Supporting Families Affected by Substance Misuse

Quality Standards and Group Guidelines

National Family Support Network

SUPPORTING FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING WITH SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Acknowledgements

Contents

We are proud to have developed a Quality Standards Framework which, will ensure that family members all over Ireland will receive high quality, best practice and consistent support from our affiliated groups and members.

Dear Reader,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for reading this resource which is designed to enhance the work of family support groups and to increase positive outcomes for families. This is an especially exciting moment in the National Family Support Network's history and we are proud to have developed a Quality Standards Framework which, will ensure that family members all over Ireland will receive high quality, best practice and consistent support from our affiliated groups and members. The Quality Standards Framework is also a mechanism which we hope will provide confidence, increased knowledge and skills to the facilitators of family support groups, who are the lifeblood of our organisation.

As soon as we began the journey of developing a Quality Standards Framework for family support in 2015, we were very conscious of ensuring that we did not create a bureaucratic, top-heavy or divisive model that would alienate family support workers and groups and impact negatively on family members. We have always wanted to ensure that all of the stakeholders involved understand that a quality standards framework is about providing the best possible support to family members, this is about real people's lives, not paperwork.

All groups currently affiliated to the Nation Family Support Network (NFSN) agree to adhere to the NFSN good practice guidelines for peer-led family support groups but there lacked a formal structure or process to ensure that this is the case. The lack of standardisation amongst groups has historically led to questions in relation to the quality of family support on offer within some of these groups and at times this has had detrimental effects in terms of low referrals to groups from service providers or a reluctance to fund groups by funders. The organic nature in which these groups have developed, the lack of addiction specific family support training available and the inability of the sector to outline the competencies required for family support work has meant the family support is often viewed as unprofessional by fellow

workers or volunteers within the addiction field. For these reasons the National Family Support Network began to ask the question if there was a need for quality standards for addiction specific family support groups to be developed.

Central to our vision as a representative organisation, a partnership approach has informed the development of the framework from the very beginning. In 2015 we brought together over 80 family support group facilitators/co-facilitators together for a one-day seminar on the topic of quality standards. The discussion, feedback and input gathered focussed on the issues of confidentiality, training, empowerment, support and structure among many others and this information was invaluable in designing the framework with the final principles reflecting this.

A 'Vision' steering group comprised of twelve family support workers was subsequently created and this group met ten times over two years and were instrumental in designing the framework and making it meaningful. We were delighted also to work with our colleagues in Quality Matters who have helped us to develop this framework and its review process into an accessible, user-friendly, family centred package.

The effectiveness and sustainability of the family support groups who affiliate to our network is the core element of our work. We are confident that this framework will allow facilitators to gain confidence in their work and feel supported by NFSN throughout the process. We look forward to working with all new and existing support groups with the Quality Standards Framework and continuing to provide high quality supports to family members affected by substance misuse all over Ireland.

Sadie Grace
CEO

1 Introduction to the NFSN and this resource

1.1 NFSN mission statement and objectives

The National Family Support Network (NFSN) is an autonomous self-help organisation that respects the lived experiences of families affected by substance misuse in a welcoming non-judgemental atmosphere. It endeavours to provide accurate information and personalised services to meet the unique needs of each family.

The principal objectives of the National Family Support Network are to:

- Raise awareness of family support work and its role within the community
- Highlight the importance and value of work done by family support groups
- Provide information to families and communities on existing services and supports
- Highlight the extent of problem substance misuse and its effects on families and communities
- Campaign for better services for people who use drugs and their families

- Support the involvement of the people most affected by the problem in the development and running of services and to ensure that adequate supports are put in place to enable this to happen
- Remember and commemorate those who have died as a result of substance misuse
- Offer support to each other as members of the Network
- Represent the needs of family members on National Policy Structures

1.2 What is family support

In Ireland, the term 'family support' generally has a very broad meaning. The National Family Support Network is concerned with a particular type of family support: **any service or activity designed to help individuals, of any age, to cope with problems and stresses which they face as a result of substance misuse by members of their families.** NFSN supports both peer-led and externally facilitated family support groups, alongside supporting trained practitioners to provide one-on-one supports to families.

