

A guide for children and young people

Family Group Conference Service

'Families making decisions'

What is a Family Group Conference (FGC)?

Everyone has problems at home or at school sometimes.

A Family Group Conference is a chance for your family, relatives and friends to get together to sort things out and make things better.

Who arranges the meeting?

- You will have your own worker. They are called a Family Group Conference Coordinator.
- Your coordinator will come to see you and tell you about the meeting and why the meeting is important. They will answer any questions you have.
- Your coordinator will make sure the meeting is as comfortable and easy to understand as possible.

Who will be in the meeting?

- Anyone who cares about you can be invited: close family; other relatives, including those who live a distance from you; and friends who you feel are part of your family.
- If you have a social worker they will also need to be there.
- There may be someone from your school or other people working with you and your family who will be at the meeting to say what

Do I go too?

- You will be invited to go to all or part of the meeting, but it is your choice.
- Before the meeting, your coordinator will visit you to prepare you for the meeting and hear your views and wishes.

Will they listen to me?

If saying how you feel is hard for you, your coordinator can help you with this. You can make pictures or record yourself speaking. You can talk to another person, someone you know and trust or an independent person called an 'advocate'. They can be at the meeting to support you, and can be asked to help you say what you want or say it for you.

Where is the meeting held?

- You and your family have a say about where the meeting will be held. We always try to find somewhere like a hall or community centre near to your home.

What happens at the meeting?

Information Sharing:

- Your coordinator will welcome everyone and you can help with this. Don't worry, you won't have to sit around a big table with everyone looking at you.

- Everyone will talk about what is going on, what needs to change and what they can do to help you. Everyone can have their say and ask questions including you.

Private Family Time:

- You and your family will have some private time to talk and make a plan for your future. Food and drink will be available that you can help choose. You can have a break from the room when you need to; you and your family can take as much time as you need.

Making the Plan Clear:

- When the plan is ready, you can ask your coordinator to visit your family again. They can help you to make sure that the plan has all the things in it that you and your family need to make it work.

Agreeing the Plan:

- Everyone else joins you to talk about and agree the plan. They say what they can offer to support your plan and make it successful.

What happens next?

Your coordinator then types up the plan and sends it to everyone involved.

Everyone will do their best to help you and your family with your plan. You may need more than one meeting. A Review Meeting is a good way to check how things have been going with the plan. This helps us to find out what is working and what isn't so that things can change.

"I felt we were listened to" - Young person

"I think things were difficult at first, but when family members put their feelings aside, it went fairly well" - Step parent

"We managed to talk over our difficult subjects. We never really argued even though I was expecting to. I like the plan because it's something we can work on together" - Aunt

"Dad still wants to cuddle me, that was nice" - Young person

For further information:

If you need any further information or there is anything you are concerned about, you can speak with your coordinator.

Family Group Conference Service, Rivers ACE Centre, Trent Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 7BB

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