, and in particular that the FMC's insurance policies had been renewed.</p> <p>The board noted that expenditure on meeting rooms in the early part of the year had exceeded the amount the FMC had budgeted for, that was balanced out but not spending money on travel as expected for most of the year. The board noted the need to take this in to account for budgeting in 2022; the Executive Officer will make a note of this for consideration when drafting the 2022 budget.</p>	<p>HA to make note of 2020 lessons for 2022 budget preparation</p>

2.2	Budget 2021	
	<p>The board considered the draft 2021 Budget.</p> <p>The board noted the assumptions that had been made, including that it is likely that some mediators will not renew, as they have stopped working due to Covid, but other people who are in the process of completing training courses will register for the first time.</p> <p>The board agreed that Policy & Secretariat Services had provided an effective and efficient services and that it would review its fee in spring 2021.</p> <p>The board noted that the Executive Officer was recommending that the FMC website be updated in 2021, with revised text and updated images on the part of the site aimed at the public, and a revised format for the mediator’s area of the site. The board agreed that the public facing text should be updated as soon as possible and that this could be done without any cost, and that a quote for the remainder of the work should be obtained with a view to carrying this out later in 2021, when the FMC’s income for the year was known. The Executive Officer will obtain board approval before proceeding with this work.</p> <p>JR, DR, BS & JT all volunteered to consider revised public facing text. The Executive Officer will make suggested changes to the text with a view to updating the website early in 2021.</p> <p>The board approved the 2021 budget.</p>	<p>FMC board to review PASS fee in spring 2021</p> <p>HA to suggest changes to website text; JR, DR, BS & JT to review</p>
2.3	Executive Officer Report	
	<p>The board noted the Executive Officer’s report.</p> <p>The Chair reported that following the board’s decision in September to approve subscribing to the Sheep registration system, he and AB had been negotiating a suitable contract. The board noted that members had had an opportunity to comment on the draft contract, which was now being considered by Sheep. The board agreed to proceed with the contract with the earliest possible start date, and pay a year’s subscription up front to secure a discount if this was still available with the notice period that the Chair was negotiating.</p>	

	The board delegated responsibility to finalise the contract to the Chair and AB.	JT & AB to finalise Sheep contract
3.	Items to discuss	
3.1	<p>MoJ Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funded MIAMs - HMCTS Voucher Scheme - Capacity/online survey 	
	<p>The board noted that Jacqui Frisbee had joined the MoJ private law reform team and agreed to invite her to its next board meeting.</p> <p>The board agreed that it was important to help the MoJ progress its considerations of whether a funded MIAM pilot was viable. The board noted that one of the MoJ's concerns had been about whether mediators had capacity to take on additional work and had been working with the Executive Officer to develop a survey about this and working online. The board asked the Executive Officer to limit the survey to issues of capacity, to ask the MoJ to agree the questions and then send it to Registered Mediators to answer before Christmas.</p> <p>The board noted that the MoJ was still working on a proposal for mediation vouchers and that the Executive Officer will continue liaising with the MoJ to ascertain more details.</p>	<p>HA to invite JF to next FMC board meeting</p> <p>HA to finalise and send capacity survey to Registered Mediators</p> <p>HA to liaise with MoJ re potential voucher scheme</p>
	Guest	
	<p>The FMC welcomed Jacky Tiotto, CEO and Volker Buck, Head of Commissioning at CAFcASS.</p> <p>JT gave a short presentation, which included information about the impact of Covid on CAFcASS services, the case numbers CAFcASSs was handling, and an emphasis on needing to reform the system.</p> <p>JT and the FMC agreed that a national conversation was needed about reform, and that a coalition of organisations speaking with the same voice could bring this about. JT invited the FMC to write to her after the forthcoming publication of the Family Justice Board report to encourage CAFcASS to work with the FMC and lobby for that national debate.</p>	<p>BS/JT/HA to draft letter on behalf of board to JT following publication of FJB report</p>

	<p>It was also agreed that CAFCASS and the FMC could work together on issues such as ensuring the voice of the child is heard as part of family proceedings, and that it would therefore be useful to work more closely together. It was agreed that quarterly meetings should be held between CAFCASS and the FMC.</p> <p>The board thanked JT & VB for joining the FMC board meeting.</p>	<p>HA to arrange quarterly meetings with CAFCASS</p>
3.	Items to discuss (resumed)	
3.2	Family Solutions Group Report	
	<p>The board wholeheartedly welcomed the report of the Family Solutions Group and agreed that the FMC should formally endorse this.</p> <p>The board agreed that it would identify actions recommended in the report that it could carry out directly, and build these in to its workplan for 2021, and to consider what role it could play in ensuring other recommendations are also implemented. The Chair had compiled a preliminary list of actions and will circulate this to the board. The Executive Officer will prepare a comprehensive list for consideration at the joint FMC/FMSB meeting on 13.1.21.</p>	<p>JT to circulate preliminary list of actions to FMC board</p> <p>HA to prepare comprehensive action list for 13.1.21</p>
3.3	<p>LAA Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - APPG/CCCG (marginalisation of family mediation in legal aid) 	<p>AB, BS & JR (Notes from LAA meeting)</p>
	<p>The board noted that AB, BS & JR had met with the Legal Aid Agency in October, and had agreed an approach to try to deal with audit issues early in 2021.</p> <p>The board noted that the FMC seemed to discuss the same issues with the LAA repeatedly, but considered that this was necessary if change was ever to be achieved.</p> <p>The board noted that the APPG on Legal Aid & CCCG were groups that were not really aware of mediation, and that it rarely came up as a topic, but were sometimes useful groups to be part of. The board agreed to consider the FMC's participation in these groups when it sets its priorities for 2021, and to consider using volunteers who are not board members for these roles.</p>	<p>HA to add issue of APPG & CCCG roles to list to be considered on 13.1.21</p>