In a family support group, individuals who are dealing with an issue common to their different families come together to help each other both by talking about their own situation and by listening to the stories of others. In this way people gain strength, comfort, support and a sense of belonging from each other. For members of groups affiliated to the National Family Support Network, the common issue is substance misuse by other family members.

In a 'peer-led' group, the members themselves lead and facilitate the process, and they share power and responsibility.

'Externally facilitated' groups are family support groups that are facilitated by an outside or 'non-peer' member. These groups are facilitated by a person who is not a family member seeking support, and they are often based in a project or service.

Ownership, involvement, and active engagement by all members are encouraged in both types of group.

1.3 Purpose of this start-up and support pack

The National Family Support Network has developed this start-up and support pack to provide guidance and assistance for existing support groups that are open to new members, as well as to provide support and direction for individuals interested in establishing a new support group in their community.

These guidelines were developed in line with commonly accepted "good practice" for family support groups, meaning that they have been informed by what research and experienced professionals in the field have found to be the best way to do things. The development of the package was also significantly assisted by a central 'Vision' group, made up of family support volunteers and workers who provided their invaluable expertise during the process.

This document outlines each step of the process in developing a support group in part one, provides an overview of the NFSN quality standards in part two, outlines the review process to assess local family support groups' alignment with the NFSN quality standards in part three, and includes relevant tools and templates that can be used throughout the process in part four.

2

How to set up & run a family support group

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report outlines in clear and simple steps how to establish and run a family support group. It outlines the key standards, and steps involved in each step in the process. The guidance here is complemented by tools and templates in part four which will give you guidance on practical steps to achieve the standard. The most relevant resources from part four are highlighted at the end of each step.

2.2 Working out if a local family support group is needed and engaging with NFSN

2.2.1 Overview

Whether you are a family member looking to set up a peer-led family support group or an external worker/volunteer, there are some key steps you can take before you begin the process. First, identify if there is an existing family support group in your community that is open to new members. If no existing group is available, find out if there are community members seeking support who would benefit from the development of a new group. If you

are based in a project or service that works with people who use drugs take steps to see what supports are currently in place for affected family members.

2.2.2 Steps involved for new groups

To determine if a new local family support group (FSG) is needed follow these steps:

Identify whether there is already an existing family support group in your community that is open to new members by reaching out to the NFSN, other community organisations, the local drugs and alcohol task force, and/or the local county council.

A If there is not an existing group that is open to new members, reach out to friends, family and the wider community to identify if there are other people who would like to help facilitate or attend a local support group and invite them to be co-founding members of a new group.

B If you are an external worker or volunteer based in a project or service that works with people who use drugs find out if there are any local supports for families and what the needs of affected families are in your area.

A Once you have determined that there is a need for a local support group and have formed a core team of founding members, use this start-up and support pack to guide you in starting a new group.

A Engage the National Family Support Network to ensure that you are creating your group in alignment with the NFSN Quality Standards.

2.2.3 Steps involved for existing groups

If you already have an existing local support group:

Reach out to NFSN to ensure that your current group is part of the NFSN, is in alignment with the NFSN Quality Standards, and is included in their directory of existing groups.

2.2.4 Standards related to this area

There are no specific standards that focus on the initial forming of a new group, however, all of the standards are relevant to getting a new group off of the ground and maintaining alignment with good practices.

2.2.5 FAQ

Q1: Is there a minimum number of members that a new family support group should have?

A1: The NFSN does not require a minimum number of members in order to be in alignment with the quality standards. However, it is recommended to have at least 3 or 4 members when starting out, in order to spread out the workload of starting and managing a group and to have more people to learn from and offer support.

2.2.6 Relevant supporting resources

This Start-up and Support Pack as a whole can be used at this stage to guide and support you in planning and developing your new group.

