



Family Group Conference

Training & Consultancy brochure

2022 / 23

About Family Rights Group

Our mission:

To create a more socially just society in which the child welfare and family justice systems support children to live safely and thrive within their family, while strengthening the family and community networks of those children who cannot live at home.

Our vision is a society in which children live safely and thrive within their family and community.

The Charity was set up in 1974. Over almost half a century, Family Rights Group has achieved many successes, but even greater challenges remain.

We seek to ensure that:

- Families involved with the child welfare and family justice system are treated fairly, have their rights respected and are able to make informed decisions;
- Children and families get the help they need, so wherever possible children can live safely and flourish within their family network;
- All children, including those in care, have lasting and supportive relationships to sustain them throughout their lives;
- Our child welfare and family justice system – and wider society – promotes social justice and create conditions that enable children to achieve their potential;
- Children and families' voices and experiences drive decision making at an individual and strategic level within the child welfare and family justice system.

We do this through:

1. A free specialist legal and child welfare practice advice service for parents and kinship carers;
2. By supporting local authorities through the provision of resources, training and consultancy;
3. By finding innovative family-led ways to improve child welfare;
4. Promoting families' voices so children and families with experience of the child welfare and family justice system help shape it, at local and national level; and
5. Research and lobbying for legislative and policy changes.

Our starting point is the child within the family. Feedback from families, practitioners and policy makers is that they find us helpful and non-judgmental, knowledgeable, robust and tenacious, compassionate and inclusive, innovative and problem solving.



Advice Service

Family Rights Group runs a free, independent and confidential advice service. We advise families when they are involved with children's services or need their help. We provide advice for parents, grandparents, relatives and friends including kinship carers in England. Our expert advisers are all experienced lawyers, social workers or family rights advocates. They help families to understand the law and child welfare processes and their rights and options. And to better understand social work concerns.

Our service includes:

Easy-to-follow, **online advice**. Features include an A-Z, FAQs, films, 'top tips' and legal advice sheets: www.frg.org.uk

Online forums where families can receive advice, discuss issues and find support from others

A **free telephone advice line** open Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 3pm (excluding Bank Holidays) on **0808 801 0366**. For Textphone dial 18001 followed by the advice line number.

What is a family group conference?

A family group conference (FGC) is a family-led meeting in which the family and friends network come together to make a plan for a child. The process is supported by an independent coordinator who helps the family prepare for the family group conference. Children are usually involved in their own family group conference, often with support from an advocate. It is a voluntary process and families cannot be forced into having one.

Family group conferences can be used whenever a plan needs to be made about a vulnerable child. They are now being used in the UK in all areas of child welfare including:

- Preventative services
- Safeguarding work including domestic abuse
- Pre-proceedings work
- Court proceedings
- With looked after children and planning for return home and leaving care
- Within education (to address truancy and reduce exclusions)
- To assist with anti-social behaviour and youth justice including restorative justice.

The FGC process enables a family and their network to draw on their strengths and resources to make a safe plan for their children.

FGCs offer practitioners and families a different way of working together changing how formal systems and decision making forums interact with informal family systems. It is essential then that an FGC service is carefully planned and introduced over a period of time. It is not unusual for a new service to take six months from initial planning stage to starting to take referrals. The key is getting the service right from the outset, and a willingness to continually review progress. Family Rights Group can support the local authority through this process.

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I got my voice back and I am still continuing to grow, all thanks to the support of the family group conference service

Tori, a parent who was involved in an FGC



Family Rights Group and family group conferences

Family Rights Group has been at the forefront of the introduction and development of family group conferences in the United Kingdom. We developed and run the national accreditation scheme for family group conference services. We deliver family group conference coordinator training and consultancy to local authorities who wish to develop a family group conference service.

- We lead the national Family Group Conference and Lifelong Links Network.
- We are key players in the European family group conference network.
- We undertake action research and lead practice developments.
- In partnership with the University of Salford, we deliver the only postgraduate programme on family group conferences in England and Wales.

