

**FMC Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday 7 October 2025**  
**Approved Minutes**

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

**Apologies:** Sarah Hawkins

**Also in attendance:** Ruth Hay (FJC), Robert Creighton (FMSB), 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	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everybody.</p> <p>The board noted that the AGM had been postponed until 10 December to ensure that it is quorate.</p>	
<b>1.2</b>	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	<p>The board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24.6.25 and noted the updated action log.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>The board noted that the CEO was in the process of setting up the task and finish group to address ongoing issues with orders requiring mediators to report/disclose notes to courts, in contravention of agreed principles. The FMC agreed to try to address via multiple routes: direct engagement with the President of the Family Division, the early working group (a sub-group of the Family Procedure Rules Committee), the Family Justice Council (FJC) and mediator representatives on Local Family Justice Boards. The board noted that the President of the Family Division had indicated this was a judicial training issue, and the board agreed to try to follow this up with the bodies responsible for judicial and magistrates' training. It was agreed that the FMC would make available to mediators a standard letter</p>	

	they can use to help reply to courts, if they do receive an order to report/disclose notes to court.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Items for Decision</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Family Mediation Week</b>	
	<p>The board welcomed the Family Mediation Week working group's plans for Family Mediation Week 2026. The board noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that the WG is focusing on promotional activities rather than internal mediator discussions;</li> <li>• the WG is exploring a potential theme around 'access' or reaching all communities;</li> <li>• there may be funding available to support translation of mediation materials into multiple languages;</li> <li>• the WG has started to identify the webinars that will take place that week;</li> <li>• Richard Wyatt is supporting in the early stages to ensure effective communications;</li> <li>• there has been good interest in sponsorship but there are still sponsorship opportunities available; and</li> <li>• collaboration with member organisations (MOs) and external partners is ongoing to broaden reach.</li> </ul> <p>The board asked the WG to consider organising a pre-FMW reception, potentially in Parliament, in order to raise awareness amongst stakeholders ahead of FMW.</p>	HA to add to WG agenda
<b>3.</b>	<b>Governance</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Progress re Strategic Plan</b>	
	<p>The board noted that good progress had been made against the FMC's strategic plan.</p> <p>The board welcomed the progress on organising the APPG on family separation, noting that once established it was important that resources were provided for the APPG's secretariat, without</p>	

	<p>becoming overly time-consuming. The board noted the proposal that the APPG would aim to meet 2-3 times per year.</p> <p>The board welcomed the State of Family Mediation report, provided valuable research insights, highlighting the growth of private mediation and risks to public funding. The board noted that RB was keeping an ongoing log of subsequent mediation research, so that the mini literature review could be easily updated in the future. The board noted that there was an opportunity to follow up on the report by applying for some funding that could be used to encourage academics to come together and identify further useful research opportunities.</p> <p>The board noted the FMC conference was positively received with strong feedback, though some logistical issues were noted. The conference was financially successful, making a surplus, which is notable for a first-time event. The board noted that one issue raised at the conference had concerned mediators working towards accreditation, and in particular issues about not being paid reasonable rates for work; AB &amp; RC had agreed to invite mediators WTA to discuss this and other issues at the FMC coffee morning on 21 October. The board noted that feedback was being collected and taken board, and that there were multiple calls for a future conference. The board agreed that given the resources involved, the wish to ensure that the FMC focussed on FMC/FMSB related issues rather than CPD, and the possibility of being more heavily involved in the National Mediation Awards in 2026, it would aim to host a conference once every two years.</p>	
<b>3.2</b>	Finance	
	<p>The FMC noted the draft minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting held on 29.9.25, which included the management accounts to 30.6.25 and the budget variance and balance sheet as at 29.9.25.</p> <p>The board noted the FMC is on budget for the current year but operating withing tight margins. The board noted that the Finance</p>	

	Working Group was considering options to increase the FMC's income, as well as ensuring all expenditure was necessary, with a view to presenting options and a budget at the next board meeting.	
<b>3.3</b>	Verification of Identity at Companies House	
	Directors were reminded to complete identity verification at Companies House and provide their codes to the CEO for compliance purposes.	All directors to complete send code to HA (unless already done so)
<b>4.</b>	<b>Items for Information</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	Chief Executive Officer's Report	
	<p>The board noted that FMC activities have intensified recently, including strategic initiatives and external meetings in order to continue to build relationships with MOJ officials, parliamentarians, and other stakeholders. The board welcomed the ongoing work to promoting mediation and addressing funding challenges, particularly around legal aid, and the planned meeting with the new family justice Minister.</p> <p>The board discussed ways to improve the FMC's relationship with the FJC. The FMC noted it would welcome an invitation to have an FMC appointed representative on the FJC, but noted that this may not be likely as the FJC made personal rather than organisational appointments. It was agreed that the CEO and FJC representative would liaise more closely in order to try to ensure a joined-up approach between issues raised with MoJ and FJC.</p>	HA & RH to liaise re MoJ/FJC work
<b>4.2</b>	FMSB Report	
	<p>The FMC noted the draft minutes of the FMSB meeting held on 9.7.25.</p> <p>The FMC noted the domestic abuse screening and assessment resource was nearing completion with one more iteration expected before finalisation and training rollout in November. The FMC noted that the resource was a non-compulsory tool designed to support mediators in screening and ongoing for domestic abuse, with ongoing review planned.</p>	

The FMC welcomed an exciting opportunity with Fair Hearing, a new organisation specialising in domestic abuse awareness training in the justice system, was discussed. The board noted that Fair Hearing had secured funding to offer free, in-person training sessions to all registered family mediators, focusing on increasing mediator confidence and awareness in handling domestic abuse cases. This training is positioned as intermediate-level, suitable for mediators beyond foundational training, and will be rolled out over approximately 18 months across multiple locations, supplemented by online sessions.