2.3 Providing a safe and confidential space for meetings

2.3.1 Overview

It is essential to have an appropriate, convenient, and accessible physical space in the community to host regular in-person meetings. The atmosphere of meetings must promote feelings of comfort, safety, and confidentiality.

2.3.2 Steps involved for new groups

To identify a space available in the community to host your group meetings:

A Contact the local county council, the local drug and alcohol task force, and other charity and community organisations that may be able to share or rent out some of their space.

B Compare potential venues based on the following criteria:

- Are there any costs associated with using the space e.g. for room hire or insurance cover?
- What are the processes for booking, opening, and closing the meeting space?
- Does the space offer easy access for members with physical disabilities?
- Is the location easily accessible by public transportation?
- Does the venue provide adequate privacy?
- Does the space promote feelings of comfort and safety?

C As a group, select the venue and set-up an agreement for using the space with the organisation or person who owns the venue.

D If there is a cost associated with using the selected venue, plan for how these funds will be raised.

2.3.3 Steps for existing groups

Existing groups may need to periodically find new venues for their meetings:

A At least once per year, set aside time at a full group meeting to review and discuss the following potential reasons for changing the location or routines of the meetings:

▶ Has the group size increased and out grown the space?

▶ Will the space remain available to the group for the next year or are there any potential changes taking place within the host organisation or business that may impact the availability of the current space?

▶ Have there been any challenges in accessing and using the space throughout the year?

B When a new venue is needed, follow the steps and information provided above for new groups.

2.3.4 Standards related to this area

There are no specific standards related to physical meeting space.

2.3.5 FAQ

Q1: Is it OK to hold a family support group meeting in free public space such as the lobby of a hotel or in a popular coffee shop?

A1: No. While it can be appealing to go for a free option, what is more important is privacy and being able to speak openly without being overheard.

2.3.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process: Resource K: NFSN Fundraising Policy

2.4 Creating a group contract

Overview

Each family support group must have a group contract that outlines a set of principles and values that the group will adhere to. The group contract should also include a statement of purpose, that is based on the values, unique needs, and interests of the members. The contract sets out the purpose and practices of the group and guides how members interact and make decisions.

2.4.1 Steps involved for new groups

A In the first or second meeting, discuss as a group what you want to achieve and the reasons that you are forming a new local support group. Reflect on and discuss the following questions to inform your statement of purpose:

▶ Who will your group be for? Will it be open to all members of the family or target specific members, such as mothers or fathers only?

▶ What do you believe is the purpose of your support group (e.g. to listen, share experiences, to provide information, support, campaign for change)?

▶ How will you work to meet the needs of members? What types of topics, activities, speakers, etc. might you incorporate into your meetings?

B Agree to a set of values that will shape the ethos of your group. Values are attributes that you will agree to uphold within your group, e.g. confidentiality, trust, and respect. Each group contract must at least include how the group will do the following:

▶ Uphold confidentiality,

▶ Respond to disclosure and child protection issues,

▶ Demonstrate a commitment to equality.

C In addition to values, the group contract should outline the supports offered by the group as well as agreed upon boundaries of the group support.

D Share the group contract with new members and refer back to it when making decisions about your group. It is a good idea to review the group contract and purpose statement at the beginning of each meeting.

E Hold at least one meeting per year to critically review the group contract as a group and make any necessary revisions as the group grows and evolves. It is even better to do this quarterly if possible.

2.4.2 Steps for existing groups

A Ensure that all members are aware of and have agreed to the group contract.

B Critically review the group contract and purpose statement as a group at least once a year to make necessary revisions as the group grows and evolves.

2.4.3 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

● Standard 1.1: Group members are inducted and have a clear understanding of the supports provided by the group and group boundaries.

● Standard 1.2: The group contract is written by members, reviewed every year, and continues to inform the way the group operates.

● Standard 3.1: Family support groups adhere to the NFSN Equality Policy and outline their commitment to equality in the group contract and implement this in practice.

