

THE SPECIFICATION

Specification for Family Group Conference Co-ordinator Service

Definitions

“Authorised Officer” means the manager of the Family Group Conference Service at Southwark Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Southwark is currently offering an exciting opportunity to join a new Family Group Conference (FGC) Service. The Family Group Conference Service is being developed as part of the newly created Access to Resources Team as a service provided by the Permanence Directorate.
- 1.2 There are several aims with the development of the FGC service.
- 1.3 The FGC Service is to provide Family Group Conferences to families where a decision needs to be made in order to safeguard the child(ren). The priority groups of families are those where there is a child at risk of becoming looked after or are subject to Public Law Outline, and where they have been subject to Child Protection Plans for a significant period of time.
- 1.4 The FGC service is to provide support to families where they are working with early help support services and there is a risk of escalation of referral in to statutory Children's Services.
- 1.5 The FGC service is to provide rapid access support to families, in cases of emergency where a family meeting needs to be convened quickly within 7 working days. These meetings are to address serious and significant issues, such as a child(ren) being placed in foster care under police protection powers.
- 1.6 The FGC service is also working with the Family Rights Group and the Department for Education on an Innovation Funded project call Lifelong Links for a three year pilot. The aim of Lifelong Links is to create a lasting support network for children and young people in the care system for whom there is no plan for them to live within their family or be adopted. With the goal being to identify and engage relatives and other supportive adults, who may be estranged or not yet known to, a child in the care system, and identify those who are willing to make a lasting commitment to the child or young person.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Introduction to the Service

2.1 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.1.1 provide a service which is independent and which caters to the needs of each family in respect of ethnicity, language and culture;
- 2.1.2 work in partnership with families and referrers;
- 2.1.3 organise a venue and refreshments;
- 2.1.4 co-ordinate the family group conference maintaining and disseminating a typed family plan afterwards in line with guidance and good practice;
- 2.1.5 provide advocacy to children and young people, and to vulnerable adults in sessions provided by other Coordinator(s), as required.

Technical and Professional Ability

2.2 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.2.1 develop strategies to encourage and enable full family participation in meetings, including children;
- 2.2.2 present information clearly in both verbal and written form;
- 2.2.3 mediate, negotiate and manage conflict in order to empower the child or young person and their family to formulate a plan;
- 2.2.4 communicate effectively with families from a variety of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds;
- 2.2.5 work in partnership with families, the Council and other agencies;
- 2.2.6 plan and prioritise activities in line with agreed objectives with prescribed deadlines;
- 2.2.7 supply and utilise computer and/or any other required equipment in reasonable delivery of the services;
- 2.2.8 disclose to the manager of the FGC Service if they have worked or are working for the Council in another capacity;
- 2.2.9 maintain a clear Disclosure and Barring Service check in accordance with the contract terms;
- 2.2.10 be able evidence annual portfolio of continuing professional development

- 2.2.11 provide good notice, at least four (4) weeks, of their intention to be unavailable for work or intention to terminate the Contract of Services.

Allocation of orders

2.3 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.3.1 be allocated orders as and when but no guarantee is given to volume, value or consistency of work; with first priorities of allocation will be given to ethnicity, language and gender matches, and or other specification requested by families;
- 2.3.2 be provided with relevant information about the child or young person and their family, including contact details;
- 2.3.3 convene any reviews for that family;
- 2.3.4 acknowledge acceptance of any allocation;
- 2.3.5 confirm in writing to the manager on the same day if declining an acceptance of an allocation. Allocations can not be accepted if it becomes known that there is a previous or current link to the child or their family;
- 2.3.6 secure all information pertaining to any child or young person or their families under data protection. All documents must be kept in a secure and lockable resource and information held on computer must be accessible only through the use of a password. Where computers are shared with other persons, appropriate restrictions through passwords must be in place to protect the confidentiality of files and e-mails. E-mail addresses must not be shared. The Coordinator must adhere to the Council's data protection policy.

Consultation

2.4 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.4.1 communicate with the Council social worker/lead professional referring the family;
- 2.4.2 establish the concerns of the referrer and the decisions that they are asking the family to make;
- 2.4.3 present to the family the concerns and decision to be taken in an agenda, signed by the person with Parental Responsibility;
- 2.4.4 inform the Authorised Officer if the agenda has not been prepared in time for the FGC.

Ascertaining the wishes and feelings of the Child/Young Person

2.5 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.5.1 focus any FGC on the child/young person, ascertaining/gauging their wishes undertaken in a place where the child/young person is comfortable and either alone or with a person chosen by the child/young person to accompany them;
- 2.5.2 give the choice to each child/young person (from the age of five (5) years) of working with an advocate such as a family member, a family friend or another Coordinator/agency;
- 2.5.3 act at all times in a non-discriminatory manner in a way that positively addresses the child/young person.

Attendance

2.6 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.6.1 engage as many members of the family group together as reasonably possible, in order to plan for the welfare of the child/young person;
- 2.6.2 invite professionals relevant to the plan to provide information to the family either in person or in writing;
- 2.6.3 invite any family or friends who are unable to attend to prepare something in writing to be read out at the FGC;
- 2.6.4 exclude family members from the meeting, where there are health and safety concerns, when their presence may be detrimental to a plan being achieved, or where they may be too vulnerable to attend;
- 2.6.5 have the final decision on who attends the FGC having consulted the child/young person and their parent/carer;
- 2.6.6 only convene a FGC in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Authorised Officer without key persons attending: the child or young person over ten (10) years; the social worker; the parent.

