

LOCAL AUTHORITY DATA COLLECTION ON ACCESS AND TAKE UP OF FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCES

Guidance document

This document sets out guidance for a data collection via an excel spreadsheet on access and take up of family group conferences (FGCs). This the data collection is for all local authorities in England to complete.

The **deadline** for the data collection is: **Friday 4th April 2025**

The data collection is being undertaken by Coram in partnership with Family Rights Group (FRG). They have been commissioned by Foundations as part of a project funded by the Department for Education.

The data collection is **not** being used to evaluate or assess local authority FGC services. A list of local authorities that provide data will be published, but **no further information** identifying local authorities will be presented.

If you have any questions about the data collection please email Coram at:
Impactandevaluation@coram.org.uk

Why is the data being collected?

The government's Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill includes provisions mandating local authorities to offer families a family group decision making (FGDM) prior to issuing care proceedings. This is likely to lead to an increase in FGCs, given the research evidence on its effectiveness, including the [large-scale randomised controlled trial](#) undertaken by Coram.

This makes it even more important that we understand where and how FGCs are offered and what are the barriers families face to accessing an FGC.

We currently do not have adequate data to fully understand who is offered and who takes up the offer of an FGC and in which local authorities across England.

Therefore, building on the recommendations from the national report, '[Exploring local authority data and monitoring of family group conferences](#)', we are asking all local authorities to provide aggregated data on the overall number of families being offered an FGC, and those going on to have an FGC, alongside basic demographic data.

The data collection will be used to gain a deeper understanding of the variation, barriers and facilitators to FGCs being offered and taken up by families across England. The data collection is

part of a larger [project](#) looking at access and take up of FGCs. Alongside the data collection will be deep-dive case studies with six local authorities which looks at access to FGCs. The aim is to make recommendations to improve the accessibility and equity of local authorities' FGC offers to families.

A final report will be published by Foundations in September 2025 will include findings from the data collection.

What data is being collected?

We are asking local authorities to provide information and data for the **2023/24 reporting year** (1st April 2023-31st March 2024). Each local authority is being asked:

- What an FGC looks like in their local authority and the process around making referrals, in addition to the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral and information about them.
- The process around how FGCs are offered to parent/carers, in addition to the number of FGC consented to as well as the number children where an FGC was consented to and information about the children.
- The number of FGCs that took place and the number of children that were subject to an FGC that took place. As well as information about the children and the number of FGCs that did not take place and why.

We are asking for data on the number of referrals, FGCs consented to and number of FGCs that took place, as well as the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral, where their parent/carer consented to an FGC and where an FGC took place. This is so we can understand the characteristics of the children who were subject to an FGC.

However, we are **not** asking for any individual level data, including any identifiable data on families. The collection is asking for aggregated data, for example, the overall number of families that were offered an FGC.

Who is running the data collection?

The data collection is being undertaken by Coram with Family Rights Group (FRG) who have been commissioned by Foundations as part of a project funded by the Department for Education.

[Coram](#), established as the Foundling Hospital in 1739, today is a group of children's charities creating better chances for young people and families.

[Family Rights Group](#) promote FGCs and FGC quality standards. Please note that we want to know a range of experiences of FGCs and the data you provide will not be used, and is not connected in any way, to the Family Rights Group service accreditation.

For the purposes of this data collection, Coram and Foundations (as the commissioners) are joint controllers. Coram is the primary contact for the data collection. This notice applies in addition to

Coram's Privacy policy, which includes our legal basis for processing your personal data, details of which can be found [here](#).

How will the data be used/stored?

All information collected from local authority as part of the data collection will be kept confidential and managed in accordance with data protection legislation and our Data Protection Impact Assessment for the research.

All personal data, for example the main contact details, will be destroyed two years after the end of the study (planned for September 2025) in September 2027. We only keep the data for this long for any quality assurance.