2.4.4 FAQ

Q1: Is the group contract a legally binding document that each member must sign?

A1: No. The group contract is another name for a code of ethics and is similar to a vision or mission statement. While it is not legally binding, each member does have a moral obligation to uphold the values agreed upon by the group and work towards achieving the agreed-upon purpose. While the group contract does not need to be signed and submitted, it is a good idea to provide each member with a written copy.

Q2: Should the group contract be revised and edited each time a new person joins the group?

A2: No. The group contract should be explained to every new member before or at their first group meeting, and they should be asked to agree to abide by it. This can be done in conversation with the facilitator or another representative of the group, or it can be done with the whole group. In addition, and separate from that, the group contract should be reviewed by the group as a whole at least once a year for discussion and updating.

2.4.5 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

Resource B. Group contract development guide

2.5 Divide up roles and responsibilities among the group

2.5.1 Overview

Peer-led support groups provide all members with the opportunity to take on various roles and tasks associated with managing and operating the group. For a group of people to work together effectively, it is important that the workload is shared amongst the members. Not everyone will

be able to help out initially, but as members become more comfortable with the group and more familiar with the group's process and routines, responsibility for running the group should be shared. What the roles and responsibilities are and how they will be filled is determined by each group.

If the group has a paid facilitator and/or is supported by a project or service it may be more appropriate for the roles and responsibilities to be held by staff members but this should be discussed by the group and if members would like to take on certain tasks and roles within the group this should be strongly considered as it is important for all group members to feel engaged and valued in the group. All family support groups should operate from a peer participation and leadership approach.

2.5.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Decide, as a group, what responsibilities will be spread across the general group members that may or may not be associated with a specific role or title. Examples of common responsibilities to assign include:

▶ Who reserves, opens, and closes the place where you meet?

▶ Who greets new members and makes them welcome?

▶ Who is the initial contact person for new members?

B Decide, as a group, what formal roles, if any, will exist in the group. Examples of common roles include:

▶ NFSN liaison – The NFSN liaison is responsible for communicating and coordinating with NFSN about key issues such as group alignment with the quality standards, requests for advocacy support, or help managing challenges experienced by the group.

▶ Facilitator - The facilitator is responsible for running meetings and guiding the group.

▶ Treasurer – The treasurer manages funds and financial documents such as budgets for the group.

C Decide how these roles and responsibilities will be assigned and how often they will be reassigned. For example, will each role and responsibility be filled by anyone who volunteers, or will there be a nomination and voting process?

D Assign each role and responsibility to a wide variety of group members in alignment with the quality standards. Review the relevant quality standards and supporting resources listed below to guide this process.

2.5.3 Steps for existing groups

Hold an annual meeting to review, discuss, and reassign the various roles and responsibilities within your group. Review the relevant quality standards and supporting resources listed below to guide this process.

2.5.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

Standard 1.3: Group members are encouraged to take on specific roles and responsibilities for the benefit of the group. These roles will be assigned and reviewed annually.

2.5.5 FAQ

Q1: Is the person or group of people who initially founded the group automatically given a leadership position in the group?

A1: When a new group is initially forming it may be very small and therefore, out of necessity, require the founders to take on many or all of the roles and responsibilities required to run a group. However, as the group grows, responsibility should begin

to spread out among new group members.

Q2: Should any of the roles have term limits?

A2: While there is no set length of time that a person may hold a role or position within the group, all roles and responsibilities should be reviewed at least once a year and members should be given the opportunity to take on a new role previously held by another member.

2.5.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process: Resource C: Common group roles and responsibilities

2.6   Ensuring accessibility

2.6.1 Overview

The support group cannot fully meet the needs of its community if people seeking support are not able to fully access and participate in meetings due to factors such as racism, intimidation, the general lack of a welcoming atmosphere, or lack of wheelchair access. Accessing the space and engaging with the group should not be inconvenient or uncomfortable. The following steps should be taken to ensure that your support group is accessible.

