



# Who's in your network and how can they help you?

A Parent's Guide to Family Networking and Family Network Meetings



## Family Networking

The best support comes from the people who care about us most; our network and the community we live in.

Families have ups and downs. When times are tough asking for help from family and friends is an important way of looking after your children and yourself.

Children really benefit when those that care about them work together.

## What is a network?

The people around you, this could be friends, family, neighbours, anyone who is there to help you out when you need it.

## How can your network help you?

The help your network will offer depends on what you need and what they can do. This could include:

- Offer emotional support to you and / or your family
- Help with practical things such as lifts to appointments or DIY
- Help in an emergency, when something unexpected happens
- Help with a particular thing – such as a neighbour or parent friend who can do the school run

**It's not about where or who your network are, it's about their importance in your life and how they help you.**

## Family Network Meetings

These are an opportunity to get together and have a focussed conversation with the people who care about you and your family, and look at how they can help and support you. This becomes your network support plan, helping everyone remember what they said they would do.

The reasons for holding a meeting will be different for everyone. They could be getting the children to school on time, help with things at home or during a period of ill-health or following surgery.

## What families say

'The network meeting was very helpful for us and the parents. It brought the in-laws side 'up to speed' on the problems and I hope we can now all help in the various ways identified.'

(feedback from Grandparents following a family led network meeting)

## Things to think about before, during and after the meeting



Identify who will run the meeting and help everyone stay on track



Prepare a list of what you need to talk about so you can make a plan of support together



Make sure your children's thoughts and feelings are part of the discussion, they can attend or one of your network can speak with them before and share their views and update them after.



If your child is very young think about what life looks like for them, e.g. 'I think Baby John feels lonely when we leave him in his cot late in the morning.'



Have a Plan B in case Plan A doesn't work out

## Further information

If you have been handed this leaflet by a professional, talk to them about how they could support you with a Network Meeting of your own.

For more information and resources on how to run your own Family Network Meeting visit the Just One Norfolk Website, and search for "**Family Networking**" or scan the QR code to below.



You can also contact the Family Networking Advisory Service by emailing: **FNA@norfolk.gov.uk**

The team are able to offer advice, support and guidance for do-it-yourself family networking.

