



**FMC Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022**  
**Approved Minutes**

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

**Also In attendance:** Alison Bull (Resolution), Robert Creighton (FMSB Representative), Claire Webb (FJC Representative), Helen Anthony (Executive Officer)

**Apologies:** Dan Ronson

<b>Open Session – FMC Board Members and observers</b>		
<b>1.</b>	<b>STANDING ITEMS</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.1</b>	Welcome, introductions, apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everybody. The board noted that Jane Wilson's term as a member of Resolution's Dispute Resolution Committee had ended, and so she had also resigned as Resolution's nominated FMC Director. The board thanked JW for all her work and noted that Resolution would nominate a new director shortly.	
<b>1.2</b>	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 9.3.22 were approved.	HA to publish minutes
<b>2. Reports</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	Financial Report	
	The board noted the FMC's income and expenditure to 31.5.22 and the Balance Sheet of the same date. The board recognised it had funds to invest in additional resources to help it achieve its strategic aims.  The board noted that the FMC was now registered for VAT as was awaiting final confirmation from its accountants about the implications of this for its budget.	
<b>2.2</b>	Risk Register	
	The board noted the updated risk register, and made amendments to risks 3 & 12 to reflect the confidence it had in PASS performing its contract to the expected	HA to update risk register (items 3 & 12)

	standard and its concerns about over-reliance on volunteers.	
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Executive Officer Report</b>	
	<p>The board noted the Executive Officer's report and in particular the number of ad hoc meetings the MoJ had recently asked HA to attend. The board agreed to establish a pool of mediators whom HA could call on to go to meetings with MoJ/other agencies so that the experience of a practising mediator could be shared.</p> <p>The board welcomed the recent approach from Helen Evans at the MoJ, who sought to understand more about the accreditation process and the way in which mediators were trained in relation to domestic abuse as well as explaining the MoJ intended to review MIAMs exemptions. It was agreed that the FMC should follow up on this meeting, and that JT would write to HE with a copy of the FMC's strategy and to highlight the issues the FMC would like to address with the MoJ.</p> <p>The board agreed that appointing a replacement for DR and filling the vacant seat on the FMSB should be a priority for HA. HA will remind any directors who have not completed the skills audit to do so.</p>	<p>HA to establish pool of mediators willing to come to meetings with MoJ/other agencies</p> <p>JT write to HE (HA to draft)</p> <p>HA to prioritise recruitment</p>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>FMSB Report</b>	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the FMSB Meeting held on 29.4.22.</p> <p>The board noted that the new complaints process had been introduced and that while there were some small remaining issues to resolve, overall the transition from Membership Organisations to the FMSB considering complaints had gone well.</p> <p>The board also noted that the FMSB was carefully considering whether mediators working towards accreditation could be allowed to conduct voucher or legal aid cases within a suitable framework. It was noted that the biggest challenge in introducing such a framework would be for mediators working outside of practices, and that the FMSB was aware that a policy change may have an impact on the incentive to become accredited.</p> <p>The board considered whether to approve the MIAMs Standards and Guidance as recommended by the</p>	

	<p>FMSB. The board agreed to include obtaining legal advice as an important next step in section four of the standards and to include this in the summary as this was consistent with the FMSB's intention as indicated elsewhere in the draft, and consistent with the FMC's Code of Practice. The board considered alternative wording in relation to consecutive MIAMs, but agreed to accept the FMSB's recommendation that there should be a strong presumption against these. The board approved the MIAMs Standards and Guidance subject to proof-reading and tidying-up language.</p> <p>The board noted the plan for publication of the MIAMs standards and delegated the delivery of this to RC, JT &amp; HA.</p>	<p>HA to proof read &amp; improve language; RC and JT to check, then final version to be send to the board</p> <p>RC/JT/HA to work on publication</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Updates</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Royal Charter Update</b>	
	<p>The Chair reported that the FMC had held meetings with the CMC and Privy Council to explore the idea of becoming a chartered body and being able to confer chartered status on family mediators.</p> <p>In anticipation of having to ask directors to make a decision about taking further steps towards chartered status at the next meeting, it was agreed that JT would circulate a paper setting out what the FMC had done up to now, the considerations had been taken into account in discussions, potential next steps, consequences of the next steps, and costings.</p>	<p>JT to draft paper on chartered status for directors</p>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Legal Aid</b>	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the Legal Aid Working Group meeting held on 22.3.22. It also noted that, at a subsequent meeting with the Legal Aid Agency on 27.4.22, the following matters were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how requests for more than 50% of applications to be conducted remotely will be handled. The LAA had said it had already received a number of requests, mostly from mediators as opposed to contractors in other areas, and these were being approved. The LAA reported that it had arranged for contract managers to discuss requests so there would be consistency in decision-making.</li> <li>- the timetable for introducing new contracts. The LAA explained that these are expected to be in place for August 2023 but there is no news on when formal consultation will take place.</li> </ul>	

	<p>- the means test review. The LAA believed that if a high numbers of mediators expressed concerns about complexity of assessments when responding to the consultation, the MoJ would be more likely to pick up on these concerns than if only an FMC response was received.</p> <p>The board noted that the FMC had encouraged mediators to respond to the consultation on the means test review, as well as submitting its own response.</p> <p>The board noted that the voucher scheme has not led to a decrease in legally-aided mediations.</p>	
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Voucher Scheme</b>	
	<p>The board noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the scheme continued to be well run and feedback from mediators and clients was overwhelmingly positive;</li> <li>- as of 5th June, 8546 vouchers had been allocated, with 5661 paid;</li> <li>- vouchers are being allocated and bills and are being paid within target times (7 &amp; 14 days of receipt, respectively);</li> <li>- the MoJ had announced the total amount of funding for the voucher scheme for this financial year is £5.4m and that this will fund the scheme until 31.3.23;</li> <li>- the FMC has a contract to operate the scheme until 30.9.22;</li> <li>- it was anticipated that the MoJ will ask for tenders to operate the scheme from 1.10.22 – 31.3.23;</li> <li>- the Chair had asked directors to vote by e-mail on the question of whether the FMC should bid for the contract if the tender process goes ahead, and that directors had voted in favour of this;</li> <li>- the voucher working group, working with the Chair and the Secretary, would prepare the FMC's bid.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Strategic Items</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>FMC Vision &amp; Strategy</b>	
	<p>The board adopted the vision &amp; strategy paper, agreeing it was an accurate reflection of the work it needed to undertake for the next two years.</p> <p>The board agreed to ask people to whom tasks had been assigned to work on timetables for delivery.</p>	<p>HA to publish vision &amp; strategy</p>

	<p>The board agreed that it needed to allocate extra resources to be able deliver everything in the strategic plan. It acknowledged it had funds to be able to do this.</p> <p>The board noted that communications and the FMSB were particular areas where support was required. The board asked RC, HA and AB to identify specific areas where additional support was required and to provide costed options to the board for securing appropriate resources.</p>	RC, HA and AB to work on proposals for resources
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Request for FMC to act as intervenor in court case</b>	
	<p>The FMC had been invited to intervene in a court case. The board agreed it would not be a good use of its limited resources, and agreed not to seek to intervene in the application.</p>	HA to respond to request
<b>5.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>Recent meetings with Membership Organisations had shown that an organogram covering the FMC and FMSB would be useful. HA to produce.</p>	HA to produce organogram
<b>6.</b>	<b>Future Meeting Dates</b>	
	<p>14<sup>th</sup> September 2022 – AGM &amp; Board Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 – Board meeting</p>	