



**Public report**  
Cabinet Member Report

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board(2) Report  
Cabinet Member Children and Young People Report

7<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
12<sup>th</sup> November 2013

**Report to**

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board 2  
Cabinet Member for Children & Young People  
Councillor Duggins

**Director approving the report:**

Executive Director, People

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

**Annual Family Group Conference Service Report**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive summary**

Coventry Family Group Conference Service facilitates family meetings where strengths and resources within a network of family and friends can be drawn upon to make a family plan which offers support, care and safety for children and young people.

The outcomes for the children and families who have been offered a Family Group Conference have been carefully monitored and evaluated and are documented in the Annual Report attached.

The Family Group Conferencing Service has increasingly demonstrated its value in enhancing and assisting wider family and community networks involvement to make safe decision making for children and families in Coventry where there are child welfare concerns.

**Recommendations**

Scrutiny Board is asked to:

1. Endorse the report and the continued development of Family Group Conferencing as a process to enhance and assist wider family and community networks involvement in safe decision making for children and families in Coventry where there are child welfare concerns and forward any comments to Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

2. Confirm future reporting requirements for this work, for which annual reporting is not a statutory requirement.

Cabinet Member is asked to:

1. Endorse the report and consider any comments forwarded by Scrutiny Board 2
2. Endorse the continued development of Family Group Conferencing as a process to enhance and assist wider family and community networks involvement in safe decision making for children and families in Coventry where there are child welfare concerns.
3. Confirm future reporting requirements for this work, for which annual reporting is not a statutory requirement.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix 1      Family Group Conference Annual Report

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?** **Yes**  
*Booked on Scrutiny Board 2 7/11/13*

**Has it, or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?** **No**

**Will this report go to Council?** **No**

## **Annual Family Group Conference Report April 2012 to March 2013**

### **1. Background/ Context**

- 1.1 Coventry Family Group Conference facilitates family meetings where strengths and resources within a network of family and friends can be drawn upon to make a family plan which offers support, care and safety for children and young people.
- 1.2 The Family Group Conferencing Service is sited within the Safeguarding Children Service and works on a city wide basis addressing issues of child welfare. The Service is staffed by one full-time manager, three full-time FGC Coordinators and 2 sessional coordinators .

The annual budget for the service in 2012/13 was £165,738.

- 1.3 The outcomes for the children and families who have been offered a Family Group Conference have been carefully monitored and evaluated and are documented in the Annual Report attached. In summary these include:

- All the FGCs undertaken in 2012/13 (91) succeeded in making plans for children, which were acceptable to the referrer.
- Sixty three percent of the children who were Looked After when referred to the Service were successfully returned home to live with parents/family members,
- FGC outcomes have continued to support CLYP priority areas through safely preventing children becoming LAC and improving outcomes for LAC in promoting permanence within the birth family.
- The Service has also continued to successfully support families in identifying informal family based resources to allow children to remain living safely at home, often as an alternative to expensive agency led provision.
- Through the continued flexible use of Sessional FGC Staff, the Service has been able to respond to demand without the need to operate a waiting list, ensuring a timely response to family need.

- 1.4 The Service has also demonstrated value for money in respect of savings achieved through the provision of informal sources of support identified through Family Plans as an alternative to Council resources.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

Not Applicable

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

Not Applicable

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

Not Applicable

### **5. Comments from Executive Director , Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

The FGC Service facilitates meetings with networks of family and friends to offer support and care for children and young people. By working successfully with these family networks it has been demonstrated that for 19 young people who had FGC's in 2012/13, it had prevented the need for these young people to be accommodated by the Local Authority and avoided the costs associated with this.

The avoided costs can be considerable, but are difficult to quantify due to the need to assume what services would be required. The following table shows the potential costs avoided through the provision of either accommodation (for the 19) or family based support resources by the family network, where the alternative would have been Local Authority care or services:-

	Estimated Cost Avoided 2012/13
<b>Cashable:-</b>	
Internal/External Fostering Provision	£361k to £763k
Supervised Contact Sessions	£16k
Daycare/Baby Sitting	£2k
Respite Care	£98k
<b>Total Cost Avoided</b>	<b>£477- £879</b>
<b>Non-Cashable (Efficiency):-</b>	
Family Support Worker Time (6,261 hours)	£53,281
<b>Total Efficiency Savings</b>	<b>£53,281</b>

## 5.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications

## 6. Other implications

There are no specific implications to be considered

### 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / LAA (or Coventry SCS)

Sixty nine percent of the children referred to the Service are currently or have previously been subject to Child Protection Plans. Family Plans established at FGC in these circumstances are often addressing specific safety / risk issues or providing a support plan to address longer term sustainability once risk of significant harm has been reduced.

It continues to be an aim to promote the use of FGC pre Child Protection Conference in order to support reduced numbers of children at risk.

The Family Group Conferencing Service has increasingly demonstrated its value in enhancing and assisting wider family and community networks involvement to make safe decision making for children and families in Coventry where there are child welfare concerns.

The Service has also demonstrated value for money in respect of savings achieved through the provision of informal sources of support identified through Family Plans as an alternative to Council resources.

## **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

Not Applicable

## **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed in August 2012. No specific actions were identified for this service.

The views of family and friends are obtained following each FGC in respect of the usefulness of the process and success in addressing concerns. One hundred and five family and friends completed evaluations in this reporting period and ninety six percent of those reported that they had found the FGC useful and had addressed the concerns.

Evaluation forms completed by young people at the conclusion of their FGC highlight *that they felt safe and able to contribute, and were listened to by the adults attending their FGC. They felt well supported by their Advocate.*

## **6.5 Implications for (or impact on?) the environment**

Not Applicable

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Not Applicable

## **Report author(s)**

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