<p>3.4</p>	<p>Marketing</p>	
	<p><u>Family Mediation Week, 18 -22 January 2021</u> The board welcomed the FMW Working Group’s plans for 2021, noting that it had agreed an outline timetable for the week. The board agreed that the £2000 sponsorship that had been secured could be used by the working group to cover costs, which may include paying actors to take part in a mock mediation, as well as paying the Richard Wyatt (the FMC’s marketing consultant) to arrange for Google Ads. The board asked each of the FMC’s membership organisations to do at least one thing to support FMW – this could be publication of an article, or organising an event. The FMC will promote these</p> <p><u>Marketing Workshop</u> The board thanked RW for running the recent online marketing workshop for FMC registered mediators. The board noted that the workshop was very well received and several mediators have thanked RW and the FMC for this. The board noted that workshop was available on the FMC website for registered mediators to watch in future.</p> <p><u>Misc proposals for promoting mediation & the FMC Register</u> The board noted a proposal made by an FMCA registered mediator to create a card which could be handed to people involved in criminal proceedings who are at risk of losing touch with their children, to point them towards advice and information about the family court process, and mediation. The board agreed to consider this at its meeting on 13.1.21 when it was considering its priorities for the year.</p>	<p>HA to add proposal re information card to list to be considered on 13.1.21</p>
<p>3.5</p>	<p>Inclusion and Diversity Framework</p>	
	<p>The board noted that the FMC has an Equality and Diversity Policy, which was last approved in 2019, but agreed that more should be done to it put the principles it contained in to practise.</p> <p>The board noted that the FMA had approached the FMC in relation to this work, as it has established working group looking at encouraging diversity in the family mediation profession, and does not want to carry out its work in isolation from the rest of the profession.</p>	

	<p>The board agreed to invite the group members to form an FMC working group whilst retaining its existing Chair (Sara Collins) and invite other FMC registered mediators to join. JT volunteered to sit on the working group to provide a strong link between the working group and the board. The board agreed that it would invite the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To consider and advise the FMC on a framework which can be adopted to ensure the principles set out in the Equality and Diversity Policy are considered when it comes to making decisions - To consider the barriers that people who are underrepresented in the family mediation profession face on entering and working within the profession, and to recommend to the FMC what steps it can take to remove these - To consider and recommend to the FMC steps that it could take to actively encourage diversity in the family mediation profession - To consider and recommend to the FMC how it could work with partners to ensure the principles in its Equality and Diversity Policy are reflected throughout the family mediation profession <p>The Executive Officer agreed to liaise with SC to establish the working group.</p>	<p>HA to liaise with SC to set up working group</p>
Reports (resumed)		
2.4	FMSB Report	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes from the FMSB meeting held on 9.11.20. It was noted how useful the draft minutes were, and the FMSB Chair agreed that draft minutes could be circulated to FMC board members once they had been checked by the FMSB, and not have to wait to be circulated at the next FMC board meeting.</p> <p>The board noted the latest drafts of the Good Standing policy and implementation papers, and that the next step in the process was to consult Registered Mediators about the way in which this test would be introduced.</p> <p>The board noted the work that the FMSB had done regarding complaints, and that it was exploring the practical consequences of a single complaints system operating under the auspices of the FMSB, as well as finalising the details of a proposed single system.</p>	<p>HA to send draft FMSB minutes to FMC board members once checked by FMSB members</p>

4.	ITEMS AND PAPERS FOR INFORMATION	
4.1	<p>2021 FMC Board Dates:</p> <p>13.1.21 – Joint FMC/FMSB Meeting, 2.30pm – 4.30pm, Online</p> <p>10.3.21 – Online, 12.30 – 3.30pm</p> <p>9.6.21 – time & location tbc</p> <p>8.9.21 – time & location tbc</p> <p>8.12.21 – time & location tbc</p>	
5.	AOB	
	<p>The board noted that the FMC had been invited to support the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Strengthening Couple Relationships and Reducing Parental Conflict's 'Sort It Out' campaign. The campaign aims to stop children being harmed by ongoing conflict between their parent, and the FMC agreed to support this.</p>	<p>HA to confirm to APPG that FMC supports this campaign</p>