Location of Services

2.7 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.7.1 utilise a venue which is neither a Children's Services building or the family's home (except in exceptional circumstances) at their discretion;
- 2.7.2 offer the family the list of venues, if required, held at the Council from which the family can choose.

Timescales

2.8 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.8.1 use best endeavours to convene a FGC within four (4) weeks, in any event within six (6) weeks, unless the Authorised Officer agrees otherwise in writing/email.
- 2.8.2 disseminate a typed plan to all those invited to the FGC, within five (5) working days.
- 2.8.3 agree plan review dates, where possible, at the end of the FGC. The plan may be reviewed in a Review FGC or in another forum (e.g. in court, as a family meeting convened by the team manager, in case supervision). If in another forum the date must be stated if known.
- 2.8.4 only agree to the postponement and rearrangement of a FGC at the request of a key family member or key professional (e.g. the social worker), and with the knowledge of the Authorised Officer.

Contract Management

2.9 The Council shall:

- 2.9.1 provide Group Practice Development Meetings with all Coordinators in delivery of the FGC, and Group Practice Development Meetings specific to the delivery of Lifelong Links through out the year, for the facilitation of best practice. All Coordinators are expected to provide a portfolio evidencing continuing professional development annually.
- 2.9.2 undertake a Contract Review Meeting with an individual Coordinator at the request of either the Coordinator or the Authorised Officer, as required.

Recording

2.10 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.10.1 issue a typed plan, once agreed by the referrer and the family, in the Southwark FGC Service template. No other minutes are required.
- 2.10.2 complete and submit an invoice and the Southwark timesheet inclusive of the coordinator feedback form, providing a record inclusive of who was visited, who was called or written to, reasons why a child did not attend their FGC, FGC attendance, and work carried out with a family where a FGC never took place with the reasons why it did not.

Coordinator Concerns

2.11 The Coordinator's concerns will be handled as follows:

- 2.11.1 the Coordinator shall notify the Authorised Officer in writing/email where there are concerns about the child/young person, the process, the placement or the practice.
- 2.11.2 the Authorised Officer shall address issues raised with the appropriate manager.

Child Protection Concerns

2.12 The Coordinator shall:

- 2.12.1 refer all Child Protection concerns immediately (the same day) by telephone or visit (not e-mail or voicemail) to the Authorised Officer or the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Manager/and duty manager of the team responsible.
- 2.12.2 address their concerns in writing/email after and in addition to the telephone call or visit.

3. FINANCE

Invoices and Payment

3.1 The Coordinator shall submit:

- 3.1.1 a claim for payment with a detailed breakdown attached to the invoice. The Coordinator shall be paid for completed tasks only, so that a claim can only be made once the work is written up and submitted, except in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Authorised Officer.
- 3.1.2 invoices as soon after the end of each piece of work as possible. Full bank details must be provided so that money can be paid directly into accounts.
- 3.1.3 invoices in the prescribed formats. Invoices will be delayed by inaccurate recording and, as a result, payment may be delayed. Invoices must have a unique reference number.. Ensure that all claims for travel, refreshments and venue hire are accompanied by the tickets and/or receipts; no payment will be made without the receipt.
- 3.1.4 a Tax Reference Number on invoices and are responsible for their own Tax and National Insurance Payments. Any information required about such payments must be addressed to the Tax Office.

Fees

3.2 The Council shall:

- 3.2.1 pay any work pertaining directly to the convening of a FGC at a ceiling rate of £27 per hour
- 3.2.3 pay travel time at a ceiling rate of £13 per hour.
- 3.2.4 repay reasonable travel costs subject to the provision of copies of tickets and receipts submitted as part of the invoice and documented mileage at 45 pence per mile
- 3.2.5 not pay for time taken to fill out the invoice, supporting paperwork to the invoice and/or any fees relating to group supervision and/or training.
- 3.2.6 not pay if a home visit or meeting, (including the FGC) with a professional is postponed or cancelled. If, however, a FGC Co-ordinator attends a visit/meeting but the family member, or professional is not available, then the FGC Co-ordinator will be paid the agreed hourly fee plus travel costs.

Service/Contract Monitoring and Assurance

3.3 The Council shall:

- 3.3.1 seek the views of children and young people, parents, social workers and other professionals about the FGC Service and may seek to make changes as a response to those views.
- 3.3.2 scrutinise all forms of recording including claims. Any concerns or feedback will be addressed with the Coordinator.
- 3.3.3 monitor to ensure efficient data collection and analysis. The Coordinator shall ensure that all forms are filled out as accurately as possible and encourage all FGC attendees (family members and professionals) to complete feedback sheets.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

	Key Performance Indicator	Criterion	Target
A1	Contract management returns	The Provider shall convene a FGC within four weeks, in any event within six weeks, unless the Authorised Officer agrees otherwise in writing or via email.	100%
A2	Contract management returns	The Provider shall disseminate a typed plan to all those invited to the FGC, within five working days.	100%

Complaints

3.4 The Coordinator shall:

3.4.1 encourage Children and Young People to voice their concerns about their circumstances and, where appropriate, to make complaints, advising them on how to do so;

3.4.2 carry complaints information for children/young people or their parents where it is available;

3.4.3 address any complaint about the FGC Service with the Authorised Officer initially or to the Manager of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service;

3.5 The Council shall investigate any complaint regarding the Coordinator or, if appropriate, further complaints procedures will be followed. Any significant concerns about the Coordinator may result in suspension from allocations of orders until the matter is fully resolved or contract termination as appropriate.