

Contact us:

### Children 1st is Scotland's National Children's Charity.

We help Scotland's families to put children first, with practical advice and with support in difficult times. And when the worst happens, we support survivors of abuse, neglect, and other traumatic events in childhood, to recover.

For more information visit our website at  
W: [www.children1st.org.uk](http://www.children1st.org.uk)

### Parentline

ParentLine Scotland is our free helpline, email and web-chat service for anyone caring for or concerned about a child. It's open Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat-Sun 9am - 12 noon.

- Talk:  **08000 28 22 33**
- Text:  **07860 022 844**
- Chat:  **[www.children1st.org.uk/plschat](http://www.children1st.org.uk/plschat)**
- Email:  **[parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk](mailto:parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk)**
- Web:  **[www.children1st.org.uk/parentline](http://www.children1st.org.uk/parentline)**

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# Children 1st

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHARITY

## Family Group Decision Making



# Family Group Decision Making

In Scotland, Children 1st has pioneered the use of Family Group Decision Making (also known as Family Group Conferencing) since 1998. Every family, at some time, has to make big decisions about their children.

We offer Family Group Decision Making when there are concerns about the children in a family. Family Group Decision Making can help a family to make a Family Plan to meet the needs of children who have been affected by difficult family situations such as drug and alcohol use, domestic abuse, a parent's mental health and family breakdown.

## What is Family Group Decision Making?

Family Group Decision Making draws on the strengths of the wider family and friends network in deciding how best to care for a child. It gives this network the chance to take part in finding solutions to any difficulties and to make a Family Plan for the children.

Family Group Decision Making is based on the belief that; given resources, information

and power, families will make safe decisions for their children.

## How Does it Work?

A Family Group Decision Making Coordinator contacts family members and family friends who are involved with the children. The Coordinator spends time individually with each person helping them to think about what their views are, what they can do to help the children and what support they might need to be able to take part in the Family Group Meeting.



## Family Group Decision Making aims to:

- encourage family members to take part in decision-making about their children
- explore what support is available for the children within their family and community
- help families make safe and unique Family Plans for their children
- support families and workers to work better together

## The Family Group Meeting

**Information Sharing** - The Coordinator runs this part of the meeting. The family group (including the children, where appropriate) and workers (whom the family have invited) are present. A working agreement is made and the workers share information that will be useful to the family in making a safe Family Plan. The family have the chance to ask questions of the workers.

**Private Family Time** - The family group are left in private, for as long as they need, to talk and make a Family Plan. The Coordinator is available, in another room, to give information and support if the family want it.

**The Family Plan** - The Coordinator and workers re-join the family. The Family Plan is discussed and agreed by the family and workers and ways to monitor the plan are decided.

**Monitor and Review** - A date is set for a Review Family Group Meeting to allow the family to come together again to check that their Family Plan is working and to update it and make any changes needed.