

GLASGOW FAMILY CONNECTIONS ASSESSMENT AND PLAN (FCAP)

Why did we want to make this change?

One of Glasgow's key priorities is protecting and promoting relationships between brothers and sisters in our care; not only because this is highlighted as a key priority for change by 'The Promise', but also because research tells us how important it is to protect the sibling relationships of children and young people in our care. Brothers and sisters should not be separated when they come into our care. If it does happen, they are reunited where possible to maintain their shared sense of development and identity.

What did we do?

Glasgow Children's Services formed a working group to think about the creation of a new sibling assessment tool. They created and launched the Family Connections Assessment and Plan in Spring 2022, which shifted the focus of thinking and language away from separation to connection. It is designed to support child-centred, relationship-based practice that helps us to plan effectively for children who are a part of a wider sibling group, whether they live together or not. It helps map out brother, sister and other important relationships that need to be maintained. All sibling information is recorded in the FCAP along with their care arrangements and the views of the young person, and a section then planning how to support these relationships. It allows us to support these relationships alongside the child's care plan, and it encourages conversations and explanations with siblings each step of the way.

The FCAP is a living document, which will grow and develop with the children, and in line with their circumstances. It is designed to meet the expectations of the 2021 National Practice Guidance "Staying Together and Connected: Getting it Right for Sisters and Brothers".

Reviewing Officers are also now allocated to whole sibling groups and to full children's houses, which has improved how we connect brothers and sisters' care planning. Once we have their information, we are also linking siblings' information in our electronic systems, giving improved data quality in this area.

What did we learn?

We learned how to implement the FCAP process through delivering briefing sessions to all children and families practitioners. Some teams were also asked to pilot the FCAP and encouraged to provide feedback from which we could learn. We also worked with CELCIS who conducted evaluation through user group feedback.

We now ensure that the FCAP is central to care planning. It emphasises understanding the importance of sibling connections, which has become a significant part of the recruitment process for our carers and adopters.

What difference did it make?

We have received feedback from children, young people, carers, families and their social workers that there are improved sibling connections. We are helping children and young people have more information about each other and their families. The tool helps us support sibling relationships that may have been overlooked previously (e.g. connections with adult siblings, siblings of unaccompanied children in different countries and, foster siblings from previous placements). Examples of impact include:

- new babies coming into our care receive much better permanence plans and outcomes where they have a large and separated sibling group already in our care;
- children and young people are being made aware of their rights in this area too and are being given explanations about decision making;
- Reviewing Officers are also now allocated to full sibling groups and to full children's houses, improving connected care planning; and
- we consider the issue of family time more closely in all care plans. Where we are not placing children together we will try to do so geographically and ensure connections between carers are taking place. This includes in instances of adoption.

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