

Practice Guidance

Family Group Meetings

- 1.0 Family Group Meetings are also known as Family Group Conferences
- 1.1 Family Group Meetings are a process through which families, including the wider family are supported to find solutions and make decisions when there are concerns about children and young people. They are an approach to planning and decision making which uses the skills and experience of the wider family as well as professionals. The definition of who is in the family will come from the family itself and may include friends, neighbours and community members.
- 1.2 The following section is an extract from Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006:
- 1.3 “Family Group Conferences (FGCs) may be appropriate in a number of contexts where there is a plan or decision to be made. Family Group Conferences do not replace or remove the need for child protection conferences which should always be held when the relevant criteria are met.
- 1.4 They may be valuable for example:
 - for children in need in a range of circumstances where a plan is required for the child’s future welfare
 - where Section 47 enquiries do not substantiate concerns about significant harm but where support and services are required
 - where Section 47 enquiries progress to a Child Protection Conference, the conference may agree that a family group meeting is an appropriate vehicle for the core group to use to develop the outline child protection plan into a fully worked up plan.
- 1.5 It is essential that all parties are provided with clear and accurate information, which will make effective planning possible. The family is the primary planning group in the process. Family members need to be able to understand what the issues are from the perspective of the professionals. The family and involved professionals should be clear about:
 - what are the professional findings of any core assessment of the child and family
 - what the family understand about their current situation
 - what decisions are required
 - what decisions have already been taken
 - what is the family’s scope of decision making and whether there are any decisions/issues that are not negotiable; and
 - what resources are or might be available to implement any plan. within this framework agencies should agree to support the plan if it

does not leave the child at risk of significant harm, and if the resources requested can be provided.

- 1.6 The Leicestershire Family Group Meeting Service is a countywide service and the service is aimed at children and young people aged 0 to 16 years who are at risk of or who are already looked after by the local authority. The aim of the service is to identify kinship alternatives to care or to encourage the support of a kinship group to enable a child or young person to remain in the care of their immediate family.
- 1.7 In Leicester City the service is available city wide for children on the child protection register, children looked after or at risk of needing to be looked after and children in need of a co-ordinated package of support.
- 1.8 The Family Group Meeting Service for Rutland is county-wide.
- 1.9 **Contact details**

Leicestershire Family Group Meeting Service
Upper Bond Street
Hinckley
Tel 01455 894917

Leicester City Family Group Meeting Service
Mansion House
41 Guildhall Lane
Leicester
LE1 5FR
Tel 0116 2254772

Rutland Family Group Meeting Service
Children and Young People's Services
Catmose
Oakham
LE15 6HP
Tel 01572 758327

¹ Taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government, 2006, Chapter 10 Pg 189-190.