

**FMC Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday 24 June 2025**  
**Approved Minutes**

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

**Apologies:** Ruth Hay

**Also in attendance:** Caroline Bowden (Guest, in part), Robert Creighton, Helen Anthony (CEO)

Open Session – FMC Board Members and observers		
	Item	Actions
<b>1.</b>	<b>STANDING ITEMS</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	Welcome, introductions, apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everyone.	
<b>1.2</b>	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	<p>The board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25.3.25 and noted the action log from 17.6.25.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board noted that concerns about court orders naming mediators and requiring them to file reports remained. There was agreement to establish a task and finish group led to address this issue via a three-pronged approach: engaging the President of the Family Court, via the Family Procedure Rules Committee’s Early Resolution Committee, and through the Family Justice Council (FJC)</li> <li>• The board noted that the number of mediators on the FMC register was constantly fluctuating and currently stood at 1,032 mediators registered, with 688 holding FMCA status.</li> </ul>	HA to set up task and finish group
<b>2.</b>	<b>Governance (Part 1)</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<p>The board noted The Law Society’s decision to end its FMC membership following internal governance review.</p> <p>The board noted that the Law Society had stressed that it continued so support regulated family mediation and that the CEO was due to meet with TLS to discuss opportunities for working together in the future.</p> <p>The board noted that there was no impact on Law Society’s independent accreditation scheme which operates independently</p>	

of its status as a member organisation, and there was no impact on reaccreditation processes which are operated by the FMC.

The board noted that very few registered mediators (and possibly none) who were members of the Law Society and no other FMC membership organisation – the FMC Office will check this position and contact anyone in this position directly.

The board agreed that the FMC should collaborate with Law Society on a joint statement which should be released to mediators as soon as possible.

The board agreed that the FMC should also notify the Ministry of Justice.

Directors representing other member organisations were keen that their MOs issue statements clarifying their position as MOs remained unchanged and the board agreed that the FMC would be able to help co-ordinate these statements to reduce the change of confusion amongst mediators.

CB recused herself whilst the board considered the position of TLS's appointed director. The board noted that the TLS director role had ended when TLS resigned its membership. The board expressed its gratitude for CB's work as a director, noting she had made important contributions to the work of the board. The board noted that CB represented the FMC on the Family Procedure Rules' early resolution working group, and that the FMC did not have to nominate a director for this role. Noting that continuity was important, but that the FMC's representative needed to have an understanding of the FMC's wide work, the board agreed that CB should be invited to continue as the FMC's representative on this group for the time being. Noting also the important issues that the WG was addressing, and the link to the issue regarding court orders (see item 1.2) it was agreed to invite CB to be part of the task and finish group, and to consider whether additional representation on the WG may be needed. The directors considered whether CB might also be able to continue to contribute to the work of the board in other ways and a decision on this was deferred until the next meeting.

Having re-joined the meeting briefly, the directors thanked CB for all her work and she left the meeting.

The board noted that it had planned a governance review for early 2026, and noted that this offered an opportunity to address any consequential issues, such as capacity of the board, that arise as a result of the end of TLS's membership.

<b>3.</b>	<b>Items for Decision</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	Finance	
	<p>The draft accounts for year ending 31 December 2024 reviewed and approved.</p> <p>The board noted the Finance Working Group minutes from 10.6.25, including the appended management accounts and budget variance.</p> <p>The board noted that working capital and cash flow was tight but manageable and that ongoing vigilance required. The board noted the Finance Working Group was due to convene in August to review future finances.</p> <p>The board noted that two financial documents would follow: draft director's report for accounts publication and updated financial delegation document.</p> <p>The board agreed to include Stephen Burke and Rachael Blakey as signatories on the HSBC bank account and Stephen Burke on the Virgin Bank Account (to replace Allan Blake before his term ends).</p>	HA to circulate draft director's report and updated financial delegation document for approval.
<b>3.2</b>	Annual Updating of Code of Practice and Professional Standards Framework	
	<p>Proposed changes to the FMC Code of Practice, PPC Code of Practice and Professional Standards Framework were presented for approval.</p> <p>The board noted this included a consolidation of items in the Code of Practice relating to domestic abuse and changes to PPC Code of Practice and standards stem from ongoing consultation over recent years.</p> <p>The board noted that some minor improvements could be made and consequential changes may be needed.</p> <p>The board approved the changes subject to minor amendments, which would be circulated to the board for final comments. The board noted that publication targeted for 1st August to allow integration into autumn training programs.</p>	HA to make minor and consequential amendments and circulate for final comments before publication
<b>3.3</b>	Trading Standards	
	Having previously agreed to enter a Trading Standards Partnership, the board noted that in order to do so it needed to provide a list of businesses covered by the partnership. The board noted that the FMC Register could be used as that listed	

