

FMSB Meeting
Wednesday 14 January 2026
Approved Minutes

Present: Robert Creighton (Chair), John Hobson, Bola Olayinka (In Part), Anthony Blackman, Mike Mack, Lesley Allport, Alexis Walker, Sarah-Jane Turnbull

Apologies: Lorraine Bramwell

Also in attendance: Jan Coulton (FMC Representative), Helen Anthony (CEO)

	Item	Action
1.	Introductory	
1.1	Welcome and introductions, apologies, declarations of interests	
	The Chair welcomed everyone.	
1.2	Approval of minutes of last meeting & matters arising not covered elsewhere	
	The FMSB approved the minutes of the meeting held on 15.10.25 and reviewed the action log and workplan. The FMSB noted that it intended to make good progress on the issues of data and assurance in early 2026, and agreed to bring forward its Spring meeting to March, to discuss these issues then.	
2.	Governance	
2.1	Strategic Plan	
	The FMSB noted its progress against its strategic plan and the importance of ensuring progress on trading standards and restructuring the Code of Practice & Standards in 2026.	
2.2	Clarity re ToR & processes	
	The FMSB noted that a query had been raised about the correct process for queries about a mediator's PPC status where a mistake has been made in the training process. The FMSB confirmed that the Accreditation Panel has a process to deal with any queries relating to an individual's status on the FMC Register, including CIM and PPC status.	
2.3	Recruitment	

	<p>The FMSB noted that recruitment for the independent FMSB and FMC roles, that would become vacant later in 2026, was ongoing and the FMC would seek to promote the adverts again in January and February. The FMSB noted that LFJBs, the Magistrates Association and National Childbirth Trust may have notice boards on which the adverts could be shared.</p>	
3.	Priority Items for discussion & decision	
3.1	DCA Resource	
	<p>The FMSB noted MM's interest in this item in his role of CEO of The Family Mediation Trust, which had funded the development of the resource and the 'Train the Trainers' day.</p> <p>The FMSB welcomed the drafted Mediation Screening and Assessment Guidance and Resource that had been developed under the guidance of the DCA Panel. The FMSB thanked the Panel members as well as Adrienne Cox and Dr Liza Thompsom who has drafted the resource on a consultancy basis.</p> <p>The FMSB welcomed the extensive consultation that had taken place in order to prepare the resource, both with mediators and with domestic abuse advice agencies, as well as the involvement of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed to adopt the resource.</p> <p>The FMSB discussed whether to require mediators to undertake training in the new resource, and if so when this should be carried out and how/by whom. The FMSB noted that the resource was intended to help improve assessment of suitability for mediation, rather than to introduce new standards. The FMSB also noted that it asked mediators to take responsibility for their own professional development and the Standards Framework already requires mediators to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take adequate steps to keep up to date and maintain the ability to practise competently; • to demonstrate that they keep up with developments in family mediation practice and theory; and • to demonstrate that they keep up with developments in safeguarding knowledge and skills, to include domestic and child abuse. 	

	<p>The FMSB therefore agreed to encourage mediators to be trained in the resource as part of their CPD cycle. The FMSB agreed to recommend to trainers that this training be delivered by an FMCA mediator who has attended or been taught by a trainer who attends the FMSB's 'Train the Trainer' day, scheduled for later in January, and that the training includes a refresher on coercive and controlling behaviour and the impact of domestic abuse on survivors.</p> <p>The FMSB agreed to monitor who had attended training on the use of the resource via re-accreditation and portfolio submissions.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that trainers had previously expressed concern about training on the use of the resource as part of Foundation courses, without courses getting longer. Whilst recognising that training in the use of the resource may replace training using other existing methods of assessment, the FMSB also noted that it would cover this issue in the forthcoming letter from the Training Panel consulting training providers on a number of issues.</p> <p>The FMSB noted that the aim of the resource was to improve assessment of suitability of mediation, and considered how it could measure whether it achieves this. The FMSB agreed to ask trainers to gather feedback from delegates when training on the use of the resource, to ask whether their awareness and understanding has increased as a result of attending the course. The FMSB noted that it planned further work on assurance in 2026.</p>	
3.2	PPC Guidance	
	<p>The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the PPC Panel meeting held on 28.11.25.</p> <p>The FMSB welcomed the draft updated PPC Guidance, and approved it subject to a minor amendment to remove outdated references.</p> <p>HA to send updated guidance to FMC and publish this.</p>	<p>HA to send updated guidance to FMC and publish this.</p>
3.3	CIM Working Group	
	<p>The FMSB approved the proposed Terms of Reference for the CIM working group.</p>	

	<p>The FMSB welcomed the proposed membership, of a core of FMSB & FMC co-chairs and MO representatives, together with additional members who have a particular interest in and experience of CIM.</p>	
3.4	Draft Guidance the use of AI	
	<p>The FMSB reviewed the draft guidance on the use of AI in family mediation.</p> <p>The FMSB approved the content of the draft, and agreed to delegate to RC & HA the order of the document; once complete, HA to send to FMC and then publish this.</p> <p>The FMSB considered drafting separate guidance in the future about how clients may use AI as part of the family mediation process.</p>	<p>RC & HA to re-order guidance</p> <p>HA to send to FMC & then publish</p>
3.5	Process for Prioritisation/Drafting of Guidance	
	<p>The FMSB welcomed the discussion paper that set out a proposed process for determining the topics on which guidance should be issued, and then producing that guidance. The FMSB welcomed the proposals, noting the importance of encouraging mediators to tell the FMSB what they would like guidance on. The FMSB noted that it may be necessary to limit the membership of the proposed guidance drafting group, and helpful to have rolling membership, with some members changing on a yearly basis.</p> <p>RC & HA to develop and circulate further proposals.</p>	<p>RC & HA to develop and circulate further proposals.</p>
3.6	Training Panel	
	<p>The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the Training Panel meeting held on 5.12.25. The FMSB noted the Training Panel's proposal to accept new applications three times a year.</p> <p>The FMSB noted the Training Panel's proposal for fee increases, and for an additional inspection of newly approved courses, to be build in to the approval process. The FMSB approved the process and the principle of increasing fees.</p>	

4.	Reports	
4.1	FMC Report	
	The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the FMC board meeting held on 10.12.25 and the timetable for Family Mediation Week. JC noted that the joint meeting in December had been very constructive and positive, and thanked the FMSB members for all their work.	
4.2	Chief Executive Officer's Report	
	The FMSB noted the CEO report, and in particular that the FMC Chair and CEO had had an introductory meeting with Baroness Levitt KC, the new family justice minister, in December.	
5.	Updating & Discussion	
5.1	Complaints	
	<p>The FMSB noted the complaints report, that showed an increase in the number of complaints the FMSB was receiving, which reflected an increase in the amount of mediation that was taking place.</p> <p>The FMSB noted the need to ensure it had capacity to respond to an increased number of complaints in response further rises in the amount of mediation taking place, and the fact that AI may play a role in increasing the number and complexity of complaints made.</p>	
5.2	Accreditation Panel	
	The FMSB noted the draft minutes of the Accreditation Panel meeting held on 27.11.25. The FMSB noted that the issue of Child Only/Finance and Property Only Accreditation had been discussed as a possibility as the joint FMC/FMSB meeting in December, and would be added to the Accreditation Panel agenda for discussion in 2026.	
6.	Future Meeting Dates	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 March, 11am – 3pm, Online • 10 June, 11am – 3pm In Person (London) • 16 September 11am – 3pm In Person (London) • 9 December 11am – 3pm (Jt FMC FMSB Meeting) in Person (London) 	