

Report of:	Simon Johnson and Dee Lynn, Service Delivery Managers
Meeting:	Children and Young People's Social Care Delegated Decision Panel
Date of meeting:	27th May 2010
SUBJECT:	Interim Family Group Conference Service

This Report is for:			
Discussion Only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information Only	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Advice/consideration prior to taking a Key or Major decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Decision to be taken by:			
Full Council	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Governance and Audit Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Executive Board	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Standards Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
An Area Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Member Management Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A Regulatory Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A Director using delegated authority	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Executive Summary

A successful pilot of the Family Group Conference model has operated in the South of the city since December 2008 funded initially through the Innovation Fund. There is a long term aim to establish the model city wide on a permanent basis. This report seeks authority to establish a temporary city wide service from September 2010-March 2011.

Funding has been secured in the current financial year to secure the proposed interim arrangements.

A decision will need to be made about the future governance and funding arrangements from March 2011.

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To consider how a Family Group Conference service can be delivered city-wide from September 2010-March 2011

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The ambitious Local Strategic Plan target to reduce the need for children to become looked after will only be achieved by working differently to find solutions that enable children in very vulnerable situations to remain in their communities and families of origin. Leeds has a successful track record of supporting family networks to support children once they have come into the care system through approving and supporting

family network carers. Family Group Conferences are designed to intervene at an earlier stage to see if the professional and family network can together identify elegant solutions that enable children to be successfully parented within their own family.

- 2.2 There has been a successful pilot of the Family Group Conference model in the South of the city which has been effective in working with 18 families in the first twelve months where children were on the 'edge of care'. The coordinator of this pilot project was pro-actively engaged with professionals in the South wedge of the city to promote the scheme. A very successful seminar, with presentations from families who had been involved, was also held to share the learning outcomes from the pilot project with other staff and professionals. Only one child from these 18 families subsequently became looked after. National evidence from the Family Rights Group and others would support a view that this model is effective in empowering kinship networks to be better able to support children and young people.
- 2.3 The model used in South Leeds was to second an experienced practitioner to South Leeds Health for All, a local voluntary organization with effective links to children's services in that area of the city. South Leeds Health for All took responsibility for management of the project through a multi-agency steering group. Since the funding from the Innovation Grant came to an end in December 2009, the seconded post has been retained using social care funding. Future funding for the project had been uncertain.
- 2.4 In January 2010, a successful bid for funding for Family Group Conferences was made as part of Children's Services bid for Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) funding as an area 'not on track'. £120k was agreed for spending in the current financial year. In addition, the East Leeds management team has identified a further £47k for this project from a temporary vacant team manager post. In total £167k is available.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 This paper proposes a model for using the funding available in 2010/11 to deliver an interim Family Group Conference service pending the anticipated full service delivery model.
- 3.2 South Leeds Health for All has now been extended to cover the city and is renamed Health for All. It is proposed that the partnership between Children's Social Care and the Health for All is maintained to manage this project. The benefits of this are:
- From the family's point of view clear independence from social care
 - Access to the existing pool of sessional advocates employed through Health for All.
 - Link to other Health for All services
 - Creativity and flexibility of working in partnership with a voluntary agency, access to resources and other funding streams
- 3.3 It is envisaged that the following temporary posts will be needed to operate the service
On a city wide basis:
- 1 x Team Manager at grade PO6
 - 3 x Coordinator posts at PO4
 - 1.5 x admin support at C1.

The post-holders are unlikely to be in post before August with a service start date of

1 September, salary costs (with the exception of the existing coordinator post) are shown as 8 months not full year costs.

1 x Team Manager	£31,000
3 x Coordinators	£84,000
1.5 x Admin support	£24,000

Total salary costs: £139,000

Support costs:

3 tablet PC packages & 3 desk top PCs	£6,000
Accredited training for Coordinators £500 each	£1,500
Running costs: room hire, travel, advocacy,	£20,000
Management cost to HFA @ 5%	£6000

Total Operating Budget: £33,500

Total budget: £172,500

The identified potential shortfall could be made up from Section 17 budget allocation.

Office accommodation costs have not been included as we anticipate this service may be hosted within existing provision in children's services; the continued use of the Nesfield Centre is being negotiated with Early Years.

- 3.4 It is proposed that a cost centre is identified for the LPSA grant and other funds to support the salary costs and a grant agreement established with Health for All whereby they access expenditure under the same costcode. Further advice will be sought from Commissioning on setting up the grant agreement.
- 3.5 Thus, if agreed, a sum of £167,000 should be made available for HFA to access. The Team Manager and Co-ordinators should be advertised for internally to LCC and will be required to be social work qualified and be temporary appointments.
- 3.6 They will become employed by HFA but the Team manager will be supervised by a CSDM within CYPSC. The team manager will have management/supervisory responsibility for the co-ordinators. Further detailed governance arrangements will require drafting.
- 3.7 The existing procedures and materials used in the south will be mirrored across the city and local practice will be overseen through the establishment of steering groups.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The evidence that FGCs are a sound way of working is emphatic. As such this report argues for an agreed interim position until the longer term arrangements, perhaps within the wider children's services arena is agreed. Funding is available and there is a need to move speedily to develop the service as specified.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 The Delegated Decision panel is asked to support the proposal of a model for using The funding available in 2010/11 to deliver an interim Family Group Conference service pending the anticipated full service delivery model. And to support the proposals as discussed.

5.2 The Chief Officer Children and Young People's Social Care is asked to agree the proposals to use LPSA funding and funds identified from staffing budget to establish an Interim Family Group Conference service on a citywide basis.

6.0 Background Papers

6.1 Local Strategic Plan

6.2 Evaluation of South Leeds Family Conference Group – Nick Frost