

# EPUT



Essex Partnership University  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Mental Health Family Group Conferencing (FGC)

Essex specialist perinatal services



**Information for professionals.**

## What is a family group conference (FGC) in perinatal services?

A family group conference (FGC) is a process that enables mums, their families and wider network to come together to best support their perinatal journey.

Mums will be guided and supported by an FGC co-ordinator and their chosen professional network, and are at the forefront of all decision making. During the FGC, mums, their families and wider network have an opportunity to discuss their chosen issues, drawing on suggestions made during the conference.

### FGC co-ordinators can help with the following:

- ante-natal support and post birth planning
- discharge from an inpatient stay
- strengthen and re-integrate family relationships and social networks, e.g. baby groups etc
- improve mutual understanding of their situation.

FGCs also enable open and honest conversations, addressing any safeguarding concerns, if safe to do so, and completing a safety planning checklist.

### FGCs can offer:

- support for perinatal practitioners, and can work alongside cases
- support for mum through careful and considerate recovery work, in the context of holistic care planning. This stage can sometimes lead to disclosures of abuse for the individual or other members of the family (ACES)
- clear and honest work often unveiling the root cause of mums difficulties

- collaborative work with other professionals and disciplines, each FGC is unique
- children's voices are heard and their wishes and feelings explored. If not face to face then by other means such as pictures or poems
- encourage open and constructive conversations in a safe place chosen by mum.

### When is a good time to consider FGC:

- at first presentation to perinatal services
- when a significant events/change happens or at a transition point i.e. housing, bereavement, work, children's services/CAMHS, other statutory or voluntary services involvement
- when there are adult safeguarding concerns, Childcare FGC may be involved
- at discharge planning, if there is heavy reliance or a fear of being discharged
- when families feel "stuck". Often the first step is to explore and re-integrate relationships e.g. the FGC plan might be a referral to family therapy.

### When are FGC's not suitable?

- when children are on Section 47 Child Protection Register, Childcare FGC will be involved
- when there are ongoing current child/custodial arrangements
- when it's not safe to proceed due to safeguarding issues, where mums would be placed at more risk.

FGC is not family therapy, it is strength based and solution focussed intervention.

## Contact us

For more information on Family Group Conferences please contact the Perinatal Mental Health Family Group Conference team.

Call: 01245 315637

Email: [epunft.perinatalteam@nhs.net](mailto:epunft.perinatalteam@nhs.net)

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This leaflet can be produced in large print, CD, Braille and other languages on request.



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