

“It gives
families and
kids a voice.”

Dad

FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING

Helping you have a say in important
decisions about your family

WHAT IS FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING?

Where families experience challenging times, family group decision making (FGDM) is a way for children and families have a say in important decisions that are being made about them.

Family group decision making recognises that families are the experts in their own lives and understand what works best for their children. Family group decision making brings together all the important people in a child's life, so that those closest to them are the ones helping to make decisions about how to keep the child safe, happy and well.

Family group decision making originally come from New Zealand, but it is now known across the world as a way for children and families' voices to be heard in decision-making.

All families have a right to be involved in decisions being made about them. Children First have been helping families in Scotland have their say in important decisions about their children, through family group decision making for over 20 years.

“Every child
deserves the right
to have their say.”

Dad



“I enjoyed talking to our FGDM worker. They listened to everything I said in the meeting.”

Child



Family group decision making:

- Keeps the focus on the future
- Concentrates on your family's strengths
- Is blame-free
- Encourages you to have your say in decisions about your child
- Makes sure your child's voice is heard in decisions
- Explores what support is available to your child in their family and community
- Helps you make a unique plan to keep your child safe and well
- Supports families, social workers and others to work better together
- Puts your human rights at its heart.

HOW DOES FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING WORK?

A family group decision making coordinator will work with everyone in your family to help them understand how family group decision making works and make sure everyone has a chance to take part.

The family group decision making coordinator is an independent worker (who is not already involved in making decisions about your children or family).

They will help you prepare for a family group meeting, where you will come up with a family plan to support your child. The plan will be decided by your family and then agreed with social work and other workers at the family group meeting.

A few weeks or months after the family group meeting you will usually have a review family group meeting to check that the family plan is working.



“If we didn’t
have the meeting
I don’t know
where we’d
be now.”

Mum

YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING

Your family's journey through family group decision making will go through four stages: introduction, preparing for your family group meeting, your family group meeting and your review family group meeting.

Your family group decision making coordinator will support you through every stage of your journey.

Introduction

Your family group decision making coordinator will introduce yourself to you and your family and explain more about how family group decision making works. They will ask you about family members and friends who are important to your children, as well as any workers that you would like to be involved in making your family plan.

If your family has been referred for family group decision making, your family group decision coordinator will also meet the person who has referred you (this could be a social worker, teacher or health visitor) to find out what their concerns are and what might be important to consider as part of your plan to make sure these concerns are responded to.

I have seen a big change in my son after having a meeting. It helped us get the support he needs and now he speaks to them every week.'

Dad



Preparing for your family group meeting



Your family group decision making coordinator will contact the family members, friends and workers you would like to be involved in making a family plan for your child.

Your coordinator will spend time individually with each person helping them to think about what their views are, how they can support your child or family and any support they might need to be able to take part in the family group meeting.

Your coordinator will also help you and your child decide if they want someone to help them with their meeting (called an advocate or meeting buddy). A meeting-buddy can support you before or during the meeting or go to the meeting for you or your child to share views, if you or child would prefer not to be there.

Your coordinator will ask you to think about:

- Who you and your child want to invite to your family group meeting?
- What each member of you family wants to say at the meeting?
- Where and when the meeting should be?
- What refreshments there will be (you can choose your favourite snacks!)?
- What else needs to happen to make the meeting safe and comfortable for everyone who will take part?



Your family group meeting



Your Family Group Meeting is made up of three key parts:

1: Information Sharing

At the start of your family group meeting, your family and any workers who you have invited come together with your coordinator. Your coordinator shares information they have found out from speaking to your family, friends and workers that will help you to make a safe family plan. You also have the chance to ask the coordinator any questions.

2: Private Family Time

Your coordinator and other workers leave your family in private, for as long as you need, to talk to each other and make a family plan. If you want any extra information or support, the coordinator will be nearby and you can go and get them if you need to.

3: Agreeing the Family Plan

The coordinator and other workers rejoin your family to talk through your family plan and make sure it addresses any of the concerns that were shared at the start of the meeting. As well as agreeing the family plan, you will also decide with workers how to check you are making progress on the plan.



Review family group meeting

At the end of your family group meeting, you might also decide a date to bring everyone back together to check that the family plan is working, celebrate what is going well and make any changes that might be needed.

This is called a review family group meeting. This usually happens a few weeks or months after the first family group meeting. If anyone in your family is worried that the plan is not working, or if there is a family crisis, then you can ask the coordinator to organise a review meeting sooner.



“I felt listened to
for the first time.”

Young person

CONTACT US

For more information about family group
decision making contact Children First.

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Visit: childrenfirst.org.uk/fgdm

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FIRST** Protecting
Scotland's
Children