

Foundation Training Programme 2024 Course and Application Guide

Note: FMNI is committed to open knowledge. However, all original material must be properly attributed and some content cannot be appropriately used outside its original context.

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A. FOUNDATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

Family Mediation Overview

Family Mediation offers an alternative to conflict when families experience challenges with communication particularly during or after separation and divorce. By managing conflict and offering an independent, privileged, and impartial process, it empowers (ex) partners to negotiate solutions which meet the needs of their family, especially those of their children. Mediation addresses the parenting issues which result from couple relationship breakdown and incorporates the views of children by indirect and direct consultation. Understandings reached together are written down to form a useful working document (Mediated Agreement) - the basis for future problem solving. It reduces both the emotional and financial cost of separation and divorce.

Ethos of the Training Programme

Throughout the delivery of the Foundation Training Programme there is a strong emphasis on the fundamental underpinning principles of family mediation i.e. respect for the views and feelings of the participants, respect for the interests of the children and others involved, respect for an equitable outcome, respect for the values of equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age or disability and above all respect for the authority of the participants to make their own decision.

Course Validation

Our programme is approved by the College of Mediators UK for both generic and specialist family mediation. We are currently seeking approval from the Mediators' Institute of Ireland for our Family Mediator Foundation training Programme and for the 'separating couples mediation' for those with a recognised mediation qualification.

COST The cost of the Foundation Training Programme is **£2000** per person which includes assessment, training materials (electronic copies) and catering. Please note that course fees can be paid by instalment, by prior agreement with the Director prior to the course commencing.

FMNI require a minimum of 10 eligible participants, to ensure that delivery of the FTP programme is financially feasible for the Charity to deliver.

Course Hours: 72 hours direct (12 days) + 20 hours minimum self-study including pre-course reading, completion of a Learning Journal and a drafting assignment (a Mediated Agreement).

Successful completion of the course requires full attendance and participation throughout.

The course will be assessed both through formal role play and written submissions. Attendance on all days of the course is mandatory and successful completion includes satisfactorily passing the assessed elements as well. Certificates of completion cannot be issued without full attendance.

It is important not to commence this course if you have any anticipation of difficulty in attending all of the modules. In exceptional situations, i.e. unforeseen circumstances, a trainee may be able to make up a missing unit or module at additional expense.

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Dates for Foundation Training Programme 2024

Module	Days	Module Title	Dates	Trainers
Module 1	Day 1 (In person)	Introduction	Friday, 21 Sept 2024 (full day)	Davina & Sheena
	Day 2 (In person)	Mediation & Communication theory	Saturday, 22 Sept 2024 (full day)	Davina & Sheena
Module 2	Day 3 (Online)	Mediation as a staged process	Thursday, 10 Oct 2024 (half day)	Davina
	Day 4 (Online)	Mediation as a staged process	Friday, 11 Oct 2024 (half day)	Sheena
	Day 5 (In person)	Mediation as a staged process	Saturday, 12 Oct 2024 (half day)	Davina & Sheena
Module 3	Day 6 (Online)	Couple Dynamics	Thursday, 7 Nov 2024 (half day)	Davina
	Day 7 (Online)	Children & parenting	Friday, 8 Nov 2024 (half day)	Davina
	Day 8 (In person)	Children & parenting	Saturday, 9 Nov 2024 (full day)	Davina & Sheena
Module 4	Day 9 (Online)	Parenting	Thursday, 5 Dec 2024 (half day)	Davina
	Day 10 (Online)	Negotiation	Friday, 6 Dec 2024 (half day)	Sheena
	Day 11 (In person)	Finance & Property	Saturday, 7 Dec 2024 (full day)	Davina & Sheena
Module 5	Day 12 (Online)	Ethics & Reflective practice	Thursday 9 Jan 2025 (half day)	Davina
	Day 13 (Online)	Ethics & Reflective practice	Friday, 10 Jan 2025 (half day)	Sheena
	Day 14 (In person)	Family Law	Saturday, 11 Jan 2025 (full day)	Davina & Sheena

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Module 6	Day 15 (In person)	Managing the risk	31 Jan 2025 (full day)	Davina & Sheena
	Day 16 (In person)	Endings & Assessments	1 Feb 2025 (full day)	Davina & Sheena

FTP Coursework Assignments

Submission date of MA & Open Statement of Financial Information:	18 December 2024
Submission date of Learning Journal:	18 February 2025
FTP certificates forwarded:	11 March 2025

Note: *FMNI may make changes to the order in which training days/content are delivered. Trainees will be advised of any changes well in advance. An electronic copy of all training materials will be forwarded to trainees in advance of each Module training day (s).*

Aims of the Foundation Training Programme

1. To equip trainees with principles, values, knowledge and skills required to practice as Mediators, in particular assisting couples following separation and divorce which includes:
 - a) Understanding of the theory and practice of family mediation.
 - b) Knowledge of conflict management strategies and family dynamics with particular emphasis on the effects of separation and divorce on children.
 - c) The ability to confidently deal with legal and financial issues in mediation.
 - d) Enhanced listening, probing and evaluation skills.
 - e) The ability to confidently and competently include the needs, wishes and feelings of children and young people in the mediation process through indirect consultation.
2. To provide those trainees who successfully complete the course with a qualification which is compliant with the standards of and approved by The College of Mediators UK.

