



The
Family
Mediation
Trust

Report and Accounts

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Charity Number 1041476
Company Number 2975404

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Registered office at The Charing Cross Centre, St John Maddermarket, Norwich, NR2 1DN
The Family Mediation Trust Ltd is a registered Charity No. 1041476.
Registered as a company limited by guarantee and registered in England No. 2975404



THE FAMILY MEDIATION TRUST LTD ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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CHARITY NUMBER

1041476

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER

2975404 (ENGLAND)

A company limited by guarantee,
not having a share capital

TRUSTEES/DIRECTORS

Chair

Tracy Sortwell

Treasurer

Charles Mckie (Resigned 23rd November 2023)

Trustees

Elizabeth Lewis

Sarah Calder (Resigned 23rd November 2023)

Hilary Perrott

Elisabeth Sneade

Sellina Kauser

Karen Taylor

Jonathan Dickens (Appointed 23rd November 2023)

Fiona Hotston Moore (Appointed 28th May 2024)

James Pirrie (Appointed 28th May 2024)

REGISTERED OFFICE

The Charing Cross Centre
St John Maddermarket
Norwich
NR2 1DN

REPORTING ACCOUNTANT

Stuart Arrandale
Chartered Accountant
23-25 Gwydir Street
Cambridge
CB1 2LG

BANKERS

CAFBANK Ltd
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4TA

Principal Activities

The principal activity of The Family Mediation Trust ('TFMT' or 'the Trust') is to alleviate the hardship and distress of couples and other family members involved in separation or divorce and to preserve and protect the health, both mental and physical, of the adults and children involved.

The core values of our service are inclusiveness, acceptance, and accessibility through the empowerment of parents, carers, and children, quality and professionalism of service, and acting as a voice for the well-being of children.

We aim to help those experiencing relationship breakdown by providing accessible information and support for children, parents and carers from all cultures and communities. We have a special concern for listening to the voices of children and young people and supporting children and their parents or carers.

We aim to help separating couples to work together to resolve their financial and/or childcare problems by offering them a safe environment where their feelings are acknowledged and where they are encouraged to discuss and plan the future as constructively as possible.

To further these objectives, we provide a range of services to couples involved in, or considering, separation and divorce, and to their children and other family members. These services consist of:

- Information about all aspects of separation and divorce and the most appropriate means of helping children through parental separation.
- Mediation with a view to helping couples to make decisions on practical arrangements for themselves and their children; and
- Training of mediators and other professionals in the role and delivery of mediation to separating families.

Mediation Service

We employ nine mediators. One of our mediators is also a Professional Practice Consultant and provides in-house supervision, alongside additional Professional Practice Consultancy from an external consultant.

The Trust remains dedicated to supporting new mediators through their training. Over the year we have been supporting three mediators in the development of their portfolios.

Centre for Excellence

Following the launch of the Centre for Excellence in March 2021 the Trust has continued to invest time and resources in the development of this area of work. The Centre for Excellence has focused on short course development, delivering one-off industry level events and the trial of new mediation approaches.

Focus of the CforE has been on trialing new models of mediation such as Parenting Coordination and advocacy for low-income families.



Financial Review

Income for the year amounted to £363,280 (year ended 31 March 2023: £360,581). Donations gratefully received during the year amounted to £22,762 (year ended 31 March 2023: £29,100).

Reserves

The balance on the unrestricted fund account on 31 March 2024 was £189,428 (year ended 31 March 2023: £174,191). The Trustees continue to focus on three primary financial objectives: (1) maintain sufficient cash reserves to enhance organisational resilience to respond to any future economic downturns; (2) further develop the service's revenue streams to financially support the service's charitable objectives obviating the need to rely largely on charitable donations to fund capital expenditure and future development; and (3) invest in the future of the sector to promote service quality in a changing society to deliver long-term societal benefit

The balance on the restricted fund account on 31 March 2024 was £28,270 (year ended 31 March 2023: £18,398).

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Last year, we set out to consolidate the work the Trust had been doing during the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis to build a stronger and more stable organization. This focus has led to improved performance across all areas of mediation, resulting in more people having a positive experience.

A Divided World

As the wealth gap widens, the challenges for those on the lowest income levels become increasingly severe. For individuals on minimum wage, the weekly income is just £423.28. This amount is insufficient for those people and those unable to work, relying on Universal Credit, to access effective legal advice and support. The average hourly charge rate for legal advice consumes over 80% of a person's weekly wage.

