

# Family Network Service



## Family Network Meetings (FNM)

A guide for  
Referrers  
and Involved  
Agencies

To make a referral or enquiry please call  
Warwickshire Family Network Service on  
**01926 414147** or email [fns@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fns@warwickshire.gov.uk)



# What is Family Network Meeting?

A Family Network Meeting (formally known as Family Group Conference) is an opportunity for a child or young person to come together, with their family and extended close network, to make a plan to overcome any challenges they are facing. To address any safeguarding concerns, and keep the child in their family happy, safe and well.

## Who can refer?

Referrals come from Children and Families workers at all levels from Early Support to Children in Care. In order to proceed to the meeting, consent from the PR holder is required, and family agreement is sought.

## What is the role of the Family Network Co-ordinator?

The Family Network Co-ordinator will meet with the child/ young person and the individual family members in preparation for the family meeting. This will be to answer questions, discuss concerns and plan for the meeting. The Family Network Co-ordinator will support you to prepare for the meeting and will facilitate the meeting and offer a review.



**“It really helped the family to express opinions in a safe, controlled environment.”**

# The meeting will be made up of 3 parts:

## Information Sharing

The referrer and agencies explain to everyone what their concerns are, giving clear information to the family regarding available support for the future, what strengths the family can build upon and what the next steps might be if the family can't create a plan to address the concerns.

## Private family time

The family are left alone to discuss the situation and put together a plan to address and resolve the concerns. The Family Network Co-ordinator is still available to the family if required.

## Agreeing the plan

When the family are ready, the workers will re-join them so that the family can explain their plan and the referrer can say if they feel this meets the concerns that were raised. The referrer may be asked to offer support and resources and provide any suitable signposting to other support services.

On completion of the family meeting, a review meeting will be offered to the family to consider the effectiveness of the plan. It's up to the family, with support from the agency workers, to make the plan work.



# Some important things to remember:

At the heart of the idea of a Family Network Meeting is the involvement of the young person or child. It is important that (s)he is listened to and his/her views and ideas given value, by everyone that attends. The child is at the centre.

The aim of the meeting is to empower the young person and the family to come up with a plan that looks to resolve problems and make changes.

It is the role of the Family Network Co-ordinator to keep things on track and be available to assist, support and

deal with any issues that may arise from the dynamics of the family.

Because of the nature of the meeting, it may be daunting for some staff to be excluded from some parts of the meeting and to be faced with a different process for decision-making. Research shows, however, that this method of engaging young people and families consistently provides positive results.

**“My FNM experience was good very calm and relaxed. Open and comfortable atmosphere to talk in.”**

## Contact

If you want to speak to a member of the team

T: **01926 414147**

E: [fns@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fns@warwickshire.gov.uk)



# Feedback from referrers:

"I think the family coped well, the dynamics meant it was going to be difficult but I think the outcome was a very healthy one."

"I find it hard to find fault with the FNM process. It was so effective in bringing the family together & empowering them. I think they found it very validating & supportive, especially for the mother. I can see the positive impact on the children."

"I thought it was a really useful experience for the family and I felt that it was organised well. It was also useful to attend too, so I was aware of the outcomes of the discussion and what to follow up on."

"The group was controlled well. People didn't talk over each other. It was solution focussed. It helped the family look to the future".



# Family Network Support Packages

Financial support may be available to extended family and friends to enable them to support the child and their parents.

The aim of this funding is to unlock wider network support to allow children to continue to live at home with their birth parents. Sometimes families are unable to support due to barriers such as not having a car seat, or beds for children to stay over.

## **Some ways the funding may be used:**

- Car seats to allow wider network members to help with school runs or appointments.
- Sofa beds and bedding to give children somewhere safe to sleep when wider network members are offering to have the child sleep over regularly as part of their support.
- We may fund additional medical equipment (if not available from another service).
- We may fund plane tickets, train tickets, or support with petrol money to help network members get to the child and their family to offer support.

## **When we are NOT able to offer financial support:**

- If a family member or friend holds a Child Arrangements Order or a Special Guardianship Order for the child whom the family meeting is for.
- We are not able to offer parents financial support to care for their children.
- Services that another service normally provides e.g. autism assessments.

## **When we CAN offer financial support:**

- Families must have a family network meeting (FNM) to decide financial support.
- In the FNM families consider how to keep the plan going after the funding has ended.
- The funding can only go to wider network members to help them support the family.
- A parent within the family must have parental responsibility for the child.

## **How long we can offer funding:**

We can offer financial support for up to 8 weeks. At this point families will need a FNM review to see what support is still needed. From the review we can offer financial support for a further 8 weeks meaning a maximum of 16 weeks financial support in total. If families choose not to have a review the funding will end.

Families need to consider how to keep the support going once the funding has come to an end.



# Warwickshire Family Information Service

Contact the Family Information Service (FIS) for a wide range of information relating to children and young people aged 0 – 25 including, but not limited to:

- Childcare
- Money and benefits
- Housing
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Health and wellbeing



Scan me

Freephone the team **0800 408 1558**

Monday – Friday **9am – 5pm**

or email **[fis@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fis@warwickshire.gov.uk)**

Scan the QR code for the website

or visit **[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis)**

