



## What is Family Circle?

Family Circle is a project of Tros Gynnal working in partnership with City and County of Cardiff to provide Family Group Meetings.

## What is a Family Group Meeting?

A Family Group Meeting is the central focus of the Family Group Meeting process. It is an opportunity to make plans about a child / young person and is part of a process that facilitates decision making within families.

Family Group Meetings present a new and radical approach to planning for children / young people. They require that families assume a responsible and powerful role in deciding how to meet their child / young person's needs. It is for each family to create their own plan and the plan they make will be unique.

Family Group Meetings are based on a 'strength' model seeing families as having positives to offer, even where some members experience or cause difficulties. The model will not work if the professional approach is based on a 'deficit' model assuming that families in difficulties are not fit to plan for their child / young person's welfare.

## How does the Family Group Meeting process work?

An independent co-ordinator from Family Circle meets with families to explain the process and will make all the arrangements for the meeting. Together with the family, the co-ordinator will decide on when and where the meeting will be held and who will attend. 'Family' is taken to be family in it's widest sense and includes Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Cousins, Step-family, Honorary Aunts and Uncles, family friends and anyone else who might have a role to play. The co-ordinator will then prepare the family members for the meeting.

The child / young person will be offered an advocate. This is someone who can work with them on a 1 to 1 basis to ensure that they are able to fully participate in the process and say the things they want to say.

In the first part of the meeting, chaired by the co-ordinator, the referrer and any other professionals (such as social workers, teachers and health visitors) who have been invited will be asked to explain: What concerns they have; What their duties and responsibilities are and any help they or their agency can give. Family members will then have the opportunity to ask any questions. The child / young person can have the support of their advocate.

Once the co-ordinator is clear that the family understands the issues that need to be discussed, the family are left alone to talk things through in private.

## What happens next?

Once the family are happy with their plan it will be written up and presented to the referrer and other professionals. Providing the plan does not put the child / young person at risk it will be agreed. An agreement will then be made as to how the plan will then be monitored and a review meeting will be held approximately three months later.

TG/WFC/0207

## Who can have a Family Group Meeting?

The referral criteria is:

1. The child / young person is aged between 0 and 18 years.
2. The child / young person is normally resident within the City and County of Cardiff.
3. The child / young person agrees to the referral and this way of working.
4. At least one family member agrees to the referral and this way of working
5. A decision or plan needs to be made re. serious concerns that a child / young person is at risk of exclusion or is excluded from any of the following:

**Home:** For example: Risk of family breakdown; Contact issues; Family reunification; Returning home after being looked after; Identifying an alternative placement within extended family/friends network

**Education:** For example: Non-attendance; Behaviour; Bullying; Permanent or fixed-term exclusion

**Community:** For example: Offending; Anti-social behaviour

The list is not exhaustive. The referrer may wish to consider whether this method of working would benefit their particular family.

Referrals are accepted from families and professionals and can be made by telephone, fax, in person or by posting a referral form.

## Why have a Family Group Meeting?

Research suggests overall, positive outcomes associated with Family Group Meetings, with families tending to reach more creative solutions to their difficulties than those proposed by professionals.

We believe that by having a Family Group Meeting

- Families are enabled to find their own solutions to their difficulties with the help of professionals.
- Families take responsibility for planning in response to the concerns of others.
- Families use the strengths and resources from within their own networks.
- Families have ownership of the problems and solutions and thus are committed to making the plans work.

**If you would like to find out more or make a referral please contact:**

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or

**Fax: 029 2034 4679**

or

**Email: [familycircle@trosgynnal.org.uk](mailto:familycircle@trosgynnal.org.uk)**