

Working agreement Framework between the Young People's Supported Accommodation Service and Family Group Conference Service

1. Purpose of the agreement

This working agreement framework has been developed to outline how the Young People's Supported Accommodation (YPSA) Service and the Family Group Conference (FGC) Service will work together to support young people and their families to divert young people (where safe) from entering supported accommodation services.

2. Context

Young People's Supported accommodation services have been remodelled in light of a service review. In the remodelled services, supported accommodation services for 16 and 17 year olds will be delivered in-house and services for parents aged 16-24 years and young people aged 18-24 years have continued to be commissioned. The remodelled YPSA service will provide, where appropriate and necessary, more intensive accommodation based support to better prepare Young People for sustainable independence, in temporary, high quality accommodation.

The review identified that there is often not enough work being undertaken with family members and wider family networks at an early enough stage to allow positive connections to be re-established. Once young people enter supported accommodation services, it appears that relationships have completely broken down, with minimal chance of repair. FGCs/mediation services are not generally used as a tool to explore and exhaust all options prior to entry into services. Therefore, the new model includes additional financial resources for the FGC service, to support the delivery of FGCs, prior to entry into supported accommodation services. Social workers and leaving care PAs will be expected to demonstrate evidence that an FGC has been offered, for a referral into the YPSA service to be progressed. Where an FGC has not been offered, then there is the expectation that this would be explored as a matter of urgency. There is the recognition that FGCs need to be used as an early intervention tool as well as supporting families receiving support from social care who have more complex needs.

The FGC service has been an essential part of the engagement process to empower, enable and bring whole families together to take responsibility for the issues being faced and the identification of solutions. The FGC process encourages open dialogues between family members to focus on and address key issues in a safe environment. This process helps to engage the extended family/friends/grandparents to work together and recognise the key issues to move forward, as often they are unaware of the situation.

The service is currently delivered through self-employed sessional contractors which enables the service to be delivered flexibly to meet demand and therefore, the service should be able to respond to deliver at short notice an FGC (or support an alternative meeting lead by the family, due to inability to deliver full FGC in timeframe available) for a family where there is a risk of breakdown, and referral into the YPSA may be on the horizon. Where a young person has been referred into the YPSA service for an emergency bed (e-bed), there is also the expectation that a young person entering an e-bed will receive intensive support within a 2 week period to reconnect them with their family (where safe). The FGC service will organise conference (provide) part of the

intensive intervention plan for the family to endeavour to keep the young person living safely at home, if it is safe and feasible to do so.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Referrals

Referrals into the YPSA service are made using an assessment and referral form and are normally made by district council housing officers, social workers or leaving care personal assistants (PA's).

Prior to an assessment/referral into the supported accommodation service, there is the expectation that a housing worker/ social worker/ leaving care PA will have offered a family an FGC and made a referral into the FGC service (after getting consent from carers/parent) . The YPSA assessment/referral form will identify if a family has accessed an FGC and where evidence is not demonstrated of this, then the Brokerage team will instruct this to be explored by the housing officer/ social worker/ leaving care PA making a referral into the FGC service for this intervention.

If a family have rejected the offer of an FGC the young person can still be referred into the YPSA service. The reasons for the rejection of an FGC by a family must be recorded on the assessment /referral form. An FGC will continue to be available to the family and YPSA workers will continue to make sure that the family consider this opportunity available to them.

If a family identify that they would like to access an FGC, whilst the young person is accessing a supported accommodation service, then the YPSA worker/ social worker or leaving care PA will agree who will make the referral into the FGC service to access this intervention.