This situation is impacting the family legal system significantly. The demands on family courts are constantly increasing, and the number of unrepresented people in these courts is also rising. Over this year, the government consulted on the idea of compulsory mediation, but the results showed a significant setback, opening options for those who can afford alternatives like arbitration to sidestep mediation.

Our voice remains one of the few that continues to champion support for those on the lowest incomes. The Trust has worked with other mediation services to raise

the profile and importance of Legal Aid for many families. Legal Aid rates have not been adjusted, and with new contracts coming into force in September 2024, it is unlikely that we will see any changes. However, we must continue to fight as fewer providers and locations offer Legal Aid mediation.

The voucher scheme has been a very helpful support structure for mediation, but it should not detract from the role of Legal Aid. Legal Aid is protected by law and designed to support the lowest-income families.

While advocating for mediation access regardless of income, we have also maintained high-level mediation services for private clients, especially those with complex financial situations. Whether supporting a couple in dividing trust funds or splitting debts, our team remains focused on providing high-quality mediation to all.

Putting the Child First

The majority of our work revolves around child issues, even in financial cases, as discussions and agreements often concern the child's home. The Trust believes, and the law dictates, that a child should have a voice on important issues such as where they live, who they live with, and how they are cared for.

Over the year, we have worked hard to ensure more cases include the child's voice. Despite challenges such as cost, parental concern, and administrative hurdles, we have increased the number of Child Inclusive Mediation (CIM) cases by over 120% in the last 12 months. Additionally, the Trust has promoted CIM across the sector by hosting a successful conference focusing on the Voice of the Child. We are also pleased to have welcomed a representative from the Family Justice Young Persons Board as a consultant to the board.

The Core Delivery

Over the last 12 months, the Trust has worked with over 1,000 individual families, a 16.5% increase from the previous year. This growth continues an upward trend over the past five years.

Outputs	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1st MIAMs	373	880	940	927	1,080
2nd MIAMs	176	338	419	447	534
Mediation Sessions	228	266	491	568	700

The table shows a significant increase in 2nd MIAMs (19.4%) and subsequent mediation sessions (23%). The Trust has focused on improving communication with the second client to achieve a higher conversion rate into mediation.

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The Centre for Excellence

The Centre for Excellence has primarily focused on rolling out a Parenting Coordination pilot project and advocating for Legal Aid mediation.

Parenting Coordination:

The concept of parenting coordination has been developed in many countries as a way for clients with significant conflict to manage their court-ordered agreements. In the UK, it has been developed by a group of nine mediators over the last five years. However, it has not materialized into significant case work.

The Trust secured funding from the Norfolk Community Foundation and The Mercers Charity to trial a project in Norfolk for Parenting Coordination (PC). The aim was to identify and remove barriers to accessing PC. The project focused on:

- **Court Support:** Working with CAFCASS and family judges to ensure understanding and trust in the process and facilitate referrals.
- **Financial Barriers:** Using grant funding to create a charging system that makes PC free for those on very low incomes and low-cost for those on low incomes.
- **Legal Advice:** Requiring clients to gather legal advice on PC before engaging, simplifying the process to reduce conflict.

To date, the program has provided valuable insights into challenges for the long-term future of parental coordination.

Family Mediation Legal Aid Action

The Trust has played a leading role in advocating for low-income families and the need to retain Legal Aid for mediation. This work has involved creating an alliance of 77 providers who offer Legal Aid mediation. The Trust's CEO has also taken on the role of chair of the group, instrumental in protecting access to mediation for low-income families.

The group acknowledges progress and successes, such as gaining support from a wide partnership of providers and correspondence with senior MPs and Lord Bellamy. This advocacy has amplified the message through other organisations, including the Family Mediation Council (FMC) improved focus on Legal Aid.

The Mediators Conference

The Trust delivered an online conference focusing on the Voice of the Child. The event attracted high-profile speakers and facilitated diverse and challenging discussions on maximizing the potential of child-inclusive mediation, safely and effectively.

Plans for the Future

While this year has been successful, there is further work to be done. Over the coming year, the Trust will focus on:

- Increasing the number of families we work with to extend the impact of our services.
- Creating a new income line through the external provision of Professional Practice Consultants.
- Exploring ways to enhance support for children through the separation process.

