



Family Group Conferences

Information for Professionals



Part of the Family Matters Service

Family Group Conferencing in Wirral

We aim to support families to make their own decisions and safe plans for their children. We follow the principle that families have knowledge about themselves that professionals cannot easily match and are therefore able to make better decisions in relation to themselves and their children.

What is a Family Group Conference?

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a:

- voluntary
- culturally centred
- solution focussed
- family led

planning process that threads the children or young person's feelings through the family's own plan that is agreed and supported by them selves and their lead professional.

Who can access a Family Group Conference?

Referrals can be made for any open case held by Wirral Children's Services by the child or young person's Social or Family Worker. FGCs can work well accross all level 4 or 5 situations, including families that are at Pre Proceedings or Private Law Outline stages. In particular, FGCs can be very useful in identifying Kinship or Connected Carers, if necessary.

If you are unsure about an appropriate referral, feel free to speak to one of the team informally to discuss first, contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

AND

The child/young person and their families are prepared to engage in the Family Group Conference process to resolve their differences.

AND

There is an allocated Social Worker who can:

- a) provide information about the family's strengths as well as their needs and difficulties: what will need to be included in the plan to meet Social Care requirements (the bottom line): what will happen if the concerns are not addressed

- b) liaise with a Team Manager about what resources are available to the family to enable them to resolve their difficulties
- c) can attend the whole Family Group Conference, which may take place out of office hours
- d) can attend a second or subsequent Family Group Conference with the family if necessary should this have been agreed as part of the plan's monitoring or review.

Why Family Group Conferences?

Research demonstrates that the Family Group Conference model can reduce the numbers of children becoming 'looked after' or prevent a child becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan.



Mediation

The FGC team can also provide specialist Mediation support from trained Mediators – please ask for more information or our separate leaflet.

What if you're unhappy with the Family Group Conference?

If you are unhappy with the action of anybody in the process you should discuss this with the Co-ordinator or their Line Manager. The Co-ordinator has an independent role and is accountable to Wirral Council Childrens' Services Department. If this issue is still not resolved, you will be supported to access Wirral's formal complaints procedures.

For more information, please contact your Family Group Conference Team Leader, Allana Ghaemi on 0151 666 4947 or via familygroupconference@wirral.gov.uk



**The aim of a
Family Group Conference
is to give families and
their children/young people
a central role in
decision making.**

**For Further Information
please contact:**

*Allana Ghaemi, Family Group Conference Team Leader
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Wirral CH42 4RF.*

*Email: familygroupconference@wirral.gov.uk
Tel: 0151 666 4947*

Wirral Council is committed to making information accessible to everyone. Please contact your FGC Co-ordinator if you require translation of this leaflet to another language, dialect or another format such as large print, or Braille.