

You can find out more about our free service by phoning 01634 406903.

When can a Family Group Conference be helpful?

Family Group Conferences have been successfully used when:

- *A child cannot live at home*
- *A child needs protection*
- *There is violence in the home*
- *A child is excluded from school*
- *A child needs help to develop properly*

In any situation where a child is facing a real difficulty and plans need to be made, a Family Group Conference can help.

Independent Family Convenors are not Social Workers. They will not ask personal questions about your family life.

We will always try to find a convenor who speaks your language.

Our job is to help you get together with your friends and family, and with the help of professionals, to make a real difference for your child.



Medway Family Group
Conference Service

77a High Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4EE

Telephone: 01634 406903

Email: louisemills1@btopenworld.com

"Helping families to support children"

Medway Mediation

A company limited by guarantee-Reg No 3476739.

Charity Number 1088190



Medway Family Group
Conference Service

"Helping families to support children"



How Family Conferences can help

When a child in your family is in difficulty at school, cannot live at home, or is in trouble with the law, it's natural to turn to your family for help.

Doctors, social workers and teachers can help too, but grandparents, sisters and other family members know you, and your child best of all.

For many people, asking for help from the family is not easy. Grandparents may live far away. We can lose touch with brothers and sisters. Even when aunts and uncles live close by, it can be hard to ask for help. Family Group Conferences are one way of helping families get together when a child in the family really needs help and support.

An independent Family Convenor can help you get in touch with family members, will help find a suitable place for the family to meet and can help with travelling expenses, child care and refreshments. The aim is to give the family a chance to meet in private and sort out a family plan for the child who needs support.

How a Family Group Conference works

- Parents or carers agree there is a serious problem to sort out
- An independent Family Convenor meets with child and carers
- The Convenor visits family members and explains why help is needed
- The Convenor sets up a Family Meeting and invites the wider family
- Professionals such as teachers or social workers are invited
- The family is told all the facts about the child's difficulties and about services on offer
- The Convenor and professionals leave the family alone to discuss the situation in private
- The family plan is explained to the professionals who must try to support the family solution

Questions

Can children come to Family Conferences? Yes. Young people may want to have a friend or supporter with them.

Where will the meeting be held? At a neutral place agreed with the family - not at a social work office, or a family home.

What if the professionals don't agree with the family plan? They must support the family decisions unless the plan is too risky for the child.

Can I bring my friend, neighbour or priest? You and the child decide who could help you from your family and friends.

How long are the meetings? It's your meeting and can last as long as you want.

Who runs the meeting? Family meetings are completely private. You decide together how you want to sort things out.

All my family live in another country! We'll find a way to help - what about the telephone, videos, letters, and even video conferencing.

Who pays for the meetings? We'll do our best to help with travel expenses, childcare and even somewhere to stay overnight if necessary. All other costs will be covered by the service.