

**Guidance for Professionals making**

**A referral for a Family Group Conference – (External Referral)**

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is an opportunity for family members and close friends, together with your child, to get together to try to find a solution to a problem or to find ways to support your family keeping your children safe.

The best people to help your child or young person are usually their own relatives and close friends who you think of as part of your family.

The Referrer will attend at the beginning and end of the Family Group Conference. They will be asked to talk about what has brought you to the FGC. They will discuss with you the strengths within the family, what are their worries and what needs to happen next.

You and your family will have the opportunity to ask the Referrer any questions you may have.

Private Family Time

This is the most important part of the FGC. It’s where the professionals leave the room and the family have time to discuss and make a family plan that is detailed and that promotes the safety of the child. The convenor will remain on hand if you need to check anything out.

The Family Plan

The professionals are invited back into the room when you are ready to share your Family Plan. If safe and legal, the Family Plan will be agreed by the Referrer; sometimes this has to be subject to further checks being made.

The Convenor will give all attendees a copy of the Family Plan and also ask for a person in the family to become the main contact, who is called the ‘Monitor’ of the plan. It is their role to contact the Convenor if any part of the plan is not able to be put in place.

The convenor will also offer a review date around 4 to 6 weeks after the initial Family Group Conference.

**Guidance for completing Dudley FGC referral**

Please ensure all parts of the FGC Referral has been completed, this will prevent drift and delay of the referral. We do not accept referrals with missing information.

**Referring Professionals Name and position**

* The name and position of the professional making the referral.
* As stated on the referral form, the expectation is this person attends the Family Group Conference or makes arrangements for a colleague to attend in their place/ absence.
* This is an essential part of the family’s meeting and the family need the opportunity to ask questions of the referrer in order to make a well-informed Family Plan.
* The Professional will need to speak with the family at the start of the Family Group Conference before Private Family Time and at the end of the Family Group Conference, to hear the families plan and agree the plan if appropriate.

**Who are the Safety People - family members, friends, Neighbours, community members?**

# Who is appropriate, will they be supportive or are they key to resolving the concerns and keeping the children safe?

* It is important to note it is not just family that can be involved in a Family Group Conference; friends, neighbours’ colleagues can also attend but the parent/ carer must consent to this because the referral and details will be shared with them.
* It is the families decision as to who they wish to invite to their family meeting.
* If you are able to share any names on the referral, this could help the Convenor when talking with the family.
* Other Professionals who are working with the family can be involved in the Family Group Conference in some capacity, if the family agree.

# Reason for FGC

# *(It is important the information you are providing has been discussed with the family and they have consented to the referral being made)*

* You will need to complete the following sections in as much detail as possible, remembering the information you share will be shared with everyone involved in the Family Group Conference. ***For this reason, it is important details are shared in a sensitive manner.***

# Brief family history

(*This information will be read to the all family members so please keep it concise, factual and jargon free)*

* Include information such as, who lives in the family home, what the parents’ relationship is i.e. together, separated etc, and summarise wider family relationships.
* What has led us to this point?
* Identify significant events?
* What is happening outside of the family home e.g*. in the community at school etc*
* How you became aware of the family?
* What current support is in place?
* Additional relevant information?

*\*Remember all information you document should be shared with the family prior to referral and consent gained. The allocated FGC Convenor will share the referral again with the family at the point of allocation.*

# What are the family strengths? *(Safety Statements*)

*(What do various family members do well and how do they help and support the children? What’s working well with the child/ children?)*

* FGC is a Strengths and Solution Focused meeting. Please use this section to identify family strengths and successes. (*Provide as much details as possible)*.

**As referrer what are your concerns/ worries?** (*Danger Statements)*

* Outline your current concerns about the child/ren, rather than a detailed account of how the situation came to be.
* Be specific i.e. ***“Julia has met up with people she has met online, who may be unsafe”,*** rather than “Julia puts herself at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation;
* Explain what you are worried about as a professional and how this may be impacting on the child/ren for e.g. ***‘Mom and Dad often argue in front of the children and this may be impacting on the children,*** ***evidence of this is demonstrated in their behaviour where they are also becoming argumentative and aggressive towards each other’***
* Are the family in agreement with the concerns or do they have a different view?

**What needs to happen?**

*(List the Questions you are asking the family to consider and answer at their FGC; this will enable them to address the concerns? For Example: ‘How can the home be cleaned and tidied and kept to an acceptable standard?)*

* Why is it important to have a Family Group Conference?
* What areas (questions) do you want the family to address in the Family Group Questions *(Be specific, questions need to be clear not vague.)*
* Ensure you have separate questions rather than a nonspecific. (Be realistic about what needs addressing, having lots of questions may be overwhelming; consider key areas to address at the FGC) We usually recommend a maximum of 6 questions.
* The questions need to focus on what needs to happen and not how they should happen. It is not an opportunity for the professional to tell the family **what they** **should be doing**

**Example of questions:**

1.*Who can help so the home conditions are maintained to a good enough standard, Who will they help, How will they help and Who can check that things have been maintained in the family home?*

2.*Who can offer Lucy an opportunity to have a break from the family home, When will this happen, How often, How can it be arranged?*

3.*If mom is struggling with her mental health who can help and how? Who and how often can the family check that mom is OK and if she needs any support practically and emotionally?*

# The Family can change or add to these questions once shared by the FGC Convenor at point of allocation as it is their meeting.

# Bottom Line Requirements

## *What is non-negotiable and absolutely cannot happen or absolutely has to happen?*

* **Be specific, use nonprofessional jargon**

**For Example**:

*If the family cannot resolve these issues, there is the possibility a referral to Childrens Services will have to be made*

Or

*Improvements need to be made in the family home for the children to be safe*

**Professionals involved with the child**

*(This could involve, teachers, health professionals, counsellors or any other professional support)*

* Professionals can attend the Family Group Conference at the family’s request and would usually participate at the beginning of the Family group Conference to share with the wider family, what support they can offer or signpost the family towards.

**Agreement from those holding Parental Responsibility**

* A Family Group Conference is a voluntary arrangement, therefore someone with Parental Responsibility has to agree to the referral being made. They can either sign the Referral Form or if not, give verbal consent which is recorded on the referral form.

**Safeguarding**

* Please note, if any Safeguarding Concerns are identified by the FGC Convenor, they will pass this information directly onto the referrer to follow up the concerns due to FGC having a neutral role. Therefore, please ensure you provide your contact number and email address. It is also useful to have details of a manager we could contact if required in your absence. (**See FGC safeguarding policy attached)**

**Allocation**

* Please note the referral may not be allocated immediately, however, once allocated by the FGC Coordinator, the FGC Convener will make contact with the referrer to discuss the referral prior to making contact with the family.

If you need additional help completing this form or have any other questions, please contact the Family Group Conference Team on:

**01384 813111**

Or

**FGC.Service@dudley.gov.uk**

Completed Forms should be sent to

**FGC.Service@dudley.gov.uk**

Or

**Stourbridge Family Centre**

**Forge Road,**

**STOURBRIDGE,**

**West Midlands,**

**DY8 1XF.**