2.6.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Whenever possible, select a venue that has wheelchair access and that can be reached by public transportation.

B Select meeting times and days that are convenient to a wide group of people.

C Reach out to organisations that work with minority populations when recruiting new members. See resource J: National organisations Working with minority groups in part four.

D Ensure that meetings provide a welcoming and respectful atmosphere for everyone. See Resource B: Group contract development guide.

E Work in alignment with resource F: NFSN Equality Policy at all times.

2.6.3 Steps for existing groups

A Reflect on how accessible your group is and review resource F: NFSN Equality Policy and decide if your group needs to make any changes.

B Follow the guidelines listed above for new groups to enhance the accessibility of your group and reach out to NFSN for support if needed.

2.6.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

● Standard 1.1: Group members are inducted and have a clear understanding of the supports provided by the group and group boundaries

● Standard 1.3: Group members are encouraged to take on specific roles and responsibilities for the benefit of the group. These roles will be assigned and reviewed annually.

● Standard 1.4: There is an agreed process for following with people who have stopped attending the group

● Standard 1.5: Groups will promote sustainability and accessibility by actively engaging new members

● Standard 3.1: Family support groups adhere to the NFSN Equality Policy and outline their commitment to equality in the group agreement and implement this in practice.

● Standard 3.2: The group proactively includes minority organisations/communities in its promotion strategy

2.6.5 FAQ

Q1: Is it possible to target and serve a specific population such as only parents of people who use drugs and be accessible at the same time?

A1: Yes, it is possible to target a specific group of support seekers such as parents of people who use drugs spouses or significant others of those affected by addiction while still ensuring accessibility by being available and welcoming to all members of the community who fall into the target population that you aim to serve. The key is not to discriminate against members or potential members based on factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, ability, or income level and to operate in alignment with the NFSN Equality Policy at all times.

2.6.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resources found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

- Resource F: NFSN Equality Policy
- Resource J: National organisations working with minority groups

2.7 Creating awareness of your group

2.7.1 Overview

In order to attract new members and become a resource for your community, you will need to regularly raise awareness of the existence and purpose of your group within the community. This can be done through a variety of strategies, such as creating and posting promotional materials and reaching out other local community organisations.

2.7.2 Steps involved for new groups

The following strategies should be implemented to raise awareness of the group and attract new members:

A Decide as a group how and when you will engage in advertising the group in order to raise awareness in the community and recruit new members. As part of this process, discuss which information will be shared publicly, and how confidentiality and privacy will still be maintained during this process.

B Provide up-to-date contact information for your local support group to NFSN to be included on their website.

C Brief key stakeholders, local community workers, and local services such as GPs, addiction services, or family resource centres in your community about your group. Inform them of the group's mission and purpose and ask them to spread the word. Be sure to reach out to stakeholders and organisations that work with minority groups and community members who may experience challenges to accessing support.

D Create and share posters, flyers, or one-page handouts that describe your group and include contact information for a member who has agreed to take on the responsibility of talking with potential new members.

E Place advertisements in local press, community newsletters, and/or radio.

F Host information days and provide leaflets to increase awareness of your group. Emphasise who the group is for and what the benefits of joining are.

2.7.3 Steps for existing groups

A Review the process you use for advertising your group and revise it as needed.

B Make sure that the contact details for your group are up-to-date and on the NFSN website.

C Try to engage in at least one awareness-raising campaign each year in order to recruit new members and inform the community of your presence, NFSN can help with this

2.7.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

- Standard 1.5: Groups will promote sustainability and accessibility by actively engaging new members
- Standard 3.2: The group proactively includes minority organisations/communities in its promotion strategy

2.7.5 FAQ

Q1: Should the exact location, time, and date of meetings be shared on promotional posters and flyers or is that a confidentiality concern?

