**Family Solutions Meeting**

**Guidance**

**Reviewed November 2020**

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**What is a Family Solutions Meeting?**

A family solutions meeting is a Planning process to support parents and family members to make plans and decisions for children who have been identified as being in need of a Plan to safeguard and promote their welfare.

During these meetings, the family members are the main decision makers and the meeting is arranged to facilitate the resolve of an issue and to encourage family members to take the lead, as it is often families themselves that are the experts of what works within their own systems.

The main aim is to support family’s to find their own solutions to problems by organising a ‘Family Solutions Meeting’ to bring together a support network around the child and provide a Plan.

The preparation is key to the success of the meeting, working closely with agreed family members, helping them to understand the meeting, its purpose and the concerns well in advance of the actual meeting. Family members are asked to consider a maximum of 3 questions at the meeting that the practitioner feels needs to be resolved.

The participation of the child and their views are also a key part in ensuring the success of the Plan and the child taking an involvement and investment in decisions made around their care.

Preparation is required with each family member prior to attendance at the Family Solutions meeting:

The meeting is structured into three parts:

1. Information Sharing (where professionals share background information)
2. Family time (away from professionals)
3. The Plan (final agreement with the facilitator of the meeting)

At the end of the meeting the family produce a Plan and share this with the meeting facilitator.

The Plan is then agreed with consideration of risk and safety, along with any statutory and legal requirements.

The final Plan is then distributed to all parties involved and if required a review would be arranged.

**Family Solutions Preparation Form**

1. Strengths of the family
2. Concerns
3. What is the purpose of the family solutions meeting? (what needs to change)
4. What is the main thing that the family need to address? (no more than 3 areas - these are the questions the family will be asked to consider at the meeting)
5. Is there a Plan that would not be acceptable due to risk or significant harm?
6. What will happen if the Family Plan cannot be agreed?
7. Other professionals involved
8. Resources available to the Family Plan
9. Are there any statutory processes that need to be addressed too? (i.e. CP, CIN, CIC)
10. Who should attend the meeting? (family members/friends/support network) – agree this with the PR holder. **(see Family Solutions contact list)**

**Family Solutions Contact List**

**Identifying family support**

Once the purpose of the family solutions meeting has been identified, a genogram should be completed, to map out the wider family network, this should be completed with the PR holder of the child.

This will then identify those who have a role to play within the Family Solutions Meeting, this can include: Grandparents, Friends, Aunt, Uncles, etc.

A discussion either directly or via telephone contact should be held with each person invited to the family solutions meeting, with clear explanation around their role, the meeting format and what we are hoping to achieve (outlined within the Preparation form).

If during discussion with the PR Holder you identify someone in the family that could offer support but the PR holder refuses to get them involved, then time should be taken to discuss the impact of this.

The resolution of attendance should be agreed by the PR Holder in order for the meeting to function. Work may be required with the PR holder to identify who should attend their meeting. The facilitator may have a view on who could offer support at the meeting and while this discussion should be encouraged, the final decision around attendance should come from the PR holder in order for the meeting to function without conflict.

**Participation of the Child**

The facilitator of the Family Solutions Meeting must gain the voice of the child within this process. This can be the child directly attending the meeting with support, or the practitioner/facilitator providing direct work to ensure that the child’s views are shared at the meeting.

The child must understand fully the family solutions meeting process and what it is trying to achieve in order for them to understand and fully participate (if the child does choose to attend they should be supported to attend at the beginning of the meeting and the end of the meeting). Attendance would be encouraged for children aged 11+, though the individual needs of the child should always be considered.

**Family Solutions Meeting Agenda**

**Introduction**

Welcome

Introductions

Explain the stages of the meeting

1. Information Sharing
2. Family Solution time
3. The Plan

Invite the family to set meeting ground rules for the meeting (if the child is present consider their needs within this plan) ie, taking turns to talk, confidentiality etc

**Information Sharing**

* Facilitator shares information with focus on the main area’s the family need to address (outlined within the preparation form).
* Opportunity for the family to ask questions about information shared.
* Childs voice shared or child shares their view with support.
* Facilitator leaves the room, family left alone to consider the Plan (facilitator of the meeting should not be present but needs to remain available to the meeting)
* During the ‘family solutions time’ the family are asked to provide a Plan to address the concerns and consider how they will monitor this.
* The facilitator must keep checking the family are OK, if they get stuck, then support the family to go over the main areas highlighted in the preparation form.
* If there is conflict then address through though the meeting ground rules.

