

**ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES
POLICY**

**ROCHDALE FAMILY GROUP MEETINGS
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Data Protection Act 1998, and the RMBC Recording, Handling and Storage Guidelines in Relation to Personal Data.

Recording of information by Family Group Meeting Co-ordinators.

FGM Co-ordinators will keep a copy of the following:

1. Referral information (printed ICS Contact)
2. Names and contact details of extended family members
3. A copy of the Family Plan
4. Date and time of FGM and who was present
5. Details of anyone who was excluded from the meeting by the Co-ordinator and reasons for the exclusion. To be kept for health and safety reasons.
6. Details of any child protection or health and safety issues that emerged during the FGC process.

Families should be informed about what records are being kept about them.

Working notes

Rochdale FGM Service will not keep any notes on file of visits to individual family members, other than the dates and times of visits, **unless the Co-ordinator saw or heard something that would lead them to believe that someone is at risk of significant harm.** Co-ordinators /Advocates must make it clear to family members that confidentiality will be maintained unless they say or do anything that the Coordinator thinks will put themselves or others at risk of significant harm. Any concerns of this nature must be recorded and passed on to the appropriate person. Unless it would place the Co-ordinator at risk to do so it is good practice to tell the family member if you plan to breach confidentiality.

If FGM workers wish to make written notes to use as an aide memoir then these notes should be shredded or given to the family at the end of the FGM.

Co-ordinators do not minute FGMs and therefore the only part of the meeting which is recorded is the Family Plan. The Plan should reflect the style of the family and be in their own words, whilst being in enough detail to be clearly understood by anyone not present at the meeting.

Letters to the meeting

Sometimes family members who are unable to attend the FGM will write a letter to be read out at the meeting. In this instance it is important to discuss with the person who has written the letter their wishes about who the letter is intended for. For example,

- if the letter is read out during the *information sharing* stage then the referrer and any other service providers present will be able to hear it:
- if this is not appropriate then the family will need to identify someone who can read the letter out during private family time.

It is also important to ask the author of the letter what they would like to happen to the letter after the meeting. They may wish to have it returned to them or to be passed on to another family member. If it is addressed to a specific family member then obviously it belongs to them.

Young people's information prepared for the FGM

If a young person has prepared written information for the meeting, including a "wish list", then they should be asked what they would like to happen to this information at the end of the meeting. Many young people would prefer to keep this and others would prefer to have it shredded.

Retention of records

The Data Protection Act states that all individuals, including children, have a general right to access personal data about themselves held in records. Therefore records (as described above) must be retained after case closure. This is also important in the event of a complaint. Record retention must comply with RMBC policies and procedures.

Keeping records at home

Many Co-ordinators will have to keep private information at home if they are working out of hours when offices are closed. In these circumstances Co-ordinators must keep confidential information such as referral forms in a secure, locked location and must comply with the RMBC policies and procedures. Records of individual visits need only to include date of visit/phone call and name/contact details.

Referrer's information

It is important that referrers share with the Co-ordinator and the family the report that they intend to present at the FGM, well in advance of the meeting. This gives the immediate family the opportunity to question or comment on it and also ensures that they know what information will be presented to their wider family at the meeting. It is not necessary for the FGM Co-ordinator to keep a copy of this report since it is the responsibility of the referrer to do this.

Statistics

Statistics will be kept for the purpose of evaluation and analysis. These statistics will be collected when the case is open and then anonymised and kept as long as required.