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**Family Group Conference**

This document is for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing only.

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# **Introduction**

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a decision-making meeting in which a person’s wider family network come together to make a plan about the future arrangements for that person. The plan will ensure that the person is safe and their wellbeing is promoted.

FGCs are intended as a respectful and empowering process in which close family, members of the wider family and friends are given clear information about the concerns, and are asked to work with the FGC practitioner to produce a plan that addresses those concerns and answers specific queries. The expectation is that the referrer will attend the FGC to outline the strengths and concerns and then leave the meeting to enable the family to produce a plan that will safeguard against the concerns.

Every person is unique and has community values, culture, personality, dynamics and history. A FGC uses the family’s and friends’ own skills, strengths and personal knowledge to resolve difficulties. Using the family’s own expertise and ensuring their involvement in the FGC process can help to address the difficulties that are being experienced by the person at that time.

# **Restorative Conversations**

A restorative conversation is an opportunity to bring all parties together to talk through any issues or concerns in a supported and facilitated way. The focus is on hearing everyone’s voice and devising a range of agreements as to what needs to happen going forward to resolve matters.

Once a referral is received, the case will be allocated to an FGC practitioner who will work to a six week timescale. Their work will involve meeting with all parties to explore what has happened, who has been affected and what needs to happen now, in preparation for the restorative conversation, and a restorative conversation agreement being produced.

# **Referral Criteria**

A referral for a restorative conversation will be considered when there is:

* disagreement;
* conflict;
* relationship breakdown;
* carer breakdown;
* need for independent input;
* complaint / escalating complaint;
* placement or provider breakdown;
* need for mediation to support parties to explore all options.

In Adult Safeguarding, a restorative conversation would be considered post enquiry to develop the:

* protection plan;
* support for the individual;
* redress / resolution / recovery for the individual.

# **Referral Procedure**

Once consent has been given for an FGC referral to be completed, the practitioner supporting the adult completes an FGC referral in Mosaic, and sends it to the FGC task box for screening and allocation. An e-mail is sent to the referring practitioner to inform them that the referral has been screened and to whom it will be allocated.

# **The Process of a Family Group Conference**

The role of the practitioner is vital in negotiating attendance at a FGC and in informing all participants about the process involved. This role is separate from other professionals’ involvement with the family.

The FGC practitioner will aim to undertake meetings with the nuclear family; this will identify the support networks within the family.

It is the aim of the Lincolnshire FGC team that all extended family members will be contacted; if a considerable geographical distance is involved this will be primarily by phone, however, face to face contact may be agreed following a discussion with FGC managers.

It is key within each FGC that the person’s voice is captured and, where appropriate, they attend the conference.

The practitioner organises the meeting in conjunction with the person, parents, carers and friends.

Prior to the conference, the FGC practitioner should discuss with the person how they will be enabled to participate in the conference and whether they would like a supporter or advocate in the meeting. The person must be enabled to participate fully within the process and it is the practitioner’s role to find flexible and imaginative ways of achieving this. There will be occasions where the person chooses not to attend their FGC; should this be the case, their input must be sourced in alternative ways. For families where English is not their first language, interpreters will be sourced.

The practitioner negotiates the date, time and venue for the conference with the person and their family, and arrangements are made where possible to facilitate their attendance without them needing to take time off work etc. This may mean that conferences take place at weekends or in the evening. The practitioner sends out invitations and makes the necessary practical arrangements.

# **The Process of Restorative Conversation Meeting**

The FGC practitioner will undertake visits with all parties and anyone else who needs to be involved to explore what has happened, who has been affected and what needs to happen now, in preparation for the restorative conversation meeting.

Agreement will be sought for a date, time and venue for the restorative conversation meeting to take place.

Once the restorative conversation meeting has taken place, the FGC practitioner will type up the agreements made and send these out to everyone involved.

The person will then be asked to complete a feedback form to give their views of the service provided, and then Adult Care will close its involvement with the person.

# **Family Group Conference Flowchart**