Objectives of the Foundation Training Programme

Upon successful completion, the participants will:

- ✓ Meet the requirements for the Foundation Training in both Generic and Family Mediation Conversion Training for the College of Mediators (UK)
- ✓ Have gained the requisite knowledge, skills, role play practice experience and self-awareness to start the required co-working practice experience in separating/divorcing couples' mediation.
- ✓ Have gained an understanding of the vital role of safe, reflective practice and supervision.

The Training Team

Davina Clements is an accredited Family Mediator with FMNI. Davina is a qualified Social Worker. Davina qualified as a Family Mediator in 2008 and has achieved accreditation status, working as a Family Mediator and Direct Child Consultant. She is a member of the College of Mediators. Davina is also a qualified PPC. Davina has a Master's in Strategy & Leadership at QUB.

Polly Rowan Hamilton is an experienced and accredited 'All Issues' Mediator, registered with The College of Mediators UK, Family Mediation Council (FMCA), The Mediator Institute of Ireland and The Elder Mediation international network (Cert EM adv). Polly is registered with the FMCA and College of Mediators as a Professional Practice Consultant and trained to provide Child inclusive mediation. Polly formerly worked with families for over 20 years in education, teaching and senior leadership roles in South London. She trained as a Mediator with Family Mediation Northern Ireland (2011). Polly is a current member of the Professional Standards Committee for The College of Mediators UK. Polly is a member of the FMNI training team, the Mediator Panel and is a PPC for FMNI.

Sheena McGrellis is an accredited Family Mediator and has been on the FMNI Mediator Panel since 2017. She is a member of the College of Mediators. Sheena has a MSc in Health Psychology and a wide range of experience in youth research and mental health. As well as practicing as a Family Mediator with FMNI, she delivers mental health and mindfulness training.

*Additional FMNI Associate Trainers with expertise in Family Mediation may also be contributing to the delivery of this programme.

Methodology and Evaluation

Training Delivery

- Training delivery by way of didactic input, facilitated and reflective discussion with skills practice through role plays

Assessment and Evaluation

- Trainer, peer and self-assessment of each role-play
- Trainers' assessment of drafting exercise and Learning Journal
- Trainers and trainee self-assessment of overall participation

Self-Learning

- Required reading list, with recommended additional reading on specific topics
- Completion of Learning Journal including self-reflective element
- Completion of Draft Mediated Agreement

B. ACCREDITATION AS A FAMILY MEDIATOR

Regulation of Mediation

The field of mediation is not yet regulated by statute. However, there are professional bodies in the UK and Ireland who have established best practice standards for the training and practice of mediation. FMNI works in compliance with the Codes and Standards of both membership bodies, the College of Mediators (UK) and The Mediators' Institute of Ireland (MII). Although there is differing terminology, under both organisations there are three stages to becoming a fully accredited Family Mediator.

Pathway to becoming an Accredited Family Mediator

STAGE ONE – COMPLETION OF APPROVED TRAINING PROGRAMME

Stage 1 to becoming a Family Mediator requires successful completion of an approved course, such as FMNI's Foundation Training Programme (FTP) leading to a **Certificate of Completion** from FMNI.



STAGE TWO – TRAINING PLACEMENT

After completion of an approved course, trainees are required to complete a minimum of 10 hrs **supervised and assessed training placement**, co-working with an experienced Mediator. The training placement should be completed within twelve months of completion of the FTP. Those who successfully complete this stage will be issued with a **Readiness to Practice Certificate**, which enables Mediators to practice independently in family mediation cases.

Note: FMNI offers a limited number of Stage 2 training placements each year to those who have successfully completed Stage One. Candidates can also organise their own training placement with another organisation with the option of the required supervision and assessment being provided by FMNI.



STAGE THREE – DEVELOPING A PRACTICE PORTFOLIO

Becoming an Accredited Family Mediator requires the successful completion of ongoing **Supervised Casework, Continual Professional Development (CPD) and the completion of a Practice Portfolio** of mediation cases submitted to The College of Mediators UK.

