

Family and community network meetings

Information for young people,
parents and family members



**achieving
for children**

Achieving for Children believes that the most important way to support children and young people is for them to have meaningful connections with members of their family and community. We use Family and Community Network meetings to work alongside families to make a positive difference to the child's everyday life by agreeing what needs to happen and how support is going to be provided. We look at what parents may need to support relationships with the child and what the child needs for the long term. This way of working supports parents, families and their friends to take more ownership of the concerns and worries, and be part of putting a plan together with professionals to keep children and young people safer.

We believe that every child, young person and parent has a network which can be found if we try.

How does it work when the child is living at home?

- The Achieving for Children worker will set up the family and community network meetings.
- The child, young person and parents (all those with parental responsibility) will be invited at the earliest stage to involve their wider networks to help them put a plan together that will keep the child safer.
- The worker will help the child, young person and parents identify members of their network that could be involved in a family and community network meeting. You will be encouraged to contact those people to see if they would be interested in attending a meeting to help you and your child.
- The first meeting should happen at the earliest point possible, while respecting network members caring or work responsibilities.

- At the first meeting ground rules suggested by the network members will be established. The first meeting will include seeing if anyone from the network has been missed out, discussions why the network is there and the support members can offer to the child, young person and family.
- Family and network and shared with all those attending and professionals involved with the family.
- All family and community network plans must be regularly reviewed to check on progress. How and when this is reviewed can be discussed and agreed by the network members at the meeting.

Frequently asked questions

Why do I need to involve my family and friends?

You, your family and friends know your child best so you are the best people to support them. Research has shown that there are more benefits in working this way.

Secrecy and shame is damaging to families and this is broken by involving family and friends in the network.

Family and friends better understand why a worker is working with you so everyone can work better together to achieve the same thing.

Families can identify what will work to improve the safety and protection of their child, making the plans more effective.

When Achieving for Children is no longer working with you, the plan still works because you and your network are making the decisions and plans.

Can the meetings have an informal approach?

Yes. Timings and venues will be child, young person and family friendly. When a child or young person is attending we will think carefully together so that they are not overwhelmed.

What will be discussed at the meeting?

It is really important that the child, young person and parent agree with the worker what will be discussed at the meeting. It is key that network members are aware of why the meeting is taking place, what the worries are and that space is given for family and friends to consider how they are able to support the parents and help keep the child safer.

What will happen if the family and community network meeting doesn't work out? For example, someone did not attend or the venue wasn't right?

If something isn't working, the network members will agree what they want to do to best support the child or young person, including how they will explore non-attendance and how to capture feedback about the meetings to think about how well it worked.

What if a person is considered to be unsafe by the network but the child wants to see them?

The network members will think about the risks and safety, keeping the child's or young person's welfare at the centre of their decisions