

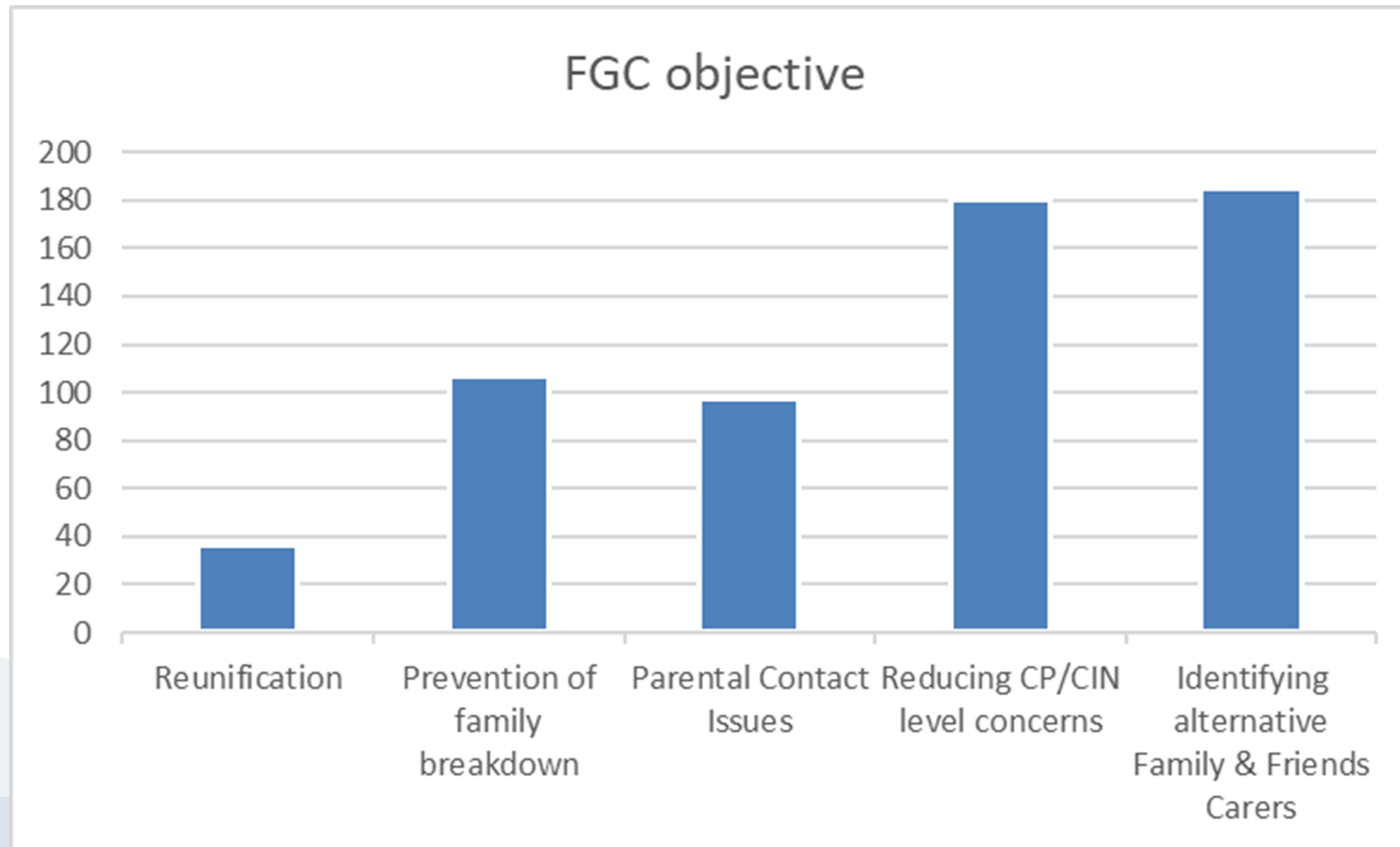
# Cassie Atherton Operations Manager and Lisa Apps Practice Manager

## Family & Friends and FGC Team

# Family Group Conference

- **What is a Family Group Conference?**
- A Family Group Conference (FGC) allows the family to identify and establish a sustainable plan to meet the needs of children and young people within their family unit. This is an opportunity to involve wider family and friends and for them to have a voice in the decisions around the child.
- East Sussex County Council set up the Family Group Conference Service over 20 years ago.
- For the period 2023/2024 185 FGC'S were held.