With the wealth of expertise and knowledge we have gained over the last 26 years we are the UK's leading authority on family group conferences.

Local authorities who would like to establish or expand a family group conference service are able to commission a bespoke family group conference training and consultancy package from us. We also offer various training courses, practice sessions and other types of support for existing family group conference services. Please do not hesitate to get in touch to discuss your needs and find out how we can help via Jordene Sewell (jsewell@frg.org.uk).

As a team we have grown in confidence since the FGC training from Family Rights Group which was brilliant.

We have found staying true to the ethos of FGC's which we learnt in training is effective in achieving some really positive outcomes for our families.

Social workers are buzzing after an FGC and speak about how amazed they are seeing a family pull together and devise good robust family plans, most of which are still going strong.

Feedback from a local authority who commissioned FGC training from Family Rights Group



Overview of FGC training and consultancy support

Level of support	Who for?	Cost
FGC set up package	Local authorities new to FGCs and who would like support setting up a service.	£5250
FGC service development package	Local authorities with an existing FGC service but looking to expand or re-launch.	£3000
Facilitated discussion	FGC teams looking for external support to think through a specific practice issue.	£300
Commissioned practice sessions	A variety of audiences depending on the session. Details overleaf.	£800 / £1250

Training and consultancy packages



Family group conference set up package

Our expert team will guide you through each stage from initial considerations of the drivers for introducing an FGC service to the FGC service becoming operational and planning for future development. Included in the package:

An introductory one hour consultancy session with senior leaders to discuss how to best support the introduction of a sustainable FGC service.

Two “core” practice development sessions from a choice of:

- Introduction to family group conferences
- Referring to and working with a family group conference
- Developing a family group conference service (see p6)

If a service would prefer to access an “advanced” practice development session there will be a supplementary £250 charge.

Equivalent of **two days consultancy** support from a Family Rights Group practice adviser. Each local authority will have a dedicated practice adviser to answer questions, help troubleshoot challenges and be on hand to provide expert advice and support over the course of the year. This support will be provided online and via the telephone. For face to face meetings there will be an additional charge.

Three **FGC coordinator training** places.

One year membership to the FGC & Lifelong Links Network which includes: 4 national network meetings a year, monthly FGC managers’ meetings and access to FGC resources and members area on our website.

Duration: 12 months // Cost: £5250



Family group conference service development

This package will help FGC services who are still in the early stages or are expanding and restructuring and would benefit from additional support. Included in the package:

One “core” practice development session (see page 6). The scope and purpose of these sessions will be developed in consultation with the local authority and Family Rights Group. If a service would prefer to access an “advanced” session there will be a supplementary £250 charge.

Equivalent of **two days consultancy** support from a FRG practice adviser (as above, this support will be online).

Opportunity to submit service for **accreditation**. Family Rights Group have run the quality assurance accreditation programme for family group conference services since 2013.

One year membership to the FGC & Lifelong Links Network which includes: 4 national network meetings a year, monthly FGC managers’ meetings and access to FGC resources and members area on our website.

Duration: 12 months // Cost: £3000

Practice development sessions

All the options outlined below can be tailored to suit the needs of each local authority. Costs are based on support being provided online. In person support is available, costings for this will be provided on request. This is not an exhaustive list of the sessions that we can run. If there is a topic or issue you would like to address then please contact Jordene Sewell (jsewell@frg.org.uk).

Core practice development sessions

Introduction to family group conferences

A half day course that explains the principles of family group conferences and how they work, the research evidence and how an FGC service can be introduced and sustained in the local context.

Referring to and working with a family group conference

This half day course is designed for social workers and any other practitioners who may refer families for an FGC or who may be involved in another way, for example, asked to attend the information giving section of a family group conference.

Developing a family group conference service

It will consider what needs to be in place for the FGC service to work effectively, including organisational culture, aligning of policies and procedures, ways to promote the service and measure impact. It will highlight good practice and potential pitfalls and will assist organisations to develop an effective plan to set up a sustainable service that adheres to Family Rights Group's national accreditation standards.

