

FMSB Meeting
Wednesday 15 October 2025
Approved Minutes

Present: Robert Creighton (Chair), John Hobson, Mike Mack, Bola Olayinka
Sarah-Jane Turnbull, Alexis Walker

Apologies: Anthony Blackman, Lorraine Bramwell, Lesley Allport

Also present: Beverley Sayers (FMC Representative), Helen Anthony (Chief Executive Officer)

	Item	Action
1.	Introductory	
1.1	Welcome and introductions, apologies, declarations of interests	
	The Chair welcomed everybody.	
1.2	Approval of minutes of last meeting & matters arising not covered elsewhere	
	The FMSB approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9.7.25. Matters arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data issues to be held over 	
2.	Governance	
2.1	Strategic Plan	
	The FMSB welcomed the progress being made against the Strategic Plan.	
3.	Priority Items for discussion & decision	
3.1	MIAMs Guidance	
	The FMSB discussed the updated MIAMs Guidance. The FMSB noted that where the guidance referred to compulsion 'i.e. 'musts'' this was to reflect the MIAMs standards. RC noted some minor drafting points and agreed to send these to HA for addressing before publication. The FMSB agreed to host a coffee morning once the updated MIAMs guidance was published to discuss some of the subtleties that arise.	RC to send MIAM drafting points to HA HA to arrange coffee morning

	<p>The FMSB acknowledged difficulties mediators face in inviting the second participant to a MIAM. The FMSB noted that it had been hoped that the courts would produce an information sheet about MIAMs that mediators could send with the invitation, but noted that as this did not look likely, this could helpfully be something the FMC produces instead. HA to propose this to FMC.</p>	<p>HA to propose to FMC that it drafts MIAMs information sheet</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p>DCA Panel</p>	
	<p>The FMSB noted the minutes of the DCA Panel meeting held on 18.7.25 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 10.9.25.</p> <p>The FMSB confirmed the status of the screening and assessment resource would be that of guidance, meaning it is not mandated, but using it would constitute best practice.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed that it was important to finalise the resource before the end of the year, so that the Train the Trainers event could take place in January. The FMSB noted that the resource should be regularly reviewed, so the document would not be fixed in stone once published.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that it would need to encourage foundation trainers to incorporate use of the resource in to foundation training, but the length of the foundation course could be a barrier to this. The FMSB agreed to add in to the planned letter to training providers (asking for views on various issues, from the FMSB's Training Panel) should include a question about the length of foundation courses and whether this should be extended.</p> <p>The FMSB discussed whether the top-up training to include the use of the DCA resource should be voluntary or mandatory. The FMSB agreed to make a decision on this at its next meeting, but agreed that delivery could be online, to make the training more accessible to mediators and encourage early take up. The FMSB noted it was important that, irrespective of the method of training, training should cover both online and in-person MIAMs/mediation sessions.</p> <p>The FMSB discussed a recent proposal from Fair Hearing to deliver free intermediate level training to all family mediators to help develop confidence when dealing with issues of domestic abuse.</p>	

	The FMSB welcomed the proposal, and stressed the importance of the FMSB's DCA panel being happy with the proposed content before the FMC endorsed this.	
3.3	Draft Guidance on record keeping	
	<p>The FMSB welcomed the draft guidance on record keeping and asked that the following points be considered for inclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific mention of the ICO - A specific point to say you can't treat a client differently for asking for data and you can't tell the other client that data has been requested - Make a specific recommendation on keeping files in cases there is a complaint, probably of one year <p>The FMSB asked for clarification regarding keeping two sets of notes (one with client information and the other with mediator opinion).</p> <p>HA to refine guidance consulting ICO and others as necessary.</p>	HA to refine draft consulting ICO and others as necessary
3.4	Draft Guidance the use of AI	
	<p>The FMSB welcomed the draft guidance on the use of AI.</p> <p>The FMSB asked that the following issues be added/emphasised in the draft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mediators should not permit the use of AI to erode their professional skills: judgement is always required; - Any AI tool has a hinterland and this needs to be understood; - Consent <p>The FMSB noted that this would be an important topic for the mediation community to discuss and consider and may form a good conference or coffee morning subject.</p> <p>HA to refine draft.</p>	HA to refine draft
4.	Reports	
4.1	Chair's Report	

