

# The Family Meeting Service



## Family Meeting Service

Family and friends  
making decisions  
together

A supportive,  
empowering way to  
address family issues

## Early Help Family Meetings

As members of a family we can all find ourselves going through difficult times, struggling to manage our own issues or meeting our children's needs. As a service we support families to come together to hold their own family meetings in order to find solutions and **make safe decisions together**.

We **value the strengths, knowledge and experience of the wider family network** by promoting their full involvement so that ideas can be shared and **positive, creative solutions** can be found. A person with parental responsibility must give consent to a referral to the service.

With your permission your family meeting will be organised by a trained **independent co-ordinator**. By independent we mean that they have no prior knowledge of or involvement with you or your family.

## The Family Meeting Service - What we offer

We offer **different types of family meetings** as outlined below. 'Family' refers to blood relatives and non-related significant family members, friends or neighbours. We will **consult and plan** with you regarding which type of family meeting best suits your needs.

### Family Group Conference

A family led meeting that is held with as many family members as practical to make plans and decisions about a child's future and how to keep them safe and cared for.

The key aspect about a family group conference (FGC) is that most of the meeting is given to family to spend **private time** creating their own plan.

### Facilitated meeting(s)

A facilitated meeting is where the coordinator remains with the family throughout their family meeting to offer **support and direction** if needed. This type of meeting can be designed around the unique needs of the family and their circumstances.

## Mediated meeting(s)

One or two coordinators will work with two parties to seek a solution to a specific issue. Each person is prepared beforehand and it may take several weeks before they are ready to meet. The meeting will be time limited and is held in a neutral venue.

### How we work with families:

- We work with everyone in a **kind, caring, compassionate and non-judgemental** way. We believe as many families as possible should be offered a family meeting. The decision to engage in this process is **always the family's choice**
- **You decide** who is invited to your meeting. The best people will be those who know and care about you. We ensure that **each individual is prepared** by meeting with them and giving them time to think things through. This is to make sure everyone feels supported and that your specific needs are taken into consideration
- This is your family meeting therefore the coordinator will work with you to identify a mutually suitable venue, date and time
- We believe the **child/young person's voice** within the family meeting is particularly important and we use creative methods to ensure their participation in family decision making. Children and young people are actively encouraged to attend and enabled to do so and their voice/views are an important part of the process
- We help to identify or appoint **advocates for children and adults** where needed to support individuals to share how they feel and put forward ideas for positive change to their family
- We are committed to the long term value of restoring and supporting family relationships. We make respectful judgements in the interaction with each family member and professional. Careful thought is given to when to hold information; when to share or encourage sharing of information

- The pace of the work with your family is important; we are a time-limited service and family plans are usually completed within 6 - 8 weeks.



### Examples of where early family meetings can help:

- Where there are short or long term decisions to be made about the care and welfare of a child or young person
- Supporting a parent with mental or physical ill health issues
- Support for 'parents to be' or those struggling with meeting their children's needs
- Helping relatives to identify care for children or young people
- Ensuring that children whose parents are seriously ill continue to be cared for
- Involving the wider family to support children who have significant needs.

This is our main office details but we usually meet people in their own homes or wherever is convenient, suitable and comfortable.

### The Family Meeting Service

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