

FMC Board Meeting
Wednesday 11 March 2026
Approved Minutes

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

Apologies Alison Bull, Allan Blake, Ruth Hay (FJC Representative)

Also in attendance: Robert Creighton (Chair, FMSB), Helen Anthony (Executive Officer)

Open Session – FMC Board Members and observers		
	Item	Actions
1.	STANDING ITEMS	
1.1	Welcome, introductions, apologies	
	The Chair welcomed everybody.	
1.2	Approval of draft minutes, matters arising	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 10.12.25 were approved, and the board reviewed the action log.	
2.	Items for Decision	
2.1	CIM Working Group	
	The board approved the CIM Working Group Terms of Reference and agreed the proposed approach to initial membership and workplan. The board agreed practical steps to establish the group. The board thanked JC and FMSB member Lesley Allport for their work on this. The board noted that the Family Justice Council also had a working group on CIM, and noted that this presented an opportunity for joint discussion on issues of mutual interest.	
2.2	Governance Consultation	
	The board approved the timetable for the governance consultation.	

	The board discussed the draft consultation document, welcoming the clear way in which set out the FMC's role and asked opened questions of mediators. The board considered that the responses may be long and varied, that would take time to analyse and consider, but agreed that asking closed questions or limiting responses may restrict mediators' ability to share their views with the FMC. The board agreed to clarify that the FMC would invite responses not just from family mediators, but from those with a wider interest in family justice too. The board discussed whether to consult on the issue of differential fees for legal aid mediators as part of this consultation, but agreed that the issue should be addressed separately. The board considered asking mediator respondents which FMC member organisation they belonged, but considered that this might be construed as trying to analyse different MO services which was not the purpose of the consultation. The board agreed the draft consultation document should be sent to FMC MOs and the FMSB with comments invited from them and from FMC directors by 16.4.26.	HA to finalise consultation draft and circulate for comments
2.3	National Mediation Awards	
	The board discussed the invitation from the College of Mediators and Civil Mediation Council to enter a joint venture agreement to host the National Mediation Awards, sharing risk and potential profit equally. The board noted that it had a duty to use its resources carefully, but that considered the risk of losing money was relatively low given the budget and that there was an opportunity to make a small surplus. The board discussed the benefits of working together with the wider mediation community,	

	that an FMC nominated volunteer remained on the organising committee from previous iteration of the awards, and that the call on staff time would not be excessive. The board therefore welcomed the opportunity and agreed to enter in to the joint venture agreement to host the awards.	HA to progress FMC's involvement and arrange to formalise the joint venture
3.	Governance	
3.1	Finance & Risk Register	
	The board noted the draft minutes of the Finance Working Group meeting held on 4.3.26, the management accounts to management accounts to 31.12.25 and the updated risk register. The board noted that the Finance Working Group had drawn up criteria in order to go out to tender for bookkeeping and accountancy services. The board noted that the FMC's insurance premium had increased for 2026 but that a market search had been conducted. The board approved the updated Schedule of Delegation. The board noted the feedback that the FMC had received regarding mediator registration fees for 2026, from about 30 mediators with mixed views. The board noted that some mediators were concerned about the increase and some were supportive of the FMC's decision, but that many mediators had queries about the reason for increases. The board noted that SB & HA had replied to all queries, and had thoughtful and appreciative responses from many mediators. The board noted that many mediators had not seen SB's original letter regarding the fee increases that had been sent in the FMC newsletter and to each mediator individually with their first invitation to re-register for 2026. The board agreed to consider	