**Agreeing to the Family Plan**

* Once ready the meeting re-groups
* The family present their Plan to the facilitator, this is read out by the family, clarification is sort by the facilitator – Facilitator confirms the Plan is suitable (consideration for risks, safety and statutory requirements must be addressed).
* Discussion about whether a ‘review’ would be required or not. (not all cases will require a review)
* Review date agreed/times agreed.
* Copy of ‘The Family Solution Plan’ is distributed to all members of the meeting (ideally prior to departure/ or within 24 hours)

**Family Solutions proposed meeting structure/Script**

1. **Introduction**

“*Thank you for attending this Family Solutions Meeting, as you know my name is …………. And I will be facilitating the meeting which is being held in respect of* .…………..

* Ask each participant to introduce themselves and their relationship to the child.
* Meeting Ground Rules – Invite the family to set some basic ground rules ie taking turns to speak, confidentiality, no shouting etc
* Discuss the structure of Meeting:

Info Sharing

Private Family Time

Agreeing The Plan.

* Check when the child’s voice will be heard, is their voice present, has direct work been completed if the child is not attending, agree the child attending at the beginning and the end of the meeting.

1. **Sharing Information**

“*During my preparation for today I have contacted you all individually and we have discussed your involvement and the purpose of the meeting”*.

“*I understand the reason/s for the focus of the meeting are*: ………..(list the questions the family have been asked to consider from the preparation form).

“*I also understand that………....*” (consider any things that would not be acceptable (from question 5 of preparation form) ie the social worker has a statutory duty to visit every 14 days due to the child protection plan or the child is unable to have direct contact with …….?, this is non-negotiable due to statutory requirements etc.

“*I will start by discussing the social care/MAT/ involvement with the family, why we have asked for this meeting, what questions we would like you as a family to consider, and any resources available*”

**The child’s voice** should also be provided at this point – if the child is present at the meeting a decision should be made around what is appropriate for them to hear.

Once all information has been given, ask the family if they have any questions.

1. **Private Family Solution Time**

* Encourage the family to decide the best way of working together
* Help the family to identify a chair person
* Make sure they are aware of the questions to address (from the preparation form)
* Provide paper/pens for them to record a plan

Facilitator leaves the family, checking back every 15 min.

Once the family have devised their Plan return to the meeting.

1. **Agreeing the Plan**

“*Thank you all for investing time in this plan for ………….’ please explain your Plan’.*

Facilitator to confirm the Plan is agreed, does it address the questions from the preparation form, and does the Plan support statutory and legal requirements?

At this point the Child (if choosing to participate) should return to the meeting to hear the family plan and contribute.

Get all involved to sign the plan – share a copy at the end of the meeting.

1. **Reviewing Arrangements (if required)**

Discuss who in the family will monitor the Plan and if a review is required.

“*Thank you for all participating in this family solutions meeting and for creating your Family Plan to address the issues and concerns raised’*

**Meeting ends**

**Family Solutions Preparation Meeting Workflow**

**Childs voice** to be part of the Planning. If appropriate, encourage them to attend. If they don’t attend ensure that their voice is heard at the meeting through direct work (to be shared at the meeting).

Facilitator completes **Preparation form** identifying key area for discussion/strengths etc

Genogram to be completed with the PR holder

**Meeting invite list created with the PR holder**

Each family member in the invite list to be contacted either directly or via telephone to discuss their participation, discuss the process, their role, the meeting structure and what we are trying to achieve.

The aim is to **prepare each family member** for the meeting to reduce disruption at the ‘Family Solutions Meeting’ on the day.

**Family Solutions Meeting day**

See Family Solutions Meeting Agenda, guidance and checklist.

* Sharing Information (why we are here)
* Family time (Just with the family)
* The Plan (shared and agreed)

**Final Meeting date to be confirmed once each family member has been spoken to.**   
Invites sent out/telephone confirmation of venue/refreshments arranged.

**The Plan (see Family Solution Plan guidance)**

At the end of the meeting the family present their Plan. It is confirmed by the meeting facilitator if the Plan can be agreed to. Particular consideration must be made to the safety of the Plan and if it meets any statutory or legal requirements. **A copy is signed and provided to all members of the Family Solutions Meeting.**

If a review is not required the process now ends.

**If a review is required** agree a timescale to this.

**Guidance for producing Family Solution Plans**

**This can be shared/discussed in the meeting to assist the family in producing a family plan.**

**The Plan should contain:**

* Name and date of birth of the child discussed in the Family Solutions Meeting.
* Date and venue of the Family Solutions Meeting.
* List of all those who attended (who everyone is, their relationship to the child)
* Reasons for the Family Solutions Solution Meeting – Record the questions that were asked of the family from the Preparation form.
* Plan/decisions made and who in the family will monitor this.
* Names and contact details of family member monitoring the Plan.
* Date of Review (if required).