A1: It is entirely up to each individual family support group to decide how much and what type of information they are comfortable including on promotional materials. If group members feel that including such specific details on promotional materials threatens their privacy, confidentiality, or safety, an alternative option is to only provide contact details for one member of the group who will perform a screening process determined by the group prior to sharing meeting details.

2.7.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resources found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

- Resource E: Template for advertising group
- Resource J: National organisations working with minority groups

2.8 Welcoming new members

2.8.1 Overview

In order to ensure that all newcomers feel welcome and prepared to be active members of the group, it is important to have a process for meeting and orientating new members. This process should be followed each time a new person joins the group.

2.8.2 Steps involved for new groups

Decide as a group what the process for welcoming new members looks like and which members are responsible for each stage in the process. Write this down and refer back to it every time a new person joins the group. The basic steps in welcoming a new member include:

A At least one member of the group should have an introductory phone call or meeting with the potential new member to explain the purpose, services, values, and expectations of the group and answer any questions they might have. If the person wishes to join the regular full group meetings, provide the date, time, and location of the meeting.

B Greet, welcome, and introduce any new members at the beginning of their first meeting.

C Explain and share the relevant documentation including current versions of:

a Resource A: Induction information sheet

b Resource D: Consent to contact form

c Resource B: Group contract

D Share the various roles and responsibilities within the group and explain the process and timing of assigning these among the group.

E Follow-up with new members after each of the first three or four meetings that they attend to ask about their experience and if they are finding anything about the meetings difficult. Such contact should then be

continued on a monthly basis until the new member expresses satisfaction that she/he is comfortable in the group.

2.8.3 Steps for existing groups

A Reflect on whether or not your group is consistently inducting each new member in the same way and whether or not you are providing all of the necessary information and materials. Decide if the induction process needs to be revised and re-written down.

B Follow the guidelines listed above for new groups to revise your process for welcoming a new member as needed.

2.8.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

- Standard 1.1: Group members are inducted and have a clear understanding of the supports provided by the group and group boundaries.
- Standard 1.5: Groups will promote sustainability and accessibility by actively engaging new members

2.8.5 FAQ

Q1: How long should a person be a member before being offered a role or responsibility within the group?

A: There is no set amount of time that is "right" for every group. It is more important that the new member has built rapport with other members and demonstrated their commitment to the group than it is to have attended a minimum number of meetings.

2.8.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resources found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

- Resource A. Template for induction information sheet

- Resource D. Consent to contact form

2.9 Receiving outside training and support

2.9.1 Overview

Self-care and self-development are key components of family support services to help members develop the skills that they need to be feel empowered, be resilient, and cope with their life challenges. In addition to supporting and learning from each other, it is also important to seek support, training, and information from outside organisations with relevant areas of expertise. Access to good quality, up-to-date, and locally relevant information and services can be an enormous relief and support to family members.

2.9.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Discuss as a group what information, skills, or experiences members would like to gain and create a prioritize list based on which are most urgent and most common.

B Research what organisations and programmes are available related to the topics identified in step one and then discuss as a group what types of services, trainings, or events would be beneficial to members. Contact NFSN for support and to find out what trainings NFSN can provide to the group, or research what other training options exist.

C Identify if there are any costs associated with the selected programmes and brainstorm as a group how these costs will be covered. See the FAQ related to fundraising below for extra guidance.

D Engage in the training, service, activity, or event selected.

E Debrief as a group to reflect on the following questions and then save the

information for future planning in this area:

- ▶ What did members like/enjoy about the training or information session?
- ▶ What would members wish for more of?
- ▶ What would members wish for less of?
- ▶ How did the information or training affect the group?
- ▶ Was their positive change and development for members as a result?
- ▶ What was the value of the information or training to the members of your group?

2.9.3 Steps for existing groups

For the most part, the steps for existing groups are the same as those for new groups listed above except that existing groups may have additional resources to draw from in this area such as, already having some funds raised and set aside for outside training and support or existing notes from past trainings events that can guide what topics and programming were the most helpful.