	sending an e-mail to mediators regarding decisions about fees before the end of the preceding year, although noted that this would require earlier approval of the budget. The board noted that the Finance Working Group had considered a number of suggestions made by mediators in their correspondence, including differential fees for sole traders or for mediators carrying out legal aid work. The board agreed that it was very difficult to determine how differential rates could work fairly, given that mediators work in so many different ways. The board also noted concerns about attempting to prop up a failing publicly funded system. The board agreed it was important to maintain a lower rate for mediators working towards accreditation and to support mediators who offer legal aid, but did not consider it practical or desirable to have more than two different registration fees. The board noted the Finance Working Group had discussed the possibility of introducing a Hardship Fund to which mediators could apply if they could not afford their registration fees. The board noted the difficulties there could be in administering this, but welcomed the idea in principle and so asked the Finance Working Group to explore this further. The board agreed to try to be clearer about its work and decision-making process, and to include information about this discussion regarding fees in the FMC's Newsletter in April. SB, RC & HA accepted an invitation to speak about the work of the FMC on the FMA's podcast, and noted it would welcome other opportunities to discuss its work with mediators.	HA to discuss budget timetable with Finance WG HA & RW to draft communication re fees before year end HA to add Hardship Fund to next Finance WG agenda RW & HA to draft for approval by the board
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	The board noted proposals to amend the system for approving Foundation and CIM training courses, to introduce an early inspection. The board also noted proposals to increase Training Course Approval and Renewal Fees, which had remained unchanged for 10 years (Foundation) and 8 years (CIM). The board noted that the reason for increasing fees was to pay training course reviewers a more reasonable rate for their work to inspect and approve courses. The FMC noted that as there is more demand for mediation, it is harder to attract reviewers to work for non-commercial rates. The FMC agreed to increase training course reviewer fees, so that recruitment processes can start ahead of course re-approvals. The FMC noted that the FMSB was carrying out more work regarding the proposed increased provider fees, and to clarify the new process, as well as a timetable and communication plan regarding these.	
3.2	Progress re Strategic Plan	
	The board noted the summary of the joint FMC/FMSB meeting held on 10.12.25 and progress against the strategic plan. The board noted that whilst some workstreams were taking longer than hoped, others were on course and good progress was being made. The board noted that efforts continued to establish an APPG for family separation and thanked BS for her work on this.	
3.3	Conflict of Interest Declarations	
	The board noted the need to keep the conflicts of interest register up to date, and directors were invited to complete the declaration of interest forms that had been sent to them.	Directors to complete declaration of interest forms.
3.4	Recruitment	
	The board noted that adverts were live for a number of roles for mediators and non-mediators, including an independent FMC member, and independent FMSB member, and two FMSB mediator members, to replace members' whose terms are ending	HA to send details of roles to directors for circulation

	later in 2026. HA to send details of these roles to directors for circulation to their networks.	
4.	Items for Information	
4.1	Chief Executive Officer's Report	
	The board noted the CEO's report and in particular the work the MoJ is doing to develop a Family Justice Strategy, and that the office of the President of the Family Division has committed to helping the FMC arrange webinars for the judiciary about mediation.	
4.2	FMSB Report	
	The board noted the draft minutes of the FMSB meeting held on 14.1.26 and thanked the FMSB for its ongoing work. Directors discussed the benefit of observing FMSB meetings, and those who had not observed before, or for some time, agreed to try to do so. SH volunteered to observe the meeting on 20.3.26. HA to circulate dates for subsequent FMSB meetings to directors to consider observing other meetings.	HA to circulate FMSB dates to directors
4.3	Academic Workshop	
	The board welcomed the news that RB had secured a grant from the British Academy to conduct a workshop between the FMC/FMSB and researchers. The board noted proposed research opportunities that the FMC had identified, and directors were invited to send additional ideas for research to RB.	Directors to send research ideas to RB
4.4	Legal Aid and Voucher	
	The board welcomed the statement from the MoJ that is expected the voucher scheme to continue and looked forward to formal confirmation of this.	

	The board noted the work that the FMC had done on legal aid, raising the issue of rates with the Minister in December, with the Justice Select Committee, producing a template letter for mediators to write to their MP and raising the issue repeatedly with MoJ officials in meetings. The board noted a proposed drop in event in Parliament that would be hosted by the MP for Welwyn Hatfield, where FMC office staff are based, and welcomed this as an opportunity to inform MPs about the legal aid crisis as well as explain the benefits of regulated family mediation.	
4.5	Communications Update	
	The board reflected on a successful Family Mediation Week, during which the FMC had engaged with significantly more people in webinars and on social media than previous years. The board also noted the positive feedback received The board agreed to try to find opportunities to increase the confidence of new speakers from diverse backgrounds and encourage them to present webinars during FMW. The board noted that despite an increase in FMW engagement, the number of visits to the FMC website had decreased in January 2026, compared to January 2025. The board noted there could be a number of reasons for this, including better marketing from mediators and the change in the way that Google presents search results, with more local websites being returned.	
5.	AOB	
	The board noted that it had previously agreed in principle to produce a logo for mediators working towards accreditation to use, but had decided not to produce this until the terminology around mediators working towards accreditation had been discussed and possibly changed. The board noted that it had had an inconclusive discussion on a potential name change in 2024/5.	HA & RW to work with designer to produce logo for WTAs

	The board agreed to go ahead now with producing the logo, noting that the cost was relatively low and if the name was to be changed, a new logo could be produced in due course. JC declared an interest as a PPC, for a discussion about a mediation forum that had been set up by a mediator and was intended to encourage discussion between mediators on matters of professional interest. The FMC had been asked to promote the forum. The board noted that there were lots of discussion forums available, and whereas the FMC had a policy to help determine which courses and events should be published, it did not have such a policy for fora, so it had no criteria against which to make a decision about which it should promote. The board decided to agree and publish a policy on this issue, before making a decision in the particular case.	HA to draft policy for board consideration
6.	Next meeting dates	
	○ 3 June, In person (London), 12pm - 3pm ○ 12 August, Online 10am - 12pm ○ 14 October, Online 10am - 12pm (NB Also AGM) ○ 9 December - In person (London), 11am - 3pm (Joint FMC/FMSB Meeting)	