

Family Group Conference

Quality standards

Family Rights Group

October 2022





About the family group conference standards

These seven quality standards have been developed to help families and practitioners understand what a family group conference is and what to expect if involved in one. They identify the basic requirements expected from those delivering the service.

These standards should be integrated into the work of the family group conference service and not become a bureaucratic process. A service that successfully employs these standards is making a clear pledge as to how it will operate and be held accountable.

The standards draw upon current practice and learning in the UK and internationally. Family Rights Group offers an accreditation framework to assist in developing effective family group conference (FGC) services rooted in good practice.

Standard one: The FGC coordinator is independent.

1.1	The FGC service will be delivered by an independent coordinator who will have no other professional role with the family and will have no involvement in any professional decision making or allocation of resources for the child, young person or adult or family.
1.2	The coordinator will be managed by someone who has no previous or current involvement in any decision making for the child, young person, adult, or family.
1.3	The FGC service will ensure that the coordinator is independent of decision-making, trained in the FGC model, has undertaken an induction programme, and has the skills necessary to undertake the role.
1.4	All coordinators should be in receipt of relevant and adequate professional supervision and/or practice consultancy, and oversight (including observation of practice) to maintain the integrity and quality of their role.

● **Standard two: The family's decision to participate in the FGC is voluntary.**

2.1	The coordinator will ensure that there is informed consent given by an appropriate person with the legal authority to agree to have the FGC and that there is understanding that this consent can be withdrawn.
2.2	The coordinator will ensure that each invited family member is given the opportunity to make an informed decision about their participation in the FGC process.

● **Standard three: The FGC should be family-led and include 'private family time' for the family to make a plan in response to concerns.**

3.1	The FGC process is a strength-based way of working, which acknowledges the positives as well as addressing the needs and challenges in a family.
3.2	Families should be supported to be active decision makers.
3.3	The FGC involves the extended family network and can include non-family members as identified by the family.
3.4	The date, time, and venue for the FGC should be informed by and agreed by the family.
3.5	Families should always have private family time within a safe and supportive environment to make decisions and plans.
3.6	The FGC will seek agreement as to how the plan will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitored; • reviewed; and • incorporated into other decision-making processes.
3.7	Families should have the opportunity to comment upon the service they have received.
3.8	Families should be involved in the development and evaluation of the family group conference service.
3.9	Families should be able to raise concerns or complain about their involvement with the FGC process, and this will be dealt with in a constructive way.

- **Standard four: The referred child or adult should be the central focus of the FGC and they should be offered support, including an advocate.**

4.1	The child, young person, or adult should be supported by the coordinator to explore their network and identify who they wish to be involved in their planning.
4.2	The agreement as to who attends the FGC will be negotiated with the person who has legal authority for the child, and in consultation with the child or young person and the wider family network.
4.3	The views of the child, young person or adult should be sought throughout the process and be central to the decision-making.
4.4	The child, young person, or adult should be supported to effectively participate in their FGC, even if not present at their FGC.
4.5	Advocacy should be offered to children, young people, and adults at all stages of the FGC process.
4.6	When the child, young person, or adult is not present at their FGC, the coordinator will ensure that the family plan is appropriately shared with them, and it is clear when and how this will be done.

- **Standard five: The FGC service should ensure that the family has all necessary resources, including adequate preparation, relevant information, and a safe and appropriate environment, to make their plan.**

5.1	The child, young person, or adult central to the FGC should be supported to have their families and other significant people fully involved in planning their future.
5.2	Families have the right to clear and accessible information about the FGC process.
5.3	The coordinator will assist referrers and other practitioners in preparation for their roles in the FGC process.
5.4	Prior to the FGC, the family should be provided with relevant & accessible information needed to make their plan. This should include access to independent legal advice where necessary to make an informed decision.
5.5	The coordinator will use a range of creative methods to ensure that all contributions are sought and shared and, where possible, the views of those unable to attend are shared at the meeting.



5.6	Everyone participating in the FGC will be prepared and supported throughout the process, and the coordinator should meet with all prior to the meeting.
5.7	The FGC service will ensure that the safety of child, young person, family members, referrers, and other practitioners will be planned for, and all necessary provision put in place.
5.8	Families have the right to have safe plans agreed and resourced at the FGC. If there is to be a delay in agreeing the plan the family need to be informed of the reasons and a timescale agreed.
5.9	The coordinator, at the end of the process, will ensure that all participants have understood what has been decided.

● Standard six: The FGC should respect the family's privacy and right to confidentiality.

6.1	<p>The coordinator will ensure there is appropriate agreement to share any information with the wider family network and other practitioners in accordance with the information sharing policy and GDPR. An exception to this would be information that if not shared would place a child or adult at significant risk.</p> <p>It is the referrer's responsibility to ensure that they have agreement to share any information that they are presenting which is of a confidential nature.</p>
6.2	The FGC service should have a clear recording policy. Families should be aware of how their information is collected and stored by the FGC service.
6.3	The family plan is the only written document to result from the FGC. The coordinator will ensure that all participants receive the plan in a timely manner.

● Standard seven: The FGC service should work to the principles of equality and inclusivity, promoting diversity including respecting and being sensitive to the family's culture and individual identities.



7.1	The FGC service should recognise that each family is unique and will include a range of identities and experiences. The FGC service should be guided by the family to ensure the FGC is organised, resourced and facilitated in a way that is sensitive to the family's culture and enables all family members to participate in the decision making.
7.2	The FGC service will have a clear, publicly available, equalities policy.

For information and guidance on implementing these standards, please visit Family Rights Group's [website](#) or contact office@frg.org.uk



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