

FMSB Meeting

Wednesday 15 January 2025

Present: Robert Creighton (Chair), Lesley Allport, Anthony Blackman, John Hobson, Alexis Walker, Bola Olayinka, Mike Mack (Items 1 & 2), Lorraine Bramwell (Items 3-6)

Apologies: Sarah-Jane Turnbull, Allan Blake (FMC Representative)

Also present: Helen Anthony (Executive Officer)

Approved Minutes

	Item	Actions
1.	Introductory	
1.1	Welcome and introductions, apologies, declarations of interests	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone, especially Bola Olayinka who was attending her first FMSB meeting.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that Mike Mack had declared a new interest, as he had been appointed to the Legal Services Board Consumer Panel. The FMSB congratulated MM on his appointment.</p> <p>The FMSB also noted that Mike Mack had recused himself for discussion of item 3.2 regarding development of a DCA screening resource due to a conflict of interest.</p>	
1.2	Approval of minutes of last meeting & matters arising not covered elsewhere	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 16.10.24 were approved.</p> <p>There were no matters arising, not covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
2.	Governance	
2.1	Priorities & Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027	
	<p>The FMSB welcomed the summary of priorities and the draft strategic plan that had emerged as a result of the joint FMC/FMSB meeting in December.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that there had been less emphasis on the need to be clear about what data the FMC collected, and on child-inclusive mediation, than some people had expected, though the latter did appear at several points in the resulting strategic plan, and there was a risk that over-emphasising child-inclusive mediation would result in it being seen as a standalone process.</p>	

	<p>The FMSB noted the draft strategic plan clearly sets out how and when the FMC and FMSB would make progress towards its objectives.</p> <p>The FMSB supported the proposal for improvements to the FMC's online registration system, noting that the relatively small cost had been included in the FMC's draft budget and would result in improvements for mediators, as well as efficiencies in the FMC office.</p>	
2.2	FMSB Roles, responsibilities and ways of working	
	<p>The FMSB gave a cautious welcome to the idea of changing the panel structure, which it operated at present, with the aim of having a more efficient way of working and involving a wider pool of non-FMSB members in its work. It was suggested that adopting focus groups may help the FMSB in its work.</p> <p>HA & RC to reconsider how the FMSB works with panel members.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the FMC conference would provide a valuable opportunity to celebrate the work of those panel members who contribute to the work of the FMC.</p>	HA & RC to consider ways of working with panel members
3.	Priority Items for Discussion	
3.1	PPC Report – Implementation	
	<p>The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the PPC Panel meeting held on 20.11.24.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the PPC panel had put together an implementation plan, to identify what needed to be done to give effect to the recommendations in the PPC report. The FMSB noted that the PPC report had not been published at the end of 2024 as intended, but would be published at the beginning of February after being sent to the FMC board.</p> <p>The FMSB noted the importance of being clear about the impact for mediators and PPCs, in terms of changes to ways of working, time and cost, and the reasons for this. RC to write a foreword for the PPC report to emphasise the central role of PPCs to assurance processes, and the process of producing the report (consultation, listening to profession, consideration of practical consequences).</p>	RC to write foreword to PPC report

3.2	DCA Panel – Resource Development	
	<p>The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the DCA Panel meeting held on 20.11.24.</p> <p>The FMSB welcomed a potential new opportunity to bid for a grant to fund the development of a screening resource and recommended the FMC applied for the grant, if the conditions (which are yet to be published) are ones that the FMC can reasonably meet.</p>	
3.3	New Accreditation Pilot	
	<p>The FMSB noted the updated pilot document & progress on discussions with Resolution about the new potential portfolio structure.</p> <p>The proposed structure welcomed as offering a new option to mediators. The FMSB noted a concern that a move too far towards knowledge rather than practice-based assessment risked granting accredited status to mediators who may struggle how to put theory in to practice, but also noted that the structure had tried to address this concern by requiring mediators to submit answers to case study questions that are based on real world experience.</p> <p>The FMSB asked how PPCs could support submissions if they were partially completed in an exam or guided coursework format. HA to explore this further with Resolution and the Accreditation Panel.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that if this pilot was progressed, it would need to be assessed along with the existing staged portfolio pilot.</p>	HA to continue development of pilot with Resolution & Accreditation Panel
4.	Reports	
4.1	Chair's Report	
	The Chair did not have anything additional to report, that was not covered elsewhere on the agenda.	
4.2	FMC Report	
	The FMSB welcomed the timetable for Family Mediation Week, and the proposal for an FMC conference in 2025, which FMSB members were happy to support as speakers. RC agreed to participate in the FMC's Conference Working Group, and the FMSB noted that MM was also willing to support the development of the conference.	

4.3	Executive Officer's Report	
	The FMSB noted the Executive Officer's report, including an update on support provided to a mediator who had been ordered to provide a report on the progress of mediation to the court – the FMSB noted that order had since been discharged.	
5.	Updating & Discussion	
5.1	MIAM Guidance – Update	
	The FMSB noted that final changes to the updated MIAM guidance had yet to go to the FMSB MIAM working group, and that this work should be carried out before the next FMSB meeting.	
5.2	Accreditation Panel	
	<p>The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the Accreditation Panel meeting held on 28.11.24.</p> <p>The FMSB thanked Claire Webb and Mary Raymont for volunteering to be joint deputy-chairs of the Accreditation Panel. The FMSB welcomed the Accreditation Panel's work plan for the year which was consistent with the FMC & FMSB draft strategic plan.</p>	
5.3	ARG Update	
	The FMSB note that ARG sub-groups were working on different workstreams and would report to the ARG in March.	
5.4	Complaints	
	<p>The FMSB noted the most recent complaints report.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that BO would be taking the lead on complaints on behalf of the FMSB, and had been working with HA to learn about the complaints process.</p>	
6.	Future Meeting Dates	
6.1	FMSB Dates 2025	
	As the proposed FMSB dates for 2025 did not work for all members, it was agreed a Doodle Poll would be circulated and future dates confirmed by e-mail.	HA to send Doodle Poll & confirm dates via e-mail