Note: FMNI uses a Panel of trained Mediators to deliver its service across Northern Ireland and invites new members to apply to join the Mediation Panel, as and when required. Panel members can use Supervised Casework for their Practice Portfolio.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE

Anyone interested in mediation can join the professional mediation bodies as a general member. However, candidates must have a Stage One Certificate and a Stage Two Certificate to practice as a Mediator working with separating couples. Ongoing professional membership requires completion of a minimum number of cases per year, Continual Professional Development hours and evidence of receiving regular supervision and support from a qualified Professional Practice Consultant. The benefits of membership include access to a large and varied programme of group events and conferences, discounts on professional indemnity insurance, newsletters, sharing and learning groups, standard policy documents, practice documentation and inclusion on a website as licensed to practice mediation.

C. APPLICATION GUIDE

Entry Criteria for the Foundation Training Programme

Person Specification

Essential requirements

Successful applicants must demonstrate:

- (a) An ability to work at graduate level i.e either hold a degree or equivalent third level qualification, or have experience in a role which requires working at a similar level of thinking and application; and
- (b) At least three years’ experience of working with couples and/or families; and
- (c) You will also need to demonstrate clearly on the application from that you meet all of the essential qualities, skills and attributes listed below. Please use these as a guide to assist in deciding if training as a Mediator is right for you, before completing the application form.

Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to alternative dispute resolution • Energy and enthusiasm • Willingness to work towards attaining standards of professional competence • Understanding of own motivations to become a family mediator • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take responsibility for own learning and self-development ✓ Make links between theory and practice ✓ Transfer and develop skills
Interpersonal Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Active Listening • Ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communicate at all levels (with clients, service personnel, trainees) ✓ Facilitate meetings to enable forward movement ✓ Work solo, in pairs or as part of a team ✓ Work respectfully, non-judgementally and with impartiality ✓ Show sensitivity to clients’ emotional state ✓ Cope with very conflictual or distressing situations
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to:

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Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Understand the process and principles of mediation✓ Read and assimilate new material✓ Grasp implications and facilitate others to do so✓ Record outcomes clearly and logically✓ Understand theoretical and legal aspects✓ Facilitate thinking and generate creativity✓ Engage with and understand complex factual material
Professional Ethical Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of the principals of mediation and how to reflect these in practice• Working inclusively in ways that allow equal access to mediation• Working within the codes of practice of The College of Mediators (UK) and/or The Mediators' Institute of Ireland• Understanding the role of the mediator and maintaining professional boundaries• Recognising the rights of children in separating families
Practical Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong literacy and numeracy skills• IT Skills

Please feel free to contact FMNI for further one to one guidance and advice on suitability for Mediation work if you are unsure of your eligibility.

Note: Previous mediation experience is an advantage but not an essential requirement.

Application Process

Please complete the application form below, contact Training@familymediationni.org.uk for current deadlines

Shortlisting/Selection Process

Initial shortlisting of applications may be followed by a telephone interview.

Please ensure that two independent References are made available at the shortlisting stage as allocation of places are dependent on satisfactory references.

Please note there is a limit of 12 places available on the FTP programme.

Shortlisting and selection of trainees will be carried out by the FTP Trainers. In the event that the programme is oversubscribed, places will be allocated on the basis of those who best meet the programme criteria. The decision of the FTP Trainers is final.

Successful applicants will be notified in a timely manner once the final selection has been confirmed by the FTP Trainers.

Foundation Training Programme

Attendance Policy

Successful completion of the FTP requires full attendance on all twelve days and participation throughout.

The course is assessed both through formal role play and written submissions. Attendance on all days of the course is mandatory and successful completion includes satisfactorily passing the assessed elements as well. Certificates of completion cannot be issued without full attendance.

It is important not to commence this course if you have any anticipation of difficulty in attending all of the modules. FMNI understands that changes can come about due to unforeseen circumstances. In exceptional situations, a participant may be able to make up a missing unit or module, which will be at additional expense to the trainee. We will endeavour to facilitate the additional unit or module in a timely manner after the course has finished, however this cannot be guaranteed. All decisions are at the discretion of FMNI.

Foundation Training Programme

Cancellation Policy

Family Mediation NI will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate participants who make changes due to circumstances outside their control. However, there are charges in most cases to cover costs already incurred and to ensure the course is still viable for the other participants.

Payment for the Foundation Training Programme before the course commences. Instalments will be considered. If you have to cancel at short notice a cancellation fee of 15% will be deducted from the total fee and the remainder returned to you.

Cancellations after ----- and withdrawals from the course are non-refundable unless in exceptional circumstances. Any refunds will be at the discretion of FMNI.

Options to transfer to a future FTP are at the discretion of FMNI: in all instances a 10% administration fee may be applicable.

FMNI reserves the right to cancel the training programme due to insufficient numbers or other circumstances outside our control. All successful candidates will be invited to join the next available programme and all fees returned in the interim.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR FMNI

Training@familymediationni.org.uk