The Team

The Family Mediation Trust places immense value on its staff, recognizing that their dedication and expertise are at the core of our success. We are proud to highlight the recent achievement of Debbie Hargreaves, who has successfully secured full accreditation, further strengthening our team's ability to provide exceptional mediation services.

As part of our commitment to staff well-being and development, we also support all our employees by ensuring they are enrolled in the Real Living Wage, reflecting our belief in fair compensation and the importance of investing in our people. This dedication to our team not only enhances their professional growth but also ensures that our services are delivered by motivated and well-supported staff.

Thank You

The Trust's administrators and mediators are not only hardworking but also show compassion and commitment to our clients daily. Their approach has enabled the Trust to have another successful year. The Trustees have provided guidance and support to decision-making while ensuring the charity's governance is maintained at the highest level.

The Trust has been fortunate to receive support from several charities and trusts. We would like to thank the following for their support:

- The Mercers Charity
- CAF Bank
- The Privy Purse

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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The trustees (who are also directors of The Family Mediation Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law they have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland" and the Charities SORP 2020.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue its activities.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that its financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities SORP 2020. They have general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies and in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charities Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act 2011.

Independent examiners

The directors reappointed Stuart Arrandale, Chartered Certified Accountant as independent examiner to the company.

Reserves Policy

The charity aims to hold sufficient general funds to cover the cost of running the charity for three months.

Post Balance Sheet Events

There are no Post Balance Sheet Events to be reported.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on. 9.12.24

Director

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ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS ON THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS OF CAMBRIDGE FAMILY MEDIATION SERVICE

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 9 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and reporting accountants

As described on page 7 the Trustees, who are also the Directors of The Family Mediation Trust Ltd for the purposes of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, and they consider that an audit is not required for this year and that an independent examination under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act, does he mean 144, that's what he refers to above?
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of statement

My work was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act

have not been met, or to which in my opinion attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

STUART ARRANDALE
Chartered Accountant
23-25 Gwydir Street
Cambridge
CB1 2LG

9-12-2024

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	<u>NOTES</u>	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE					
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Donations	1c	869	21,893	22,762	29,100
Incoming resources from operating activities in furtherance of the charity's objects		336,573	-	336,573	330,663
Investment income		<u>3,945</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,945</u>	<u>1,088</u>
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		341,387	21,893	363,280	360,851
Cost of generating funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
NET INCOMING RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR CHARITABLE APPLICATION					
		<u>341,387</u>	<u>21,893</u>	<u>363,280</u>	<u>360,851</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Direct charitable expenditure	3	324,850	12,021	336,871	328,967
Governance costs	5	<u>1,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,300</u>	<u>1,200</u>
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		326,150	12,021	338,171	330,167
NET INCOMING /(OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR					
	2	15,237	9,872	25,109	30,684
Balances brought forward At 1 April 2023		<u>174,191</u>	<u>18,398</u>	<u>192,589</u>	<u>161,905</u>
Balances carried forward At 31 March 2024		<u>189,428</u>	<u>28,270</u>	<u>217,698</u>	<u>192,589</u>

The current and previous years include trading activity generated from the merger with Norfolk Family Mediation Service, and the impact of Covid-19.

The notes on page 12 to 16 form part of these accounts.



THE FAMILY MEDIATION TRUST LTD BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	NOTES	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS	6		2,220		3,331
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	7	45,545		38,305	
Cash and Bank		<u>209,751</u>		<u>177,673</u>	
		255,296		215,978	
CURRENT LIABILITIES					
Creditors falling due within one year	8	<u>39,818</u>		<u>26,720</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>215,478</u>		<u>189,258</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>217,698</u>		<u>192,589</u>
INCOME FUNDS					
Restricted funds	10		28,270		18,398
Unrestricted funds			<u>189,428</u>		<u>174,191</u>
			<u>217,698</u>		<u>192,589</u>

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the Trustees on 9/12/2024 and signed on their behalf.

Y. Sorell (Director)

The notes on pages 11 to 16 form part of these accounts.

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) BASIS OF PREPARATION OF ACCOUNTS

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the provisions of Section 1A "Small Entities" of Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (FRS102).

The Family Mediation Trust Ltd meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The financial statements are presented in pounds sterling (£), rounded to the nearest pound.

b) FUND ACCOUNTING

Unrestricted funds represent accumulated surpluses and deficits in the general fund which are available for us at the discretion of the trustees in the furtherance of the charity's objectives.