# FGC Objectives of the 185



# Case Examples

- **Case one**
- **12-year-old child with neurodiverse needs on the edge of care moving between family members and not attending school.**
- **Outcome- The FGC helped the family to come together and plan regular respite and consistent care. Following the FGC the child did return to school and remained in the care of his parents.**
- **Case two**
- **Young mother who has low cognitive levels and undiagnosed learning needs. Father posed a sexual risk to the child. There were concerns that maternal grandparents have not acted protectively with the mother in the past, unclear at FGC whether the mum and baby can return to live with them.**
- **Outcome- The family all came together to discuss and make a contact plan that the social worker could go ahead and risk assess. Risks and concerns were openly discussed with the wider family, with mum and dad present. The social worker was able to meet everyone in person on the day, including wider family and contact details given. Alternative care options in the family are identified for the baby.**

# Case Examples

- **Case three**
- **Mother and stepfather were struggling to care for a child with additional needs, the family were known to Children's Services because they didn't feel able to continue to care for him. They felt they had no support, they didn't like to ask for help, and felt ashamed.**
- **Outcome - 9 family members and the child attended the virtual FGC. Safety planning around keeping his younger sister safe within the family home, who will collect her or him and identified a safe place in the home.**
- **The FGC plan was created for the child to see different family members after school when mum was at work, this was a key area of concern because the family were struggling with this because after school club couldn't meet his level of needs. The plan detailed about who will meet the child from his school bus on which days and how he will be getting home after he's had tea with family.**
- **Family put in place one weekend a month for the children to stay with a family member so the parents could have a break, they hadn't been out without the children for over 2 years.**

# Life Long Links

- FGC is piloting Life Long Links a model from FRG, which supports the concept of relational stability, with the recognition that relationships can continue beyond placements and that foster carers and birth family members can work collaboratively.
- A study from Family Rights Group (FRG): Showed placement stability continues for children and young people in the years following the commencement of Life Long Links. Emotional health and well-being also appeared to improve.

# Life Long Links

- Life Long Links aims to ensure that a child in care has a positive support network around them to help them during their time in care and into adulthood.
- The Life Long Links model includes tools and techniques for Lifelong Links coordinators to use to search for and find family members (known or unknown to the young person) and other adults (such as former foster carers or teachers) who care about the young person.

# Current Data

		1 <sup>st</sup> April – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	1 <sup>st</sup> July – 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2023	1 <sup>st</sup> Oct - 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2023	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	1 <sup>st</sup> April – to now
Number of young people referred to Lifelong Links		5	2	4	2	10
Age of children & young people referred	0-11	1	1			
	12-15	1		1		8
	16+	3	1	3	2	2

	1 <sup>st</sup> April – 30 <sup>th</sup> June	1 <sup>st</sup> July – 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept	1 <sup>st</sup> Oct - 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan – 31 <sup>st</sup> March	1 <sup>st</sup> April - now
Number of young people who have had a Lifelong Links FGC	0	1	2	0	2
Number of young people who have had a Lifelong Links plan agreed without having an FGC	0	0	1	0	0
Number of young people who have completed the Lifelong Links process with their coordinator but without an FGC or plan agreed	0	3	1	1	0
Number of “open referrals” e.g. active Lifelong Links work with young people	8	6	6	5	8
Number of young people who have had a review Lifelong Links FGC	0	0	0	0	0
Number of practice summaries submitted this month via Egress* (*or other secure method)	1	2	4	2	3



# Case examples

- Case one
- Life Long Links was completed for a young person who wanted to find and meet his mother. He has been fostered since a very young age and he is now 17 years. His mother was located, and she had 3 siblings living with her. Reunification was achieved.
- Case two
- **How I felt before starting Lifelong Links:** “Didn’t really feel anything, didn’t think anything would actually happen, I’ve been let down in the past”. “After my first contact with Dad and C, I realised this was going to happen and I was going to be a part of my dad’s family”.
- **How I felt when I finished Lifelong Links:** “Achieved what we needed to, not worried about moving forward, happy I took part.”
- **What I like most about Lifelong Links:** “Really worked making connections with my family. Met family members from mum and dad’s family”.

# Life Long Links

- Life Long Links fits with our aspiration that all East Sussex care leavers will have at least two people who they feel love and are there for them, outside the professional network.
- This is how we plan to achieve this:
- Social workers must speak to young people at fifteen and, with their consent, make a Life Long Links referral. (Referral on the system)
- A question will be added to the Family and Friends section of the Pathway Plan asking if young people have received support from this service.
- PM's and OM's will be checking that referrals have been made. IRO's and the Life Long Links managers will also receive notification each month of young people turning 15 in order to monitor that discussions are taking place and referrals made.

# Life Long Links

**Sadie's Story**  
**Paper airplanes and Nana**

<https://youtu.be/gcnZZpPkiYs>