



A GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Lifelong Links Coventry

*Building lasting relationships
for children and young people in care*



Lifelong Links is a new and exciting project for children and young people in care

Lifelong Links aims to build lasting relationships for children and young people in care. It helps find and bring together people who care about them such as former teachers, carers or family friends. These people are brought together in a Family Group Conference.

At this meeting an agreement will be made about what support the child or young person wishes to get from the different people, and what they can offer the child or young person. This is written down in a plan so the child or young person knows what to expect. This plan should be agreed by the social worker to ensure its safe.

Once it is decided that Lifelong Links is right for a child or young person, they are allocated a Lifelong Links coordinator. A person or local authority with parental responsibility for the child or young person must consent to the referral and the child or young person must agree for Lifelong Links to go ahead.

The Lifelong Links coordinator will then:

- Meet with the child or young person and work with them to find all the people who may care about them.
- With the agreement of the child or young person, contact all the people identified (where this is safe) and arrange to visit them.
- Explain how they may be best able to support the child or young person and describe Lifelong Links, including Family Group Conference meetings.
- In consultation with the child or young person, invite the identified people to the family group conference.



The purpose of Lifelong Links Family Group Conference

Those present at the family group conference will make a plan so the young person:

- Has lasting relationships upon which they can depend
- Knows more about their own history and may feel a stronger sense of identity
- Has people to turn to for practical and emotional support. This could be invites to family events, holidays, telephone calls, emails, cards, outings, work experience etc.

Who attends the Lifelong Links Family Group Conference?

This will vary but usually includes the young person, family members (and others who care about the young person), the social worker (and other professionals who may be involved), the foster or residential carer, the Lifelong Links coordinator, and possibly an advocate for the child or young person. The family group conference includes some private time which practitioners do not attend.



What happens after the Family Group Conference?

The social worker should work with the child or young person and their support network to ensure that the plan is carried out and that it is safe. This plan will form part of their care plan and eventually their pathway plan as they become more independent. A family group conference review should be offered to the child or young person and their support network, to check that the plan is working. The plan should also be regularly reviewed.

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