After that, we will only keep anonymised data, which will only be accessed by staff working on the data collection. This anonymised and aggregated data may be used as contextual data in future analyses as part of this project.

We will publish results of the overall study in an online report and possibly in other outputs such as webinars, academic journals, conferences, briefs etc. Individuals will not be identified in any output. The data collection is not being used to evaluate or assess local authority FGC services. A list of local authorities that provide data will be published, but no further information identifying local authorities will be presented.

What if I cannot provide all the data?

We appreciate that you may not collect all the data being requested, or may not collect the data using the same categories as defined in the data collection template. As this is the first of its kind data collection on FGCs, we ask that you provide as much data as possible and highlight where you do not currently collect the data. Where you currently collect the data but use different categories (for example for age or ethnicity) we would ask that you provide that data as supplementary using the categories you use.

Data collection spreadsheet

Data is being collected via an excel template. This is to allow local authorities to collect the data from various sources if needed. If you require a copy of the excel template please email Impactandevaluation@coram.org.uk.

The **deadline** for the data collection is: **Friday 4th April 2025** – returns should be emailed to Impactandevaluation@coram.org.uk.

The questions within the spreadsheet are given below for reference.

Data collection questions

Below are the questions which are contained in the data collection template for reference.

Section 1. What an FGC looks like in your local authority

This section asks about what an FGC looks like in your local authority.

1. Does your service comply with Family Rights Group's Family Group Conference standards framework?

Responses:

- Yes
- No

2. Is your service accredited or seeking to be accredited through Family Rights Group's accreditation framework?

Responses:

- Yes our service is accredited
- Yes we are seeking an accreditation
- No we are not accredited and not seeking accreditation

3. We want to know a bit more about the standard practices of your FGCs. Please tick all that apply to the standard practice of your FGCs:

- FGCs are voluntary for families to participate i.e. no family has to take part in an FGC
- FGC coordinators are not social workers working in teams that refer into the service
- FGC coordinators and their line manager(s) do not have decision-making powers in relation to the child
- Families agree who is invited to the FGC meeting
- Families are offered in-person meetings as standard
- Families are asked and agree to where the FGC takes place
- Ahead of the FGC meeting, information is shared in a timely manner to all those involved
- At the FGC, there is a process for sharing information with all those attending
- FGCs include "private family time" for the family to make a plan
- The presumption is that children will be involved in their FGC, and that includes the option to attend part or all of their FGC, and have their views heard
- Children are offered an advocate where appropriate.

Section 2. FGC referrals

The section asks about the process around making referrals in addition to the number of referrals made, and to the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral and information about those children.

4. Briefly describe how referrals are made for an FGC in your local authority.

This should include who can make referrals, what the process is (for example if they are sent via email or within a case management system), and how this process or procedure is communicated to relevant teams or staff in the local authority (via training, a webpage etc.).

[Open text response: maximum of 750 words]

For the following FGC referral information, please do **not** include the number of FGC reviews.

5. Please provide the number of FGC referrals made between 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

- *Number of FGC referrals (not including FGC reviews) in 2023/24*

The rest of the questions in this section ask for data by the number of children, to understand their characteristics.

6. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral between 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024.

- *Number of children subject to a FGC referral in 2023/24*

7. Please provide the number of children that were subject to a re-referral for an FGC in 2023/24. (i.e. the child was subject to a referral for an FGC in the same year, 2023/24. It does not matter if they went onto have an FGC or not).

- *Number of children that were subject to a re-referral for an FGC in 2023/24*

8. Please provide the proportion of children that were subject to a re-referral for an FGC in 2023/24 by the number of all children that were subject to a referral in 2023/24

- *Proportion of all children that were subject to a re-referral for an FGC in 2023/24*

9. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral in 2023/24 based upon the legal status of the child at the time of the referral.