	The Chair reported that recruitment for independent FMSB and FMC members was underway, and asked FMSB members to share details with colleagues.	
4.2	FMC Report	
	<p>BS thanked the FMSB on behalf of the FMC, noting the significant amount of work done by the FMSB and the importance of this. The FMSB in turn thanked HA and the FMC office team for their work.</p> <p>The FMSB noted the success of the FMC conference, and that the FMC planned to run a conference every two years. The FMSB recommended that next time the FMC charge a higher ticket price for unregistered mediators. The FMSB noted that challenges facing mediators working towards accreditation had again risen at the conference, and that Allan Blake (independent FMC director) and RC had held a coffee morning on the subject as a result, to ensure all the issues were will understood.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the FMC's Finance Working Group was considering next year's budget, and in particular whether the role of Operations Officer could be retained. The FMSB noted that the additional role had significantly freed up the CEO's capacity which had been maximised to good effect with the CEO able to focus on promotion of mediation and policy work.</p>	
4.3	Chief Executive Officer's Report	
	The FMSB noted the CEO's report, and welcomed planned meetings with Andy Slaughter MP (Chair of the Justice Select Committee) and Baroness Levitt KC (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, MoJ).	
5.	Updating & Discussion	
5.1	Complaints	
	<p>The FMSB noted the complaints report.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that a question arose out of a recent complaint about whether an action that took place prior to a MIAM and prior to a mediation taking place would come under the scope of the 'mediation process' that the FMC Code of Practice covers. The</p>	HA to incorporate change when restricting the Standards Framework and Code of Practice.

	<p>case involved mediators sharing e-mails from a second potential mediation participant with the first MIAM participant, without the consent of the sender and where the sender had raised concerns about domestic abuse. The FMSB noted that this issue arose in a previous complaint and that the FMSB had concluded at that time that the Code of Practice was sufficiently clear and did not need amending. However, given the issue had arisen for a second time, the FMSB accepted a recommendation from the complaints panel that the Code should more clearly state that confidentiality applies from the first contact with a potential MIAM participant, and that information received from a potential MIAM participant should only be shared with the other (potential) participant with express consent. The FMSB agreed to make this change alongside planned work to restructure the Code of Practice and Standards Framework.</p>	
5.2	Training Panel	
	<p>The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the Training Panel meeting held on 11.8.25.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the panel had agreed an extensive workplan, including writing to training providers to gather views on a number of issues. The FMSB asked the panel to include the length of foundation training in that consultation.</p> <p>The FMSB thanked the panel for the considered approach it had given to the recent approval of a training course, to ensure it met the requirements of the Standards Framework, and separately to consider the consequences of a training course provider (whose FMSB approval to operate Foundation Courses had since expired) operating a course with trainers that did not meet the criteria set out in the Standards Framework.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that some mediation services were reporting that it was difficult to recruit accredited mediators with the skills to do legal aid assessments, which is a consequence of fewer services offering legal aid. The FMSB considered whether it may be possible to start identifying where there appear to be gaps in training, so that training providers could consider whether they could fill these gaps.</p>	

5.3	Accreditation Panel	
	<p>The FMSB thanked the Chief Assessor and her team for working on an updated portfolio template, and recognised the amount of work that was being put in to this.</p> <p>The FMSB welcomed the Accreditation Panel's continued to work on the alternative accreditation pilot.</p>	
5.4	Assurance	
	The FMSB noted that the DCA panel had received the assurance template and was aiming to complete this at its next meeting.	
6.	Future Meeting Dates	
	Jt FMC FMSB Meeting Date 10 December 2025	
	<p>The FMSB agreed dates for its 2026 meetings as follows:</p> <p>14 January, 11am – 3pm, Online</p> <p>16 September, 11am – 3pm, In Person in London</p> <p>9 December, 11am – 3pm, In Person in London (Jt FMC/FMSB meeting)</p> <p>Proposed dates of 15 April and 24 June were not viable and so alternative dates for spring and summer meetings will be proposed.</p>	HA to identify alternative spring and summer meeting dates