

FMSB Meeting
Wednesday 9 July 2025
Approved Minutes

Present: Robert Creighton (Chair), Anthony Blackman, John Hobson, Mike Mack, Lorraine Bramwell,
Sarah-Jane Turnbull, Alexis Walker, Lesley Allport

Apologies: Bola Olayinka

Also present: Jan Coulton (FMC Representative), Helen Anthony (Chief Executive Officer)

	Item	Actions
1.	Introductory	
1.1	<p>Welcome and introductions, apologies, declarations of interests</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone.</p>	
1.2	<p>Approval of minutes of last meeting & matters arising not covered elsewhere</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 26.3.25 were approved. The FMSB noted the action log and work plan. The FMSB noted that work on the MIAMs Guidance and implementation of the agreed actions relating to roles and responsibilities of PPCs was ongoing.</p>	
2.	Governance	
2.1	<p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>The FMSB noted progress against the strategic plan.</p>	
2.2	<p>Succession Planning</p> <p>The FMSB noted the agreed timetable for recruiting John Hobson's successor, when his term ends in 2026. The Chair encouraged mediator members of the FMSB to volunteer to join the recruitment panel for this.</p>	
2.3	<p>The Law Society</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the Law Society had ended its membership of the FMC although the two organisations intended to continue to work in partnership on issues where it had a mutual interest.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the Law Society intended to continue to operate its accreditation scheme, and that it may be appropriate to</p>	

	<p>introduce a fee for this and any other schemes which wished to gain FMC recognition (as may be the case when the Accreditation Reform Group completes its work). The Chair reiterated that all organisations would be expected to operate schemes that met standards set by the FMSB, as happened with the Law Society at present.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Priority Items for discussion & decision</p>	
<p>3.1</p>	<p>DCA Panel</p>	
	<p>The FMSB noted the minutes of the DCA Panel meeting held on 23.4.25 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 2.6.25.</p> <p>The FMSB discussed the screening and assessment resource that was being developed, noting the resource aims to improve mediator confidence and public assurance regarding domestic abuse screening.</p> <p>The FMSB thanked Adrienne Cox and Dr Liza Thompson, who were acting as consultants to develop the resource, as well as all the members of the DCA Panel, for their work.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediator feedback in the consultation primarily concerned about language, format, and practicality; • Some mediators worry about the resource becoming a “tick box” exercise; the amended document tried to place emphasis is on it being a conversational tool; • Domestic abuse agencies’ feedback ranged from strong support to concerns about mediation suitability. <p>The FMSB noted the target date for completion is September and training on the resource is planned from November 2025.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed it would be helpful to invite representatives of the FMC’s MOs to meet the DCA Panel, and discuss the next iteration of the resource.</p>	

	<p>The FMSB agreed the importance of messaging to clarify that the resource supports good practice without mandating rigid checklists.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the issue of taking/keeping notes had arisen in the consultation. The FMSB agreed not to address this in the resource, but separately as it concerned all mediation notes. HA to start to develop FMSB guidance on this.</p> <p>The FMSB requested the training panel consider how training on the use of the new resource could be included in Foundation Training.</p>	<p>HA to develop guidance on issue of taking/keeping notes</p> <p>HA to add to Training Panel work plan</p>
3.2	Complaints Processes	
	<p>The FMSB noted the proposed amendments to the complaints process for complaints about mediators, following the earlier review.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed the following changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce minimum expectations for complaints pool members as drafted; • To consider asking panels to review more than one complaint in a panel session, to increase capacity; • To remove the confusing and rarely used ‘offer’ stage from the FMSB’s process and instead include this in complaints guidance for mediator; • To amend the process so that the FMC office produces a summary of the complaint that is sent to the complainant for comment before being finalised, and then sent to the mediator for a response. The purpose of this change is to addresses the issue of implied but not explicit complaints. • To be clear that where a panel picks up on a potential breach of the Codes of Practice or Standards (that there is no hint of the complainant complaining about) the panel issues a separate set of recommendations to the mediator and the FMC office asks the mediator to confirm whether it accepts the recommendations. If the mediator does not, the FMSB may then initiate a separate complaints process (if the threshold for doing so is met). 	<p>FMC office to implement agreed changes</p>

