

Standards

We regularly review our performance to make sure we are providing the best service we can. We do this by:

- Consulting service users and using the information to improve and plan our services
- Regular reporting to the council and government with regards to service quality and delivery of positive outcomes for children and families
- Undertaking random spot checks and audits to see whether we are actually doing what we claim.

Access to records

Under data protection legislation, you have the right to access any of your personal information which is held by the council. To make a request for your records, please email accessinfo@southwark.gov.uk or alternatively you can write to us. If you require any help in making your request, please speak to your social worker or allocated lead professional. If you are concerned with how the council is processing your data, please contact our Data Protection Officer by email on dpo@southwark.gov.uk or telephone on 020 7525 5000. More information about your rights is available on our website, or via the Information Commissioner www.ico.org.uk

What to do if you are unhappy with service?

If, for any reason, you are dissatisfied with the service you have received from us, you can:

- Raise your concerns with your social worker or their manager
- Make a formal complaint by using Southwark Council's 'how to give us your views' leaflet. These are available from your social worker or local office. Alternatively you can telephone Southwark's complaints officer on 020 7525 3977 or email sscomplaints@southwark.gov.uk

Further information

To find out more please contact the family group conference service on FGC@southwark.gov.uk or call 0207 525 5000.

Southwark Council

Family group conference service
Southwark children's services
P.O Box 64529
London SE1P 5LX

Translation or other formats

If you require help with translation please contact the family group conference service using the details above.

Family group conference service

Empowering and supporting families in joint decision-making

Information for family, relatives and friends



[@lb_southwark](https://twitter.com/lb_southwark) facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

www.southwark.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies

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What is a family group conference (FGC)?

A family group conference is a family led meeting, to empower families to plan and make decisions, for children and young people considered at risk.

The FGC is organised by an independent FGC co-ordinator. They work with you to identify your support network, and those that you would like to attend the meeting. This can include family, friends, neighbours, or an advocate from any community organisation or social group you attend – anyone you find supportive.

Why use a family group conference?

From time to time, families may have difficulties caring for their children, which can lead to professionals becoming involved. In these situations, families can sometimes feel that the professionals are making all of the decisions.

A FGC is a free and independent meeting, organised for you, with the family and friends you want to have there. It is a chance to take time out from busy family life, to help come up with solutions, and develop a plan to deal with difficulties.

What happens if I agree to take part in a family group conference?

Your FGC co-ordinator will talk with you about who supports you. Whenever possible everyone important to the child will be invited. They will arrange a time and place for the meeting, refreshments, and a crèche for any younger children. The meeting will, when possible, be in the language you use at home.

"Everyone spoke and listened to each other."

Family member

"The co-ordinator was very supportive and helpful."

Parent

"The support of the advocate and co-ordinator ensured that my feelings were heard."

Young person

"It has supported and changed the way we are working with the family. The family were really engaged with the process and seemed to be empowered by the decision making."

Social worker

How can I request a family group conference?

If you would like to participate in a family group conference, and haven't yet been offered one, please speak to your allocated social worker or lead professional. Referrals are currently only accepted from professionals using a MOSAIC referral form.

Are family group conferences confidential?

We don't discuss your personal circumstances with anyone without your permission. What is discussed is confidential unless there is a risk to a child. The family plan developed and agreed at the FGC will be shared with all participants.

What happens at a family group conference?

Part 1: Information giving

This is where the referrer and any other information giver explain:

- What is going well
- Any worries and why they have concerns
- Support available

Part 2: Private family time

All professionals leave the room to give the family time to discuss the information provided, and to make a plan to address concerns.

Part 3: Explaining the plan

When ready, the family share the plan with others at the meeting, including professionals and information givers. The plan is usually agreed and supported by the professionals, as long as it is safe and addresses the concerns raised.

