

*"Everyone has problems from time to time. Often they are easily sorted out, but sometimes a family group conference (FGC) can help you".*

## Why have an FGC?

An FGC is a way of getting you and all your family together to make important plans and decisions when there are difficulties for a child or young person. It is your meeting.

An FGC can help sort out –

- Where a child will live
- How to keep them safe
- Problems with exclusions or attending school
- Help the family needs, to cope better.

## What happens?

There are three parts to the FGC meeting.

- 1 Introductions and information
- 2 Private family time
- 3 Agreeing the plan

## Further information

If you have any further questions about Family Group Conferences please contact:

FGC Service,  
Children's Services,  
Clarendon House,  
Monarch Way,  
Winchester  
SO22 5PW

01962 876355 / 876356

Upon request, the information in this leaflet can be produced in other formats (e.g. large print, audio tape) and other languages.

# Family group conferences

A guide for families and young people



## What do we mean by family?

Anyone who cares about the child could be invited: close family, other relatives including those at a distance, and particular friends who feel 'part of the family'.



## Who comes to the meeting?

The co-ordinator will visit you, and will want to meet the child and all family members to explain about the meeting and help arrange for people to come.

The child or young person will be invited along with any brothers and sisters. Perhaps a friend can come too.

## Who else will be there?

The referrer who first suggested the FGC to you will come, and you can ask other professionals involved with your family, who can give you information that will help you find a way forward. The co-ordinator will contact them.

## What if I don't think they will listen to me?

It is important everyone has a say. The co-ordinator makes sure all voices are heard. Sometimes a friend, or maybe an auntie or a neighbour is a good person to speak up for a child, or you may want an independent advocate to help you make your point. Those really unable to attend may choose to send a letter or tape instead.



## The meeting

FGCs usually take place outside the home at a time and place to suit the people who want to attend. Refreshments are usually provided if you would like them.

There are three parts to the meeting.

### Introductions and information

The co-ordinator welcomes and introduces everyone, and explains what will happen. Next, the referrer will explain about the difficulties the child or family are having, and the decisions which need to be made, as well as relevant information about the sort of help they can offer. The family can ask questions. The other people working with the family also explain what they can do to help too.



### Private family time

Your job as a family group is to decide the best way forward for your child. You will need to

- Agree a plan
- Decide who does what
- Decide how you can check the plan is working.

The co-ordinator will be nearby if you need any more help or information.

## Agreeing the plan

Once your family plan is agreed, you call the professionals and co-ordinator back in. Together you go through it to be clear who will do what, and get it all written down. Provided you have addressed the professional's concerns, your plan will be accepted and given the importance of any other professional plan. Usually a date will be fixed, for a review meeting.

## What happens next?

After the meeting the co-ordinator will make sure everyone who was invited to the meeting gets a copy of the plan.

For the plan to succeed, everyone needs to try their best to make it work. Family 'monitors' and the referrer need to keep in touch to make sure plans are working.

## What happens at the review meeting?

Everyone comes together again to discuss progress since the first FGC and make any changes needed to the plan.