	<p>The FMSB also agreed to expand the pool of mediators who could sit on complaints panels and create a pool of lay people to sit on panels.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed to keep under review the number of complaints panels FMSB lay members are asked to chair and, if necessary, consider whether it is appropriate to amend rules to allow external lay people to Chair complaints panels</p> <p>The FMSB also considered but rejected the idea of setting a threshold that is needed for complaints to proceed to panel.</p>	
3.3	Proposed FMC Website Updates	
	<p>The FMSB agreed to recommend to the FMC that it changes how a mediator’s accreditation status is displayed on its website, to be more positive.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed to recommend to the FMC that the public should be able to search for mediators who have declared they mediate in a language other than English, with a clear disclaimer to indicate that language skills are self-declared and not independently verified.</p>	HA to add to FMC agenda
3.4	Accreditation	
	<p>The FMSB welcomed the summary of accreditation data for 2024 and agreed to send this to the FMC and to publish this. The FMSB thanked the FMC’s assessment team for all their hard work.</p> <p>The FMSB discussed a proposal from the Accreditation Panel to adopt a policy needed for mediators who practise mediation whilst not on the FMC Register, but then wish to join. The FMSB noted that there were estimated to be at least 200 people in this position, and possibly more.</p> <p>The FMSB noted the proposal included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring joiners to engage with FMSB appointed PPCs (Professional Practice Consultants) who would produce tailored action plans; • Fees to be charged to cover the PPC’s work; and 	HA to publish accreditation data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An appeals process will be available via the accreditation panel. <p>The FMSB noted that the proposed policy aims to maintain standards and fairness to registered mediators, whilst allowing mediators who meet agreed standards to join the FMC Register at an appropriate level.</p> <p>The FMSB asked the Accreditation Panel to further develop the proposal.</p> <p>The FMSB noted a concern that mediators were exploiting loopholes in court rules to avoid regulation. The FMSB noted that the FMC was working with legal regulations and the MoJ to encourage people to join the FMC Register.</p>	<p>Accreditation panel to develop proposal</p>
3.5	<p>Establishment of joint FMC/FMSB working group CIM</p>	
	<p>The FMSB agreed to recommend a joint FMC-FMSB working group was established to clarify CIM practice and standards. The FMSB agreed the membership should include representatives with differing views and that its remit should include consideration of whether a specific CIM code of practice is needed or if CIM should be embedded in general mediation standards, and the production of guidance.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed it was important to place emphasis on normalising child engagement in mediation without making it mandatory for all mediators to conduct this.</p> <p>HA to produce first draft of terms of reference and draw up a list of potential members.</p>	<p>HA to produce first draft of terms of reference and draw up a list of potential members.</p>
3.6	<p>Assurance</p>	
	<p>The FMSB considered the issue of how it can gain/provide assurance that mediators are meeting agreed standards.</p> <p>The FMSB discussed the need to balance professionalism and accountability without overburdening mediators. The FMSB</p>	

	<p>recognised the differences between individual mediator assurance and firm-level assurance, and the importance of leverage existing systems and avoiding duplication.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the FMC currently has multiple assurance mechanisms (training, accreditation, reaccreditation, CPD, complaints, observation) and that these were broken down in the Annex to the Assurance Paper that had been circulated for the meeting.</p> <p>The FMSB had identified domestic abuse screening as a priority area needing enhanced assurance. The FMSB agreed that it would consider each element of assurance in relation to DCA screening and assessment and consider whether any needed to be strengthened. The FMSB asked the DCA panel to contribute to this work.</p>	<p>JH & RC to finalise matrix</p> <p>HA to circulate assurance matrix to DCA panel</p>
3.7	Data & Information PID	
	<p>The FMSB revisited the data and information gathering project initiation document.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the provider of a new mediation case management system had offered to work with the FMSB to assist in gathering data. The FMSB agreed to consider working with all known case management system providers to see if anonymised data could be easily extracted from systems with mediators' permission.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that if it was to requested data from mediators it would have to be clear on the purpose of doing so.</p> <p>The FMSB also noted that many individual mediators would not be able to provide case data, as their firms would hold this.</p> <p>RC to consider further what data could be gathered and why.</p>	<p>RC to consider what data could be gathered and why</p>

4.	Reports	
4.1	FMC Report	
	The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the FMC meeting held on 24.6.25 and in particular that the FMC had approved the FMSB's proposed changes to the Standards Framework and Codes of Practice.	
4.2	Chief Executive Officer's Report	
	The FMSB noted the CEO's report.	
5.	Updating & Discussion	
5.1	Complaints & Good Standing – Regular Update	
	The FMSB noted the regular complaints & good standing update.	
5.2	Accreditation Panel	
	The FMSB noted the minutes of the Accreditation Panel meeting held on 27.3.25 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22.5.25.	
6.	Future Meeting Dates	
	15 October 2025 (online) NB FMC Conference Friday 26 September Jt FMC FMSB Meeting Date 10 December	