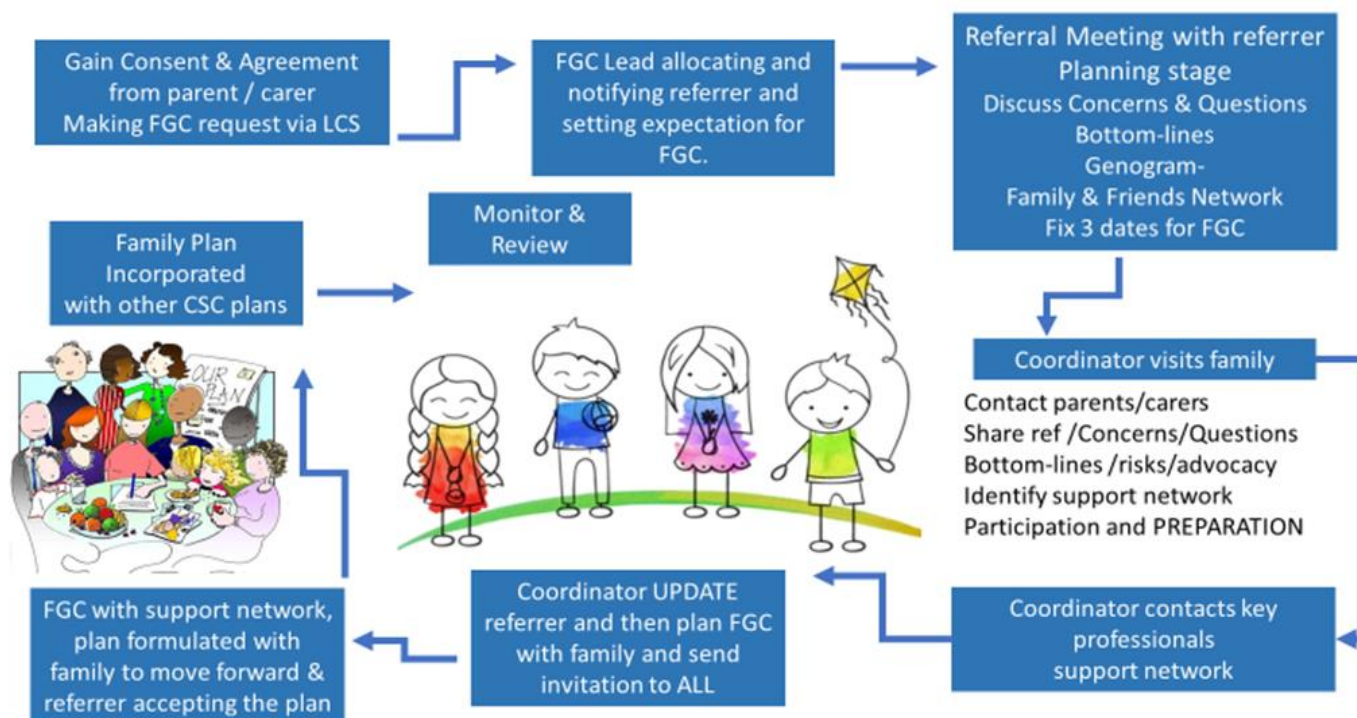
3.1.1. Emergency/ unplanned referrals

When the FGC service receive an emergency referral for an FGC for a young person in an e-bed, the case will be allocated and the FGC co-ordinator will contact the referrer within 48 hours. The FGC co-ordinator will prioritise the delivery of an emergency meeting delivered by the FGC service within 2 weeks as part of the family's intensive intervention plan. A full FGC will then be delivered at a later date as required.

3.1.2 Non-emergency/ planned referrals

When the FGC service receive a non-emergency referral, they will allocate the case and the FGC co-ordinator will contact the referrer within 5 working days. The FGC co-ordinator will endeavour to deliver the FGC within 4 weeks (if the relevant meetings can be arranged with family members as required).

3.2 FGC Casework Process



3.3 Sharing Information

Young people and their families will need to have consented to a referral into the FGC service. Once consent has been given, then a referral will be completed and they will be made aware of the contents of the referral. The referral information will be sent via a secure email address and the FGC service will hold the data on a secure server.

3.4. Measuring Impact

The FGC service will provide data on a six monthly basis to evidence:

- Number of referrals made into FGC service to prevent family breakdown including emergency and non-emergency
- Referral response times- timeframe between receipt of referral and initial contact made between FGC co-ordinator and referrer and then completion of FGC.
- Breakdown of referrers i.e. district housing officer, social worker, leaving care PA, YPSA worker
- Number of FGCs held
- Number of FGCs which were not held and breakdown of reasons why they didn't progress
- Outcome of FGCs i.e. those where young people remained living at home or with an extended member of the support network, referral into YPSA service

3.5 Financial Resources

The YPSA service will provide the FGC service with 44k per annum to support the delivery of an increased volume of FGCs which may present as the completion of an FGC is introduced, prior to a referral into the remodelled YPSA service. The finance team will arrange for this recharge to be made on an annual basis as directed by the YPSA service.

4. Summary of Process between the YPSA Service and the FGC Service

