

Scottish Report

City of Edinburgh Council

This year we have increased our number of coordinators from 9 to 11.

We have seen the number referrals to the service increase month by month. (2013-2014 we held 210 Family Meetings)

We have a new pilot project (started March 2014), working in one specific area of the city focusing on Family Meeting's where a vulnerable baby/infant (a child who is likely to be placed on the Child Protection register and/or accommodated) has been identified.

Such cases are automatically referred to the Family Group Decision Making Team. Of the 23 cases so far only two have been moved into public care. The others have remained at home with family support or moved to Kinship placements.

We have also developed a new service, Emergency Network Meetings. The aim is to reduce the number of children placed into public care on an emergency basis. (This was 80+ children in 2013) Coordinators respond immediately and identify the family network, hold a quick family meeting to prevent accommodation (when appropriate) with a view to having a fuller family meeting once the crisis is over.

Kalm Solutions (Scotland) Ltd – FGC's for vulnerable adults

Lorraine McKillop & Mary MacLeod continues to deliver FGC's to older people with Dementia. There are 88,000 people in Scotland who have dementia. At the moment we are the only ones in Scotland delivering this service to older people. An independent evaluation showed that we saved the Local Authority over 6,000 Euros on average per FGC. We are happy that 2 Local Authorities say the outcome for families is more important than saving money.

In April we had visitors from Sweden, including our friend and colleague Ewa Nashlund. They came to hear more about FGC's with older people.

We have a membership of 30 who attend our regular support forums and we have 10 independent FGC co-coordinators.

We are now working in 2 Local Authorities (municipalities) and are hoping to begin working with a 3rd soon. We have also delivered a presentation on FGC's in a Prison and hope they will pursue this further.

More recently, we featured in a national newspaper on the day of Every Families Right Conference in Edinburgh in October about FGC'S, where Mary and I delivered a presentation about our service along with the keynote speaker, Rob van Pagee.

Children 1st

CHILDREN 1ST remains committed to FGC however with current budgetary challenges for local authorities we have seen FGC services cut further in 2013/14. Local government funding has been withdrawn for two services which leaves CHILDREN 1ST FGC services in four local authority areas.

CHILDREN 1ST is directly supporting on local authority in the delivery of the Signs of Safety model alongside family group conferencing.

In March 2014 CHILDREN 1ST received funding, jointly with One Parent Families Scotland and the Scottish Child Law Centre, to offer a service to separated or separating parents across Scotland. This service includes financial advice, legal advice and family group conferencing, to help make plans and decisions that are in the best interests of children.

CHILDREN 1ST continues to offer FGC training accredited by Robert Gordon University, with 19 people undertaking the current course.

Scottish FGC Network

The Scottish FGC Network aims to promote the development of Family Group Conferences and to connect people who are interested in FGC's.

The aims of the Network are to develop and promote FGC's in Scotland and to ensure that no life-changing decision will be made for any child in Scotland without the consideration of an FGC. It also aims to provide opportunities for members to share and learn from each other. There is a national Network meeting held every year.

The Scottish Family Group Conferencing Steering Group

The Scottish FGC Steering Group consists of a number of FGC practitioners and managers from a range of voluntary sector and local authority FGC services. It was initiated in 2013.

Aims: To promote and further develop the FGC model within Scotland

Achievements of the Scottish FGC Steering Group to date:

1. Developed and delivered accredited Family Group Conferencing Training in Partnership with CHILDREN 1ST and Robert Gordon's University.
2. Created a standardised template for presenting family plans.
3. The facilitation of an annual network meeting for all those interested in furthering FGC's in Scotland.
4. Ongoing promotion within Scotland of the FGC model.
5. Creation of an online space within the Knowledge Hub for the sharing of best practice, ideas information and materials in relation to FGC.

University of Edinburgh PhD Research (in Partnership with Children 1st)

My research aims to better understand the contribution Family Group Conferencing (FGC) makes to longer term outcomes for children and families, where longer term means over a year since the family meeting.

My research questions are:

- What does FGC offer families?
- What longer term outcomes (changes, learning and /or benefits) did the involvement of families in FGC bring about?
- How do these changes learning or benefits link with the processes and principles of FGC
- How can longer term outcomes be identified and conceptualised?

I am undertaking a qualitative case study approach involving ten families from across Scotland. The study is intended to inform both practice and academic knowledge.