

Strategic Plan

2025-2034



www.frg.org.uk

Family Rights Group is the leading specialist charity working to ensure children can live safely and thrive in their family, and that children in the care system have loving relationships they can turn to throughout life.

For 50 years, we have worked to shape the child welfare system to make that a reality. We are unique in bringing together legal and social work expertise with the direct voice and insights of young people and families.

Here, we set out our ambitious 10-year strategy for building an effective child welfare system that puts children and families first.



Our work

Family voices

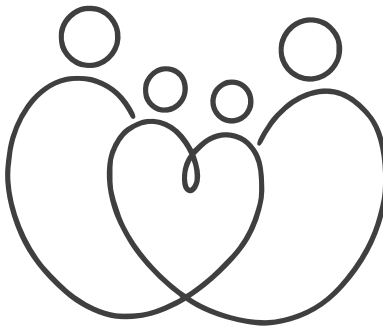


We promote families' voices, expertise and insights in all our work. We support mothers, fathers, kinship carers and care-experienced young people to be heard by policy-makers, practitioners and the public.



Innovation

We create and champion innovative family-led solutions, including family group conferences and Lifelong Links. We partner with local authorities, other agencies and academics to embed these practices.



Advice and Advocacy

We provide free, independent and confidential advice to help parents and kinship carers understand the law, child welfare processes, their rights and options.



Campaigns

We lead campaigns to achieve changes in law, policy and practice, informed by research and the perspectives of those with lived experience.

Our work is unique in bringing together legal and social work expertise with the direct voice and insights of young people and families.

Children and families' voices and experiences are central to influencing attitudes, policies and practices.

Our strategic goals



01 Access to advice and access to justice

Goal 1: Families have a right to independent legal and practical advice and advocacy, adequately funded by government, when there are care or protection concerns about their child.

We work to ensure that families involved with the child welfare system and family justice system are treated fairly, have their rights respected and can make informed decisions. We want families to be able to access the support they need as early as possible to prevent difficulties escalating.

Over the next 10 years we will:

- Develop legal projects to help demonstrate the need for, and the impact of, early legal advice.
- Analyse the legal aid regime, and publish our proposals for reforms to improve access to legal advice and justice for families.
- Provide learning opportunities for the public, as well as legal practitioners, about the evolving legal landscape.

We will continue to deliver and develop our advice and advocacy service, so that more families who are involved with children's services across England can access information, advice and advocacy support to help them achieve the best outcomes for their children. This will include:

- Up to-date, easy-to-access information and advice on our website.
- High quality, specialist advice to families by phone and digital channels and expanding our capacity to advise more families.
- Increase advocacy provision to support those families in most need, including advocating for them with children's services. This includes those affected by domestic abuse, mental ill-health and/or substance misuse.
- Innovative solutions, using appropriate technology, enabling more families, particularly those from minoritised and disadvantaged groups to get the advice they need.
- Regular evaluations to measure the impact of our advice and advocacy service, demonstrating the difference we make to the lives of children and their families.
- Setting standards for parental representation in child protection processes.



02 Family-led decision making

Goal 2: Families are supported to make safe plans for their children, with the right to a family group conference if there are care or protection concerns.

In a family group conference (FGC), family and friends are supported to come together to make a plan to safely address concerns about a child. Underpinned by a clear set of principles and standards, there is substantial evidence that family group conferences can safely avert children entering or remaining in the care system.

As the foremost experts on family-led decision making, our aim is that by 2034:

- all local authorities have an accredited family group conference service;
- Family group conferences are offered to all families when they come into contact with the child welfare system.

We will continue to be the leading authority on family group conferences in England and host of the national FGC Network. We will promote consistently high standards, be the principal source of legal expertise, and pioneer research and practice developments. That includes pre-birth, addressing child exploitation, and to support the return of children to their families.

Far greater focus is needed on supporting children to successfully return home from the care system. We will advocate nationally and locally for this and demonstrate how family group conferences are key to effectively planning the reunification of children with their families.

03 Championing kinship care



Goal 3: Kinship care is valued and properly supported as the first option when children cannot live at home.

Over the next ten years we want to ensure that:

- A clear definition of kinship care is enshrined in law, recognises all forms of kinship care arrangement and provides a foundation for an effective support system.
- At a local level there is a transformation in what support is available to kinship families, with the law requiring local authorities to develop with kinship families a local kinship offer.
- Employment rights, including paid leave are awarded to all kinship carers. There is a fair and accessible financial support framework for all kinship carers.
- That the Government recognises and addresses the cliff edge affecting young people raised in kinship care as they turn 18 years old, particularly disabled young people and those with special educational needs.
- There is a dedicated fund, that helps guarantee that children and young people raised in kinship care have access to counselling and therapeutic support that is tailored to their needs.
- Gaps in research evidence are addressed including into the experience of children from black minority ethnic communities who are being raised by kinship carers.