Duration: half day (3.5 hours) // Cost: £800 standalone (no charge if selected as part of consultation package).

Advanced practice development sessions

FGCs and domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is often a factor leading to children's services involvement with a family. There will also be families the FGC service is working with where social workers are unaware that an adult or child has been or is a victim of domestic abuse. Research shows that family group conferences can be a very effective means of safeguarding domestic abuse victims, putting in plans to support their well-being and holding those perpetrating abuse accountable for their behaviour. This session will consider what policies, procedures, practice and support systems need to be in place for an FGC service to reduce risk and prevent further harm.

Embedding or expanding a family group conference service

This bespoke session would be developed in conjunction with the FGC service to consider what steps need to be taken in order to either increase the number of families benefitting from FGCs and/or to extend referrals to the service from other areas of child welfare, youth justice or education.

Engaging families in FGC service design & development

Those with experience of FGCs are often best placed to guide organisations about what needs to be in place for the service to work well. They are also often important champions for the FGC service, with their own experiences persuading decision makers, practitioners and other families alike of the merits of FGCs. Consistent with the ethos of FGCs, this session will involve those with lived experience and guide FGC services as to how to engage young people and families in FGC service design and development as part of the service's commitment to continuous improvement.

Duration: 5 hours // Cost: £1250 standalone (£250 if selected as part of consultancy package)

One-off bespoke consultancy offers

Facilitated discussion

An externally facilitated conversation to discuss a day to day practice issue or something new you are thinking about introducing to your FGC team. This is a semi-structured session with an independent practice advisor from FRG intended to help you think through ideas and practice implications with the aim of exploring options and planning next steps.

Duration: 2 hours plus preparation // Cost: £300

FGC team day

This session is for established FGC services. It is a facilitated workshop providing a mix of FGC practice development and team building. You will have the opportunity to discuss your aims for this workshop in advance. Ideal for a FGC team away day.

Details including cost and duration to be discussed

Please contact Jordene Sewell (jsewell@frg.org.uk) to discuss any of the options outlined in this brochure.



Family group conferences

Other opportunities with Family Rights Group



FGC coordinator training

A course for those with some knowledge of family group conferences and child welfare processes, who wish to increase their understanding and develop the necessary skills to coordinate a family group conference for a child. Carried out virtually over four days. Individual places can be booked, or whole course commissioned by a local authority. Face to face or hybrid training may be available on request (at an additional cost).

£550 per individual place or £5850 for commissioned course*

(in person training cost available on request)

* 10% discount for FGC & Lifelong Links network members



FGC postgraduate certificate

Family Rights Group is pleased to offer, in partnership with the University of Salford, a postgraduate certificate in family group conferences. The course is suitable for practicing family group conference coordinators who wish to expand on their knowledge and gain an academic and professional qualification. It is an online distance learning course of two modules, each consisting of 10 hours of lectures and six hours of tutorials.

£2760 per year (one year, part time course)



FGC accreditation

We have run the quality assurance accreditation programme for family group conference services since 2013. All family group conference services are welcome to apply to become accredited. Accreditation lasts for three years.

Cost dependent on size of service click [here for details](#)



FGC and Lifelong Links Network

Family Rights Group hosts the Family Group Conference and Lifelong Links Network which was launched in May 1999. The purpose of the Network is to connect family group conference and Lifelong Links practitioners, managers and academics while promoting the development of family group conferences and Lifelong Links and the values they represent.

Cost dependent on size of service click [here for details](#)

For more information on Family Rights Group visit www.frg.org.uk

Helping Families Helping Children

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Free Advice Line 0808 801 0366

(Monday to Friday 9.30am to 3pm)



Admin Tel 020 7923 2628 **Email** office@frg.org.uk

(We cannot provide advice by email or on the admin telephone line)

