

FMC Board Meeting

Wednesday 10 December 2025

Approved Minutes

Present: Stephen Burke (Chair), Allan Blake, Rachael Blakey, Alison Bull, Jan Coulton, Beverley Sayers

Also in attendance: Robert Creighton (Chair, FMSB), Ruth Hay (FJC Representative), Helen Anthony (Executive Officer), Julie Perry (Operations Officer), Sonya Wilson (FMC Administrator), Viv Owen (FMC Administrator), Jennifer Lister (FMC Portfolio Administrator & Project Lead), Richard Wyatt (Marketing and Communications Consultant)

Apologies: Sarah Hawkins

Open Session – FMC Board Members and observers		
	Item	Actions
1.	STANDING ITEMS	
1.1	Welcome, introductions, apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everybody.	
1.2	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	The board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7.10.25 and noted the updated action log.	
2.	Items for Decision	
2.1	Budget 2026	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting held on 12.11.25 and the Management Accounts to 30.9.25.</p> <p>The board discussed the draft budget for 2026. The board noted Finance Working Group's considerations in recommending the draft budget to the board, that were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The FMC's 2026 budget needed to break even to maintain a £40k reserve although a small call on the reserve may be acceptable if it was needed to invest in growing income in the long term.	

- A recent increase in mediation work seen by mediators had also led to an increase in work for the FMC.
- The numbers of mediators on the FMC Register was growing slowly but had not yet grown sufficiently in order to be able to maintain current costs without increasing income in other ways.
- The CEO was exploring cost reductions for accountants, IDRC/registered office/post and insurance but until lower costs were confirmed these should remain in the budget at a realistic known rate.
- Staffing costs could be reduced by ending the ending temporary Operations Officer role in April 2026, but as the current staff were at full capacity, staffing levels should be maintained.
- Inflation was between 4 and 5%.

The board noted that the working group had also considered a number of fee scenarios, including:

- Discussing whether it was practical and desirable to have different fee levels for FMCAs depending on whether they offered legal aid;
- The FMC's fees provide mediators with excellent value for money, and would continue to do so even if fees were increased by the highest level contemplated (a £40 increase). The FMC noted that for the annual fee, it provided mediators with signposting of their services through the FMC website and phone line, a complaints service, and once every three years, re-accreditation, alongside its work to promote mediation and develop professional standards. The FMC also noted that its fees were low compared to lots of other professional bodies; and
- Introducing other income streams (e.g. different types of membership, conducting in person/online events) may help keep fees low but these income streams would need to be serviced. The working group agreed to ask the FMC to

	<p>consider additional income streams, but agreed it would not be appropriate to budget for them in 2026.</p> <p>The board noted that the budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set fees of £195 for FMCAs and 50% of that for WTAs; • Was based on current rather than increased register numbers; • Maintained staffing levels, and allowed for an increase of personnel costs of 4.5%; • Was realistic in respect of other costs; and • Would produce a budget with a small surplus, and maintain the £40,000 reserve. <p>The board noted that the increase in fees would, alongside other rising costs and no increase in rates, put pressure on mediators who offer legal aid. The board discussed lower registration fees for mediators who offered legal aid, but concluded that it would be difficult to administer and to determine which mediators would qualify for these fees.</p> <p>The board noted that the increase in fees of £40 for FMCAs and £20 for mediators working towards accreditation was significant in percentage terms but that at fees at less than £200 and £100 respectively the FMC continued to provide good value for money.</p> <p>The board approved the budget for 2026.</p> <p>The board agreed it would be important to explain the reasons for fees increasing to mediators.</p>	<p>RW & HA to explain fee levels to mediators</p>
<p>2.2</p>	<p>Annual reporting of FMC's work</p>	
	<p>The board agreed to produce a short summary of the FMC's work early in 2026 and annually thereafter.</p>	<p>HA to produce summary of FMC's work in 2025</p>

3.	AOB	
	<p>The board thanked Juliette Dalrymple, the FMC’s Chief Assessor, as well as the assessor team, for the significant amount of work that had gone in to to re-formatting the FMC portfolio template, with the aim of ensuring that the format was helpful to mediators completing the portfolio.</p> <p>The board considered a request from the FJC for the FMC to review the progress made in respect of the family mediation elements of the Voice of the Child Report. The board noted that the CEO had reviewed this when preparing the State of Family Mediation report which had been published in September. The board asked the CEO to share this work with the FJC.</p>	<p>HA to pass thanks to JD & assessor team</p> <p>HA to share review of family mediation elements of VotC actions with FJC</p>
4.	Next meeting dates	
	<p>2026 Dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 March, Online 10am – 12pm • 3 June, In person (London), 12pm - 3pm • 12 August, Online 10am - 12pm • 14 October, Online 10am - 12pm • 9 December - In person (London), 11am - 3pm (Joint FMC/FMSB Meeting) 	