- *Who were a Child in Need (CIN)*
- *Who were subject to a child protection enquiry or a plan*
- *Who were a Child Looked After*
- *Who were being supported in another way such as by Early Help/Family Support*

- *Other [open text: please give some explanation]*
- *Not known*

10. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC referral in 2023/24 who were in pre-(care) proceedings (i.e. a letter before proceedings had been sent by the local authority) at the time of the referral.

- *Number of children*

11. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral in 2023/24 by age of the child, at the time of the referral.

- *Pre-birth*
- *0-5*
- *6-10*
- *11-15*
- *16-17*
- *18+*

12. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral in 2023/24 by the sex of the child (i.e. the sex that they were given at birth).

- *Female*
- *Male*
- *Other*
- *Not known*

13. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral in 2023/24 by the ethnicity of the child.

This is based on DfE main categories used in the children looked after data return and the children in need (CIN) return.

- *White British*
- *White Irish*
- *Any other White background*
- *Traveller of Irish Heritage*
- *Gypsy/Roma*
- *White and Black Caribbean*
- *White and Black African*
- *White and Asian*
- *Any other Mixed background*
- *Indian*
- *Pakistani*
- *Bangladeshi*
- *Chinese*
- *Any other Asian background*

- *Caribbean*
- *African*
- *Any other Black background*
- *Any other ethnic group*
- *Refused*
- *Information not yet obtained*

14. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral in 2023/24 that had a known disability.

- *Children who have a known disability*
- *Children who do not have a known disability*
- *Not known*

15. Please provide the number of children that were subject to an FGC referral in 2023/24 where the parent/carer with parental responsibility had a known disability.

- *At least one parent/carers has a known disability*
- *Parents/carers have no known disability*
- *Not known*

Section 3. FGCs consented to

This section asks about the process around how FGCs are offered to families and the number of FGCs that are consented to by person with parental responsibility, the number of children that were subject to a consented FGC and the characteristics of these children.

16. Briefly describe how parents/carers are offered an FGC in your local authority.

This should include who makes the initial communication to the parent/carer, what the process is (for example if and what information they are sent) and what the consent process is for parents/carers with parental responsibility and for the wider family network.

[Open text response: maximum of 750 words]

For the following information on the number of FGCs consented to, please do **not** include the number of FGC reviews.

17. Please provide the number of FGCs that were consented to by parent/carers with parental responsibility as a result of a referral in 2023/24 (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024).

- *Number of FGCs consented to in 2023/24*

The rest of the questions in this section asks for data by the number of children to understand their characteristics.

18. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to by parent/carers with parental responsibility in 2023/24 (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024).

- *Number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24*

19. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 by the legal status of the child

- *Who were a Child in Need (CIN)*
- *Who were subject to a child protection enquiry or a plan*
- *Who were a Child Looked After*
- *Who were being supported in another way, such as by Early Help/Family Support*
- *Other [open text: please give some explanation]*
- *Not known:*

20. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 where the child was subject to pre-proceedings (i.e. a letter before proceedings had been sent by the local authority).

- *Number of children*

21. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 by age of the child, at the time of the referral.

- *Pre-birth*
- *0-5*
- *6-10*
- *11-15*
- *16-17*
- *18+*
- *Not known*

22. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 by the sex of the child (*i.e. the sex that they were given at birth*).

- *Female*
- *Male*
- *Other*
- *Not known*

23. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 by the ethnicity of the child.

This is based on DfE main categories used in the children looked after data return and the children in need (CIN) return.

- *White British*
- *White Irish*
- *Any other White background*
- *Traveller of Irish Heritage*
- *Gypsy/Roma*
- *White and Black Caribbean*
- *White and Black African*
- *White and Asian*
- *Any other Mixed background*
- *Indian*
- *Pakistani*
- *Bangladeshi*
- *Chinese*
- *Any other Asian background*
- *Caribbean*
- *African*
- *Any other Black background*
- *Any other ethnic group*
- *Refused*

- *Information not yet obtained*

24. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 who had a known disability.