Family Rights Group will continue to be recognised as the national policy and legal authority on kinship care and provide the Secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Kinship Care.



04 Lifelong Links

Goal 4: A right to Lifelong Links for all care experienced children and young people to build loving relationships.

Lifelong Links is a pioneering and highly successful approach developed by Family Rights Group. It helps build lasting support networks for children in care and creates a culture in which the care system values children's relationships from the outset.

- We want every local authority in the UK to offer an accredited Lifelong Links service to children in care and care leavers.
- We will lead future innovations in Lifelong Links which are tailored to the needs of care-experienced children and young people involved in the criminal justice system, adopted children and children in kinship care.



05 Families shaping the system

Goal 5: Children and families with experience of the child welfare and family justice system help shape it, at local and national level.

We are committed to ensuring that young people and families with experience of the child welfare system make up at least half of our trustee board and continue to determine the charity's priorities, activities and campaigns. We will:

- Continue to support our vibrant parents' and kinship carers' panels, and promote their impact, diversity and prominence.
- Co-develop engagement platforms for young parents and those who have grown up in kinship care or in the care system.
- Ensure that young people and families' voices and insights are integral to our work.

Our ambitions are that:

- All local children's services, central government and other child welfare and family justice agencies have mechanisms by which young people, parents and kinship carers influence policies, practice, research and evaluation and the commissioning of services.
- Young people and families with experience of the child welfare system are directly involved in the co-production and co-delivery of education, training and professional development for legal and social care practitioners.

In collaboration with young people and families we will:

- Support agencies, to embed family participation structures, policies and practices.
- Co-deliver training and consultancy support and produce resources for practitioners and families.



How we work

- Our starting point is the child within the family.
- All our work is underpinned by our unique combination of legal and social work expertise combined with direct voices and insights of families and young people.
- Our direct experience of providing services to families informs our work with policy makers and practitioners.
- We build an evidence base, particularly focusing on under-explored aspects of the impact of the child welfare and family justice system upon children and families.
- We retain independence from government and statutory services.
- We commit to promoting human rights, social justice and to tackling racism, poverty and structural inequalities.
- We challenge when required, including through strategic use of the law.
- We always provide workable solutions to the challenges we raise.

Our values

- Helpful, non-judgmental, knowledgeable and kind.
- Welcoming challenge and encouraging continuous learning and reflection.
- Pursuing anti-discriminatory, inclusive practices and challenging disadvantage. This may be related to protected characteristics but also discrimination related to care experience, class and socio-economic status, and gender.
- Continuing to develop policy, practice and service solutions through co-production and collaboration, drawing on the knowledge, strengths and insights of all stakeholders – practitioners, academics, decision makers, children and their families; and
- Leading by example, living by the values that we promote.

How we operate:

our Environmental, Social and Governance commitments



Environmental

Maintenance of a sustainable and safe hybrid working environment and responsible environmental practices.



Governance:

A commitment to continuous improvement of each of the seven principles of good governance: leadership, integrity, decision-making and risk, board effectiveness, equality and inclusion, and openness and accountability.



Strategy:

Building a sustainable ethical funding structure to give the organisation greater flexibility in delivering its objectives and grow sustainably over the next five years. This includes securing more diverse income streams, including an increase in unrestricted grants and income from training, consultancy and accreditation fees.



Operations:

We seek to enable the charity to carry out its mission most effectively through management of the core functions of finance, digital and staff development and well-being. We commit to ensuring that the infrastructure of Family Rights Group, including its policies, procedures and systems, is fit for purpose to enable the charity to achieve its priorities. We will prioritise the maintenance of high-functioning finance systems, including risk monitoring and prevention; the effective and compliant utilisation of data, including to measures performance and impact; and the communication and promotion of our work effectively to diverse audiences.

Our vision is a society in which children can thrive in their families, and have loving relationships to turn to throughout life.

Our mission is to ensure that the child welfare and family justice system supports children to live safely and thrive within their family, while strengthening the family and community ties of those children who cannot live at home.

We seek to ensure that:

- We promote families' voices, expertise and insights in all our work. We support mothers, fathers, kinship carers and care-experienced young people to be heard by policy-makers, practitioners and the public.
- We create and champion innovative family-led solutions, including family group conferences and Lifelong Links. We partner with local authorities, other agencies and academics to embed these practices.
- We provide free, independent and confidential advice to help parents and kinship carers understand the law, child welfare processes, their rights and options.
- We lead campaigns to achieve changes in law, policy and practice, informed by research and the perspectives of those with lived experience.

Advice line 9.30am–3.30pm:

0808 801 0366

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