

Safeguarding Family Group Conference (SFGC)

**Recognising families' own strengths
and support within the family network**



In Hammersmith & Fulham, we have introduced a way of working with families that recognises the families own strengths and support within the family network.

Instead of an Initial Child Protection Conference, a Safeguarding Family Group Conference is offered to some families as an alternative.

It still means we are concerned about risk and that the threshold for child protection has been met, but we think there are significant strengths in your family that mean an SFGC can be considered instead.

This leaflet provides some information which may help you and professionals decide if an SFGC is suitable.

Why an SFGC pathway?

- If you have relatives, family members and friends who are willing to offer support.
- You understand the information your social worker has shared with you about concerns and risks and have some ideas how these could be reduced.
- You and your family/friends are willing to work with other agencies to find better solutions.
- You are willing to agree a safety plan with your social worker.

So, what happens if I'm interested?

Your social worker will refer your family to an **independent** family group conference co-ordinator, this is a person who is independent of the Social Work Team. The SFGC co-ordinator will contact you to decide with you who you

would like to be part of your family network. The co-ordinator will bring your family/friends network together to attend a Safeguarding Family Group Conference (family meeting) to make a plan.

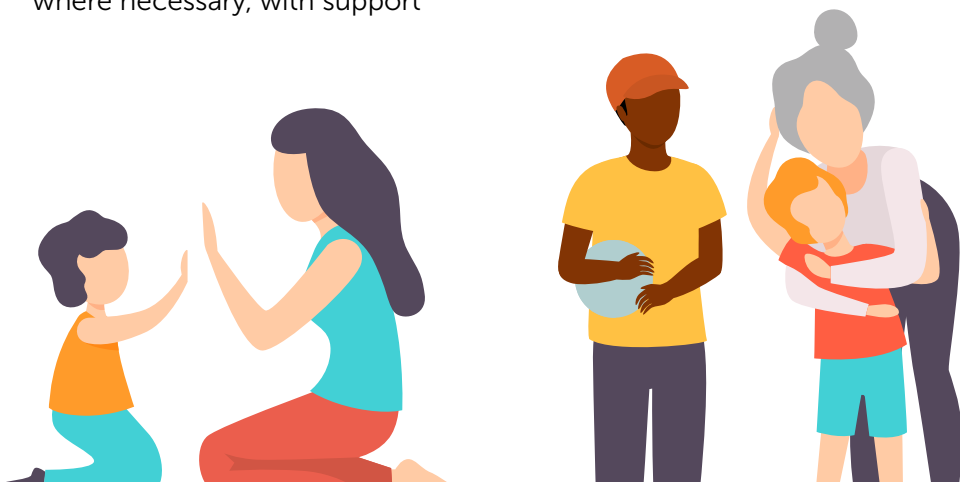
What is a Safeguarding Family Group Conference (SFGC)?

- The SFGC is a family led meeting with the social worker and an independent family group conference co-ordinator and your family members, friends, advocates chosen by you who will support you to make the changes needed to address the concerns raised. A family group conference co-ordinator is independent of the social work team and is someone who specialises in supporting families in working together to find solutions.
- The aim of the SFGC is for you to feel more empowered by using your own family strengths and solutions in creating a plan that you feel motivated to put into action, thereby avoiding child protection procedures.
- Technology can be used to invite your friends and family who live elsewhere in the UK and abroad who you feel can offer support.
- In the family meeting you will consider the risks and concerns we've shared with you and come up with a family plan of what you can do to address them.

What happens after the Safeguarding Family Group Conference (family meeting)?

After the family meeting, you will meet with the professional network at a Safeguarding Family Network Meeting where your Family Plan is discussed and strengthened where necessary, with support

and interventions identified and provided by the professional network, to create a Family Safeguarding Plan. Where needed a Review SFGC may be convened.



What can I expect from Safeguarding Family Network Meeting (SFNM)?

- There will be a local authority chairperson who will facilitate the meeting and monitor the progress of the plan.
- It is an opportunity for you and your family/friends to share your plan and work in partnership with other professionals and discuss additional resources available.
- A review meeting after three months and then after six months if necessary.
- The meeting must be held within 10 working days following your SFGC.
- Family members and a core group of professionals will be working with you and your family collaboratively to meet the actions agreed on the plan.
- Arrangements are made to monitor progress, including regular home visits to you and your children by your social worker and six weekly review meetings until the network are satisfied that the risk has been reduced and they don't need to be involved any longer.



Does this mean that my family are subject to a child protection plan?

No, although we think there are significant risks for child protection, we want to explore how these can be dealt with through a safeguarding family group conference and agreed Family Safeguarding Plan. It's important

to be aware that at any stage you can be returned to Child Protection procedures to have an Initial Child Protection Conference if you do not wish to or are unable to engage with the Safeguarding Family Group Conference and subsequent plan.

What else do I need to be aware of?

- The Safeguarding Family Group Conference is offered as an alternative to the Child Protection Conference.
- If you decide to take up this offer, we expect you to fully engage with the process, and to provide the necessary information to professionals enabling them to complete the work within agreed timescales.
- We will seek your permission to speak to your child where appropriate to obtain their views before the meeting.
- As there are safeguarding concerns that meet the threshold for child protection, we will share information with other relevant professionals.
- Your engagement with this pathway and throughout the plan is vital in ensuring the safeguards and goals for your child's safety are met, if you change your mind, do not engage with the plan or the risk still remains you will be reverted to having a the Child Protection Conference.




Children's services think Family Group Conferences are a good idea because they give families and professionals a way of working together, to try and make sure children are safe and cared for by their own families.


My FGC coordinator is:

Phone number:

If you are unhappy with our service and would like to raise your concerns, please contact:

The FGC Manager
145 King Street
Hammersmith
W6 9XY

 **020 8753 5125**

 **fgc.hf@lbhf.gov.uk**

Produced by Hammersmith & Fulham Council
May 2024