Restricted funds are created when income is received for a specific purpose and use is restricted to that purpose.

c) INCOMING RESOURCES

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- i. Voluntary income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.
- ii. Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.
- iii. Investment income is included when receivable.
- iv. Income from fees is accounted for on a receipts basis.
- v. Incoming resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.



NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

d) RESOURCES EXPENDED

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

- i. Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries.
- ii. Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include professional fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.
- iii. All costs are allocated directly between the expenditure categories of the Statement of Financial Activities. Establishment costs, management salaries and administration costs are allocated to the Mediation Service and Other Family Services in the ratio 75:25.

e) DEPRECIATION

Tangible fixed assets costing less than £1,500 are written off in the year that they are acquired.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost of assets, including the value of donated assets, less estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives, on a straight-line basis. It is calculated at the following rate:

Office equipment: 25%

f) TAXATION

The activities of the company qualify as charitable activities for corporation tax and therefore the company claims the charitable exemption provisions on any surplus arising from its primary trading activities. During the year the company did not undertake any non-charitable trading activities.

g) LEASES

Rentals under operating leases and hire agreements are charged to the income and expenditure account as incurred.

2. NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES

The net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers for the year is arrived at after:

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£
Reporting Accountant's fee	1,300	1,200
Combined liability insurance	1,750	1,567
Depreciation	1,111	1,111

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3. DIRECT CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
<u>All Services</u>				
Mediators salaries	125,461	3,055	128,516	129,585
Non-Mediators salaries	107,316	4,266	111,582	109,113
Establishment and admin costs	87,453	4,700	92,153	88,874
Training, affiliation and travel	<u>4,620</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,620</u>	<u>1,395</u>
	<u>324,850</u>	<u>12,021</u>	<u>336,871</u>	<u>328,967</u>

4. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
<u>Establishment</u>				
Rent and rates	11,750	-	11,750	14,043
Telephone	5,142	1,081	5,142	4,572
Printing, post & stationery	4,372	919	4,372	6,132
<u>Administration</u>				
Bookkeeping	8,010	-	8,010	5,515
Insurance	1,750	-	1,750	1,567
Consultants expenses*	50,400	2,100	52,500	50,000
Depreciation office equipment	1,111	-	1,111	1,111
Sundry	<u>6,918</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>7,518</u>	<u>5,934</u>
	<u>87,453</u>	<u>4,700</u>	<u>92,153</u>	<u>88,874</u>

* The consultancy expenses cover the fees for The Rural Consultant Ltd to provide Managing Agent functions to the Family Mediation Trust throughout the year.

5. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Financial and professional				
Independent examination	1,300	-	1,300	1,200
Legal and professional	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Administration	<u>1,300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,300</u>	<u>1,200</u>



NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

6. FIXED ASSETS

	Leasehold Improvements	Office Equipment	Total
Cost	£	£	£
At 1 April 2023	11,163	28,469	39,632
Additions	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	11,163	28,469	39,632
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	11,163	25,138	36,301
Charge for year	-	1,111	1,111
At 31 March 2024	11,163	26,249	37,412
Net 31 March 2024	-	2,220	2,220
Net 31 March 2023	-	3,331	3,331

7. DEBTORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	43,087	36,569
Other debtors and prepayments	2,458	1,736
	<u>45,545</u>	<u>38,305</u>

8. CREDITORS:

Amounts falling due within one year	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	5,056	6,437
Other taxation and social security	34,762	20,283
	<u>39,818</u>	<u>26,720</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

9. OTHER COMMITMENTS

At 31 March 2024 the charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024	2023
Land and buildings		
Expiry date		
Within one year	£-	£-
Within two to five years	£-	£-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The Trust uses assets under licence arrangements with rolling 90-day arrangements.

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

10. RESTRICTED FUNDS	2024	2023
	£	£
Law Services Commission	1,854	1,854
Parental Co-ordination	26,123	16,544
Mediation 4 All	<u>293</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>28,270</u>	<u>18,398</u>

11. TRUSTEES AND EMPLOYEES

There were 16 employees during the year (2023: 16) each earning less than £40,000 p.a.

There were no transactions with the Trustees who receive no emoluments.

12. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The charity has no contingent liabilities.