The board considered governance issues, including ensuring the training content is appropriate for mediators, gender neutral, and aligned with FMC standards. The board noted that the FMC would be asked to enter in to a memorandum of understanding with Fair Hearing about promoting the training, and that this may require it to agree that mediators will be asked for feedback about the training, and that mediators may be asked to request that mediation participants also give feedback. The board acknowledged the importance of this initiative in enhancing professional standards, addressing external criticisms, and ultimately improving mediation outcomes for vulnerable clients.

The board delegated authority to the FMC Chair, the FMSB Chair and CEO to finalise arrangements with Fair Hearing, reflecting the board's strong support for this initiative.

The FMC noted that mediators working towards accreditation had expressed concerns about employment conditions and underpayment, especially in large mediation firms, as well as accreditation pathways. The board noted that the FMC cannot regulate rates paid by mediation firms due to anti-competition laws but can encourage transparency and responsibility. The board noted that the FMC would host a dedicated coffee morning on 21st October to hear concerns raised by mediators working towards accreditation and gather feedback.

SB, RC & HA to follow up & implement with Fair Hearing

	<p>The board noted that multiple initiatives were underway to improve accreditation pathways, including modular accreditation schemes, portfolio guidance improvements, and return-to-practice processes. The board noted there was a call for child-only accreditation to be re-introduced to try to address some concerns.</p> <p>The board noted that return-to-practice procedures were already in place for mediators who took break from mediation work, but that the FMSB was developing a procedure for those mediators who had been practising off the FMC register. This involved the development of tailored action plans by Professional Practice Consultants appointed by the FMC for this purpose, in order to recognise that mediators joining the register would all have different levels of experience and professional development.</p> <p>The board agreed to the FMSB’s recommendation that the Find A Mediator search on the FMC website be updated to include a search for languages with appropriate disclaimers and to confirm that mediators are working towards accreditation (rather than not accredited) with an appropriate explanation.</p>	
<p><b>4.3</b></p>	<p>Legal Aid &amp; Vouchers</p>	
	<p>The board noted the minutes of the Legal Aid and Voucher Working Group meeting held on 26.6.25 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 3.9.25.</p> <p>The board noted that public funding for mediation was projected to exceed £10m in 2025, with the increase driven by take up of the family mediation voucher scheme. The board welcomed the investment, but noted the challenge of ensuring that those on the lowest incomes, who may not be able to afford MIAMs (which are not paid for by the voucher scheme) continued to be able to access legal aid.</p> <p>The board received an update on LAA systems, further to the major cyber-attack on 23rd April, which causing significant disruption and led to data breaches. The board noted that the public had still been</p>	

	<p>able to access mediation since then, and providers had not suffered any cash flow issues but the attack did result in an increased administrative burden for legal aid providers.</p> <p>The board noted that FMC's own data systems have been updated with enhanced security in the summer, and board members were reminded to follow data protection procedures and minimise retention of unnecessary personal data.</p>	
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Team (EDIT)</b>	
	<p>The board noted the draft minutes of the EDIT meeting held on 23.9.25. The board noted that team was operating on a project basis as its membership has been limited, but that some new members had joined the team. The Chair agreed to join EDIT to strengthen it.</p> <p>The board thanked EDIT for contributing a valuable session at the recent conference.</p>	HA to send EDIT details to SB
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Communications Update</b>	
	<p>The board noted the communications report dated 1.10.25, and in particular the significant increase in visits to the FMC's "Find a Mediator" webpage as compared to 2024, which indicated growing public and professional engagement.</p> <p>The board noted that social media trends showed a slight decline in Twitter (X) followers but growth on LinkedIn and Instagram, reflecting broader platform shifts.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>The board noted a further request for the FMSB to consider producing guidance on the boundary between mediation and other professional services. The board noted that the FMSB had received several, similar requests for guidance as well as for guidance on other issues. The board noted that it planned to introduce a system to prioritise requests for guidance and a system to produce such guidance, starting in early 2026.</p>	

	<p>In advance of this, the board noted the FMSB was due to consider issuing short, principle-based guidance on the use of artificial intelligence tools, emphasising mediator responsibility for compliance with standards and data protection. The board noted this particular guidance had been drafted ahead of the introduction of the planned broader exercise relating to guidance, due to the high number of requests for this taking up staff time.</p> <p>The board noted that the FMC’s annual meetings with Membership Organisations were approaching, and welcomed these discussions.</p> <p>The board noted the amount of work that the FMC was undertaking at present and thanked the CEO and the staff team for their work.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Next meeting dates</b>	
	<p><b>10 December 2025</b> – In Person – Joint FMC &amp; FMSB Meeting and FMC board meetings</p> <p><b>2026 – Proposed Dates</b></p> <p>11 March, 10am – 12pm Online</p> <p>3 June, 12pm – 3pm, In person</p> <p>12 August, 10am – 12pm Online</p> <p>14 October, 10am – 12pm Online</p> <p>9 December – 11am – 3pm, In person, Jt FMC/FMSB Meeting</p>	<p>All directors and attendees to let HA know if any concern with these proposed dates</p>