

Professionals' Information





Kent Social Connections Service



Social Connections Coordinator

Information about the Kent Social Connections Service

The Kent Social Connections Service arranges meetings with immediate families and their support networks to help to address the worries of professionals (usually Social Workers) and build upon existing strengths.

We have a range of different meetings, which all work by aiming to build connections between children, family, friends and the community to find solutions and solve problems.

The aim and focus of all meetings is to keep the children and young people safe. They are organised by a Social Connections Coordinator, who will tailor a meeting that best meets the needs of a child and their family. These meetings are voluntary, so the people with Parental Responsibility decide whether to have the meeting and they can withdraw their consent at any time.

Kent Social Connections Service is independent of decisions regarding the child and remains neutral throughout the process. We work with the current circumstances to produce the best possible outcomes for the child. Our aim is to create an environment that is conducive to the family being able to come together to make the changes needed to keep the child safe.

Why have I been contacted?

You have been contacted because you may have information that can help the child and family in creating a Family Plan. You may also be able to offer support to embed the Family Plan and help the family achieve positive outcomes for the child.

Do I need to attend the meeting?

You are encouraged to attend the meeting, share information and answer any questions about what your service can offer. You will also have the opportunity to raise any concerns you may have and answer any worries the child and family may have before creating their Family Plan.

All information is shared with the family prior to the meeting so that they are fully aware of what will be said on the day. You can meet with the Coordinator prior to the meeting to prepare and share any concerns you may have. If for any reason you are unable to attend, you will be asked to either send a representative or provide written information which will be shared at the meeting.





Who will be at the meeting?

The people with Parental Responsibility decide who attends the meeting and this could include:

Parents, carers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, any extended family members, children and young people, family friends and wider community support networks. Essentially, every significant person to the child that can help bring about change through a Family Plan.

The person who made the referral and maybe other professionals working with the child and family.

The Coordinator is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all participants at the meeting.



What are the types of meetings?

There are different types of meetings depending on what's best for the family's circumstances. All of our meetings are tailored specifically to the needs of the child and family.

Family Group Conference (or FGC)

A Family Group Conference is a meeting where the support network around the child comes together to talk through how everyone can help the child.

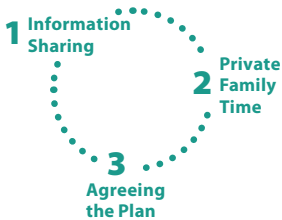
These offers of support can be put into a Family Plan to keep the child safe. Sometimes families choose to have other professionals at their meetings to give more information and inform their plan.

During **“Information Sharing”** the referrer will explain to everyone what they are worried about and what they would like the family to plan for. The family can ask questions to help them understand what is needed. The Coordinator will share any other information provided (including the views of the child if they do not attend).

For **“Private Family Time”** the referrer, professionals and the FGC Coordinator leave the meeting. The family have time to talk about what everyone will do and how they will write the Plan.

During **“Agreeing the Plan”** the Family Plan will be read out and the Social Worker will say what they think of the Family Plan. This Plan can be used to help keep the child safe and can be shared at other meetings i.e. a Child Protection Conference, however it is not legally binding.

The Family Group Conference has 3 parts





Emergency Meeting

This meeting happens at a point of crisis, where the family are brought together quickly with the right professionals to put an emergency plan together to deal with this crisis. A Family Group Conference can be held later with a wider support network if a further long-term plan is required.



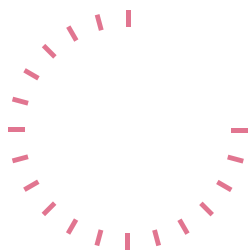
Restorative Meeting

A Restorative Meeting can be used to help improve and repair relationships between people. The meeting is usually between two or three people and aims to resolve the issues that have caused the relationship to break down, and help to find a better way of dealing with things in the future for the benefit of the child.



Lifelong Links

Lifelong Links aims to make connections with family members and other people who are important to a child in Local Authority care, with the goal of enabling lasting relationships to be formed which will support the child into adulthood. A meeting similar to a Family Group Conference may be part of this process.



How long will the meeting take?

A Family Group Conference can take between two and four hours, but a restorative meeting may only take an hour. However, this is dependent on the individual needs of the family and can take longer if needed.

What happens afterwards?

The Coordinator will send the Family Plan to everybody involved.

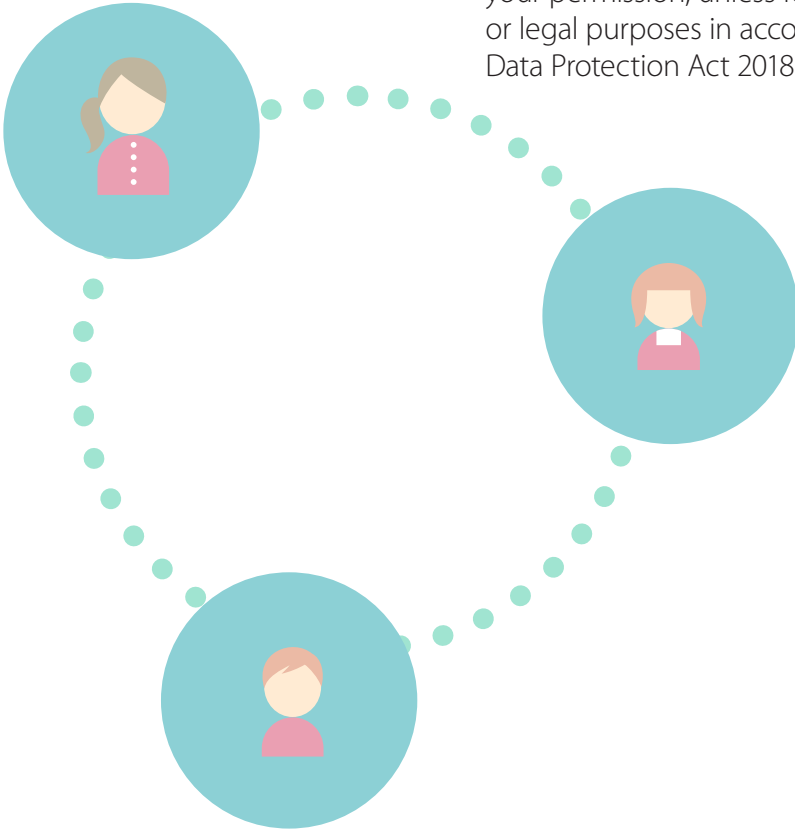
The referrer will use the Plan to work with the family in the best interests of the child.

The Social Connections Service is responsible for putting the Plan on Liberi main pathway.

What will happen to my information?

To be able to contact you about these meetings, we will need to store your name, professional role and contact details on our secure and private database. We will keep limited details of our work with you, such as dates and times of visits and what has been discussed. If you have any questions about the data stored, please ask.

Your information will not be shared outside of the Local Authority without your permission, unless for safeguarding or legal purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR).





Contacting the Social Connections Service

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South East Kent: 03000 410403

socialconnections service@kent.gov.uk

www.kent.gov.uk/familygroupconference

www.kent.gov.uk/lifelonglinks

FGC Project Accreditation

This service has met the requirements of
the National Accreditation Framework



Lifelong
Links

 **Together
we can make stronger
connections**