	<p>individuals and the Trading Partnership list needed to include businesses.</p> <p>The board noted the potential advantages to mediators of being a formal part of the partnership and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a list open to any mediation business whose practising family mediators are all registered with the FMC;</li> <li>• To charge an administrative fee for this (to cover the partnership costs, list maintenance and communications with members of that list);</li> <li>• That the initial fee would be £50 and that there should be a fee reduction for sole traders of 50%.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Governance (Part 2)</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	Progress re Strategic Plan	
	<p>The board noted progress against the areas of focus of the strategic plan as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of Focus 1: Transition of FMC management and administrative resources in-house completed smoothly on 1st April 2025.</li> <li>• Area of Focus 2: Conference planning well advanced; two sponsors secured; speaker lineup nearly complete but delayed by ministerial changes. The State of Family Mediation Council reports progressing; Rachel Blakey working with Warwick University assistant on a mini literature review of FMC research. A July survey planned to update 2019 data, excluding success rates (as voucher data now provides this information) but including legal aid committee questions on private/public work ratios.</li> <li>• Area of Focus 3: FMC website review ongoing; case study requests yielded no responses; NFM offered access to their case study library.</li> <li>• Area of Focus 4: Establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on family separation progressing; Sarah Hall MP agreed as chair; a meeting is planned over summer to formalise arrangements.</li> </ul>	
<b>4.2</b>	Succession Planning	
	<p>The board noted the proposed recruitment process for an independent director and FMSB member, including the draft adverts.</p>	

	<p>The board agreed to terminology in the draft advert from “co-opted director” to “independent director” to reflect voting rights.</p> <p>The board noted the importance of ensuring the adverts were published on sites that attract a diverse range of potential candidates.</p> <p>The board agreed that the recruitment panel for FMC director would consist of include Stephen Burke (FMC Chair), Robert Creighton (FMSB Chair), and Rachel Blakey, and that decision to appoint a director needed to be ratified by full board.</p> <p>The board noted the FMSB independent member appointments panel must include the Chairs of the FMC and FMSB, an additional FMSB members (nominated by the FMSB), plus another FMC director and a fifth independent person. The board agreed that RB would be the nominated FMC director, and that it would invite the Ministry of Justice to nominate a staff member to complete the panel membership.</p>	HA to invite MoJ to join FMSB recruitment panel
<b>4.3</b>	Risk Register	
	The updated risk register was noted by the board.	
<b>4.4</b>	Verification of Identity at Companies House	
	Directors were reminded to verify identities as per new Companies House requirements before next confirmation statement filing.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Items for Information</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	FMSB Report	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the FMSB meeting held on 26.3.25.</p> <p>The board noted the Complaints Report covering 1.3.24 to 28.2.25. The board noted that shuttle mediation was frequently cited in complaints and discussed whether guidance or training about this could be provided. The board recognised that the FMSB received lots of requests for guidance and that its strategic plan for early 2026 included agreeing a process to agree how prioritise which guidance should be produced, and how we could better utilise volunteer mediators to do so under the FMC banner. The board noted that the FMSB did not usually conduct training as this was carried out by Membership Organisations (as well as other providers) and that if this was to change it would need careful discussion with the MOs, perhaps as part of the planned governance consultation in 2026.</p>	

	<p>The board noted the domestic abuse screening and assessment resource under development, that extensive consultation revealed concerns about format and language to avoid checklist-style usage and that additional consultation with member organisations planned for early September before publication.</p> <p>The board noted that work on a new accreditation pilot continued; the board noted that the draft FMSB minutes referred to the proposal as including the replacement of live observations with recorded observations, but that this was intended to be only an option.</p> <p>The board noted that the updated Guidance on MIAMs was still being finalised.</p>	
<b>5.2</b>	<b>LSB Consultation on Professional Ethics</b>	
	<p>The board noted the FMC and FMSB response to the LSB Consultation of Professional Ethics.</p> <p>The board discussed a concern about the response, noting that not all directors agreed it was accurate and there were differing interpretations of its tone and meaning.</p> <p>The board agreed it was important to ensure transparency in the drafting process, but also to have confidence in delegation. The board noted that the CEO had proposed a new process for transparency and delegation in her report (at item 4.6) and the board agreed to adopt this.</p>	
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Public Accounts Committee Call for Evidence</b>	
	<p>The board noted the FMC's submission to the Public Accounts Committee on 9.6.25. The board noted that parliamentary rules require that those submitting evidence do not publish this before the Committee does, and that the FMC would share the link to its evidence with mediators once it has been published by the Committee.</p>	
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Legal Aid &amp; Vouchers</b>	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the Legal Aid and Voucher WG meeting held on 21.5.25.</p> <p>The board noted the Legal Aid Agency (LAA) suffered a significant cyberattack affecting its online portal, and that the civil portal was expected to remain operational for several months.</p> <p>The board noted that mediation was less affected by this than other areas of legal aid due to procedural differences; and that mediators were reportedly receiving timely payments.</p>	

	The board noted the MoJ had been awaiting the outcome of the government's spending review in mid-June before making decisions on legal aid funding and voucher scheme continuation beyond March 2026, and that the CEO would continue to liaise with MoJ regarding these issues.	
<b>5.5</b>	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	
	The board noted the draft minutes of the EDI Team (EDIT) meeting from 10.6.25. The board noted that EDIT was seeking to expand its membership and was planning a coffee morning in July to encourage participation.	
<b>5.6</b>	Chief Executive Officer's Report	
	The CEO report dated 17.6.25 was noted.	
<b>5.7</b>	Communications Update	
	The communications report dated 31.5.25 was noted.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Next meeting dates</b>	
	<p>2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 October 2025 - Board Meeting &amp; AGM (online)</li> <li>• 10 December 2025 – In Person – Joint FMC &amp; FMSB Meeting and FMC Board Meeting</li> <li>• 26 September 2025 – FMC Conference</li> <li>• Membership organisation meetings to be arranged for October</li> </ul>	