- *Children who have a known disability*
- *Children who do not have a known disability*
- *Not known*

25. Please provide the number of children where an FGC was consented to in 2023/24 where the parent/carers with parental responsibility had a known disability

- *At least one parent/carers has a known disability*
- *Parents/carers have no known disability*
- *Not known*

Section 4. FGCs that did or did not take place

This section asks about the number of FGCs that took place, and the number of children that were subject to an FGC that took place, as well as information about those children.

For the following information on the number of FGCs consented to, please do **not** include the number of *FGC reviews*.

26. Please provide the number of FGCs that took place in 2023/24 (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024) as a result of a referral.

- *Number of FGCs that took place in 2023/24*

The rest of the questions in this section asks for data by the number of children to understand their characteristics.

27. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC that took place in 2023/24 (1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024).

- *Number of children who were subject to an FGC that took place in 2023/24*

28. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC that took place in 2023/24 by the legal status of the child.

- *Who were a Child in Need (CIN)*
- *Who were subject to a child protection enquiry or a plan*
- *Who were a Child Looked After*
- *Who were being supported in another way, such as Early Help/Family Support*
- *Other [open text: please give some explanation]*
- *Not known*

29. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC that took place in 2023/24 where the child was subject to pre-proceedings (i.e. a letter before proceedings had been sent by the local authority).

- *Number of children*

30. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC that took place in 2023/24 by age of the child, at the time of the referral.

- *Pre-birth*
- *0-5*
- *6-10*
- *11-15*
- *16-17*
- *18+*
- *Not known*

31. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC *that took place in 2023/24 by the sex of the child.*

- *Female*
- *Male*
- *Other*
- *Not known*

32. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC *that took place in 2023/24 by the ethnicity of the child*

This is based on DfE main categories used in the children looked after data return and the children in need (CIN) return.

- *White British*
- *White Irish*
- *Any other White background*
- *Traveller of Irish Heritage*
- *Gypsy/Roma*
- *White and Black Caribbean*
- *White and Black African*
- *White and Asian*
- *Any other Mixed background*
- *Indian*
- *Pakistani*
- *Bangladeshi*
- *Chinese*
- *Any other Asian background*
- *Caribbean*
- *African*
- *Any other Black background*
- *Any other ethnic group*
- *Refused*
- *Information not yet obtained*

33. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC *that took place in 2023/24 who had a known disability.*

- *Children who have a known disability*
- *Children who do not have a known disability*
- *Not known*

34. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC *that took place in 2023/24* who had a parent/carer with parental responsibility that had a *known disability*.

- *At least one parent/carers has a known disability*
- *Parents/carers have no known disability*
- *Not known*

35. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC *that took place in 2023/24* who attended the FGC meeting.

- *Number of children who attended the FGC*

36. Please provide the number of children who were the subject of an FGC *that took place in 2023/24* where the father attended the FGC meeting:

- *Number of children where the father was present at the FGC*

FGCs that did not take place

37. Please provide the number of FGCs that did not take place but were offered to a family to:

- *Number of FGCs*

38. Do you collect data on the reasons why an FGC does not take place when offered?

- *Yes*
- *No*

39. For those that do collect the reasons why an FGC does not take place, please provide a breakdown by the main reason the FGC did not take place.

For the FGCs that did not take place, please choose the one most relevant reason. Do not count FGCs in multiple categories.

- Parent/carer(s) refused to engage / declined / did not want an FGC*
- Family did not proceed to an FGC meeting because: Not enough family members identified*
- Not enough family members engaged*
- Change in Circumstances*
- FGC service did not have capacity to progress referral*
- Referrer withdrew referral*
- Change in legal status of child*

Data collection information and contact

The **deadline** for the data collection is: **Friday 4th April 2025**

If you have any questions about the data collection please email Coram at:
Impactandevaluation@coram.org.uk