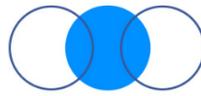


Code	AP.001
Title	Audit Policy
Status	Active
Prepared by	Stuart Hanson
Approved by	Dorian Roberto Ramirez Sosa
Date Approved	06.05.19
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Date last amended	01.06.20
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Contact Officer	Stuart Hanson
Distribution Status	Controlled



1. Introduction

File audits are a crucial part of Direct Mediation Services' (DMS) strategy to improve the mediation service it delivers to its service users. The evaluation of performance against standards or through comparative analysis, with the aim of informing management, is an essential component of a modern mediation firm. It forms part of DMS's governance arrangements helping to ensure safe and effective mediation practices.

File audit is a key mechanism in the process of monitoring compliance with standards, guidelines and mediation outcomes. It is intended that file audits will aid DMS's management to measure the extent to which day to day mediation practices meet agreed standards and to make improvements in performance if required, in order to improve service user outcomes and enhance their quality of their life going forward after a divorce or separation.

2. Purpose

This document sets out the key principles for conducting a file audit within DMS. DMS is committed to improving family mediation provision through improvement initiatives and will actively encourage all mediation staff and those in training to be involved in file audit. This policy should be referred to when organising file audit activity.

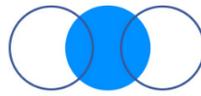
This policy is intended to:

- Make a clear statement of DMS's intentions to imbed file audit throughout all its family mediation activities
- Set rules for those involved in audit activity to manage activity in a consistent manner and in accordance with best practice where ever possible

Key Points of the Policy:

- File audit is an integral part of the family mediation service delivery and governance
- An annual programme of file audit is agreed and delivered, developed and monitored by the Legal Aid Supervisor and the Managing Partner.

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3. Duties

The person accountable for file audit is the Managing Partner, who is accountable for the monitoring of standards, supported by the Office Manager and Legal Aid Supervisor.

The Managing Partner:

- Ensures file audits take place in the firm and provide guidance accordingly, this is done on a monthly basis. This might be changed in the future as automated filing has been put in place from May 2020. No records of the outcome of the filing are produced.
- Liaises with DMS Office Manager, LA Supervisor and mediation staff
- Schedules file audits and meetings with staff involved in the audit process. This is done every month. No records are produced.
- Conducts audits of the Legal Supervisor's files if they mediates on cases
- Makes decision and implement action plans and support staff following audit
- Reviews and agree any changes re: audit policy and procedure

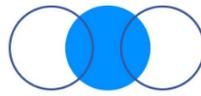
The Legal Aid Supervisor:

- Carries out audits and maintain audit records
- Designs and update documentation to be used in the audit process
- Liaises directly with the practice manager concerning audits of files
- Carries out Supervision meetings with family mediators in accordance with Legal Aid requirements
- Works with the Managing Partner to provide feedback and implement any training requirements
- Attends meetings internally and with the Legal Aid Agency
- Carries out work in view of guidance written by the Family Mediation Council and Legal Aid Agency

The Office Manager:

- Creates document checklists
- Orders and maintains digital mediation files by using document checklist produced
- Takes action to ensure files are complete regarding documentation
- Liaises with family mediators and DMS Managing Partner
- Ensures all documents are on file before closing or claiming any case.

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4. Mediator Training Plans

DMS holds training and development plans for each member of staff and these reviewed annual by DMS's Managing Partner and DMS Supervisor. Training and development plans needed to be presented by staff annually to the Managing Partner. DMS do not request sight of continuing professional development, as this is monitored by Member Organisations (MO) of the Family Mediation Council (FMC). The individual mediator must produce certificates to the MO and sign a declaration which is countersigned by the mediator's PPC. The MO will check the declarations and records. When mediators accredit, register and re-register the same process is followed.

Each member of staff is reviewed upon an on-going basis and DMS records any concerns, reviews and discussions. Notes are available of staff where concerns have been raised.

5. Family Mediator Competency

All DMS mediators are accredited, and each accredited mediator must provide a training and development plan to the FMC upon registration, accreditation, reaccreditation. The FMC process thereby ensures that individual training and development plans are in place. Working Towards Accreditation (WTA) mediators have to provide their PPC agreed training and development plans and the FMC for registration.

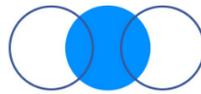
All mediators that are FMCA are competent to mediate all issues mediation. Work is allocated accordingly. WTA mediators always co-mediate with FMCA, having undertaken a briefing session prior to the mediation. The Managing Partner (or delegated representative) reviews MIAMs, as they are completed and if complex cases are identified, these will be discussed with the Practice Supervisor and allocated accordingly. Where issues of competency and capacity have been identified by DMS or the Practice Supervisor, the mediator may be allocated certain categories of work, asked to co-mediate, undertake training or removed from active mediation (temporary or permanent).

6. Supervision Meetings

To ensure quality and competence, DMS Managing Partner & Practice Supervisor provide a group supervision for WTA mediators regarding the preparation of documentation, session records, MOU, OFS, parenting plans to ensure the quality of work and documentation. The practice supervision will be delivered by Jan Coulton (Practice Supervisor) and the DMS specific content by Stuart Hanson (Managing Partner).

All supervision sessions are recorded by the Supervisor or PPC and include, date, duration of session, cases, issues and areas discussed. Personal development, training requirements and time scale will be contained in the session record. The mediators' supervisor will hold records of all supervision session and these can be requested by DMS if necessary. There is an annual meeting to discuss supervision.

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The group supervision being held on 16th May 2019 will be subject to requirements. The day is a full day, 5 hours and will be regarded as group supervision, 2.5 hours allocated to each individual towards the mandatory 10 hours of working towards accreditation supervision required by the FMC.

The norm is for one to one supervision. The group supervision is taking place for WTA mediators who may have some future input into Legal Aid work as co mediators with FMAC mediators. All FMCA mediators have engaged in one to one supervision

Admin staff are supervised and there are staff meetings each month at the beginning of the month where issues and concerns are raised. This is chaired by the Practice Manager.

7. Audit Sample

Dates of individual supervision records are maintained by DMS, supervision of administrative matters is 100%. Supervision of mediators is conducted at least one hour per quarter one – to – one supervision. If concerns are identified then additional supervision may be put in place.

The Practice Supervisor has access via 'G drive' to all files and can monitor and review all mediators work. DMS Managing Partner has 100% review of incoming documentation. Concerns as to quality will be raised with the Practice Supervisor. An example of this, is non-use company templates for MIAMs, session records. Supervision needs are identified by the Practice Supervisor during supervision, file review, review of G drive, pre-case briefing, post case brief and discussion with the Managing Partner.

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