

## PRINCIPLES FOR PRESENTING INFORMATION TO FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCES

### Principles

Family plans will be supported by Children's Services unless they leave a child or young person at risk of significant harm or are unlawful.

Families will be provided with the information they need in order to make safe and realistic plans for their children.

The agencies aim is to provide **no** major new information on the day of the Family Group Conference. Give the family time to think about the information well in advance of the meeting.

The aim is for the family and the agencies to make decisions on the day of the meeting.

Any likely delays to agency decision making need to be made clear to the family before the Family Group Conference, e.g. if an assessment is needed.

Information about the family is confidential, clarify and agree with them beforehand what it is necessary to share with the wider network in order to enable them to make safe and realistic plans for the child.

Consider ways in which the family network can have access to the information from the agencies before the Family Group Conference so that they have time to consider the implications. (FGC Co-ordinator can help with this)

### Content

- Name family **strengths** and **successes**, as well as what you are concerned about.
- Be **specific**, it is more helpful to make a number of clear specific statements rather than one vague or global one.
- Present in a way that is easy to understand, no **jargon**, good basic explanations of any professional language that you use.
- Explain your worries in relation to the **child** and in your professional view, the effect this is having on the child or young person.
- Be clear exactly what you would like to see **change**, and in what time scales.
- Name **resources** that will or will not be available to them.
- State your **mandate** - be clear when something is desirable in the interests of the children but about which you have no statutory power, versus something, which, if it is not covered in the plan, will lead to statutory action. Be clear where this is different for different issues.
- Clarify the status of the decisions the family are making - will they automatically get support, does it need different levels of management approval; will it go to a Child Protection Conference to a Court?
- Whose report is it - eg, Children's Services or the Multi Agency Group

## **Presenting your Information**

There is no one way to present your information, you are trying to present it in a way that is clear, accessible and appropriate to this particular family and in a way that they have a chance to keep the information for their own discussion. So think about literacy levels, disabilities, culture and religion of the family, their language of choice, the age and understanding of the children involved:

For example:

- You could just write down 'bullet points' to remind you and the family what you covered.
- A short written statement for you to go through (we suggest no more than one A4 sheet of paper)
- You can pose a series of questions you would like their answers to
- This information could be on paper (bring enough copies for everyone), on a flip chart, on a video, on an audiotape.