

# European Network for Family Group Conferences

Meeting held in Cavan on 4 March 2003

## Introduction

This meeting is a follow up meeting to further discuss establishing a European Network for promoting the development of Family Group Conferences and the exchange of information about policy, practice and research.

## Four Key Themes

Through discussion the four key themes initially identified were again agreed with some additional areas of focus:

- Learning about implementation and practice
- Working at the political level
- Sharing resources
- A common research agenda

### **a. Learning about practice and implementation**

A network could provide easy access to:

- Knowledge about best practice
- Contact names and organisations
- Ideas and exchanges of expertise
- Research evidence on practice and implementation
- New approaches or uses of Family Group Conferences
- Training Materials
- Help and advice about implementation

### **b. Working at the political level**

- Developing and influencing policy
- Generating a common European approach
- Raising profile and awareness about Family Group Conference
- Involving families as users in developing policy and practice
- Strength in unity - gaining political support
- Adopting a common set of values/principles about Family Group Conference
- Promoting wellbeing of children

**c. Sharing Resources**

- Making bids for European funding
- Each country could host a meeting of European forum
- Possibly setting up a European conference
- Sharing training materials and implementation plans
- Sharing policy, procedures, practice guidelines

**d. A common research agenda**

- Share information about current of existing research
- Consolidate research information that could inform new research
- Develop comparative studies
- Comparing orthodox approaches with Family Group Conference
- Sharing research information about 'what works' with implementation

**Action Plan to take Network forward:**

1. Invitation to 6 people representing their country to agree to:
  - a. Meet to progress work at a European level.
  - b. Act as a link to their own networks/colleagues.
  - c. Represent policy and practice issues relevant to their country.
  - d. Agree a mechanism for formalising the Network and providing an infrastructure to support its work.
  - e. Meet to share thinking.
2. Family Group Conference Forum (NI) to send out invitations to 6 representatives for a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003 (overnight 17<sup>th</sup>) venue to be confirmed.
3. Minutes of meeting to be circulated to network contacts.