2.9.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

- Standard 1.6: Information on drug, alcohol, and family issues is accurate, relevant, and up-to-date. Information is from reputable sources, e.g. HSE, NFSN, Drugs.ie.
- Standard 4.3 All members are offered the opportunity to attend NFSN events and training, no matter how long they have been members.
- There are also many standards specifically for trainings require for group facilitators. Those are covered in the "Managing and Facilitation Meetings" section.

2.9.5 FAQ

Q1: Where should we start?

A1: Based on a survey of family support groups conducted as part of the development of past NFSN guidelines the top three information and self-development needs of family support group are often drug awareness, stress management/coping skills and suicide awareness and prevention. Other frequently cited information needs for members of family support groups include: alcohol awareness, accessing services such as counselling and detoxification facilities, social welfare benefits and entitlements, and health information and education specifically linked to drug use, e.g. Hepatitis C.

That being said, it is important to meet the needs of your specific group and members, so it is a good idea to brainstorm as a group what topic areas or skills members would benefit from the most and then work to prioritize the list.

Q2: How can we access trainings and services that cost money?

A2: Family support groups may benefit from funding from different sources and this varies from area to area. Examples of potential sources of funding include:

- Dormant Accounts/Pobal
- Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces
- Tusla (The Child and Family Agency)
- HSE
- Local Government
- Philanthropic Funds
- Fund raising
- Saving small amounts week by week from member contributions

Note that if your group decides to fundraise locally you will need to apply to the Gardai for permission to do so. Also, review the NFSN fundraising policy in part four.

2.9.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resources found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

- Resource H: Resources for information and services for drugs, alcohol, and family Support
- Resource K: Fundraising policy/guidelines for raising money in groups

2.10 Managing and facilitating meetings

2.10.1 Overview

Effective facilitation is central to good practice in family support groups. The role of the facilitator(s) is to and guide the group to achieve its purpose and to ensure that the group abide by their values and principles. It is about honoring the members and managing the group process in response to the needs of members.

2.10.2 Steps involved for new groups

A If your support group is peer-led, decide as a group which member(s) will be the facilitator(s).

B Whether your group is peer-led or supported by a service, it is important to ensure that all facilitators get training from NFSN as soon as possible after affiliating to the network.

C Facilitators should also attend one additional national training or event with NFSN annually. Training in 5 step or another therapeutic model (e.g. Functional Family Therapy, trained counsellors) is essential for any staff or volunteer facilitators providing 1-2-1 support sessions.

D Decide if your group will offer one-to-one support or group sessions only. If your group will offer one-to-one sessions, proper training is required, alongside access to clinical supervision, adherence to data protection and recording systems and a safe and confidential space to hold the sessions.

E Set clear boundaries for facilitation. Be careful to not allow the process of facilitation cross over into counselling, giving direction or instruction, taking control, and growing into friendship.

F The facilitator and/or relevant members who have agreed to assist in managing meetings should engage in the following management tasks at each meeting:

- ▶ Arrive at least fifteen minutes ahead of members to prepare the room and welcome members as they arrive, e.g. with a personal greeting.
- ▶ Open the meeting and outline any particular agenda items or prior commitments.
- ▶ Ensure attention is drawn to the group's values and principles, in particular confidentiality.
- ▶ Facilitate the discussion and encourage participation from all group members in the discussion.
- ▶ Allow space to discuss any challenges or difficulties that members bring up and for responding to stories and emotions as they arise.
- ▶ Facilitate the identification of any additional support needs of members, e.g. referral to counselling, one to one support, etc.
- ▶ Manage any conflicts or disruptive behaviour within the group.
- ▶ Inspire reflection and create a space for silence and peace.
- ▶ Draw the meeting to a close with warmth and hope.
- ▶ Perform administrative task, if relevant, e.g. announcing timing of next meeting, announcing any guest coming, respite, etc.

2.10.3 Steps for existing groups

A Ensure that all of your group facilitators have received the appropriate trainings and are in alignment with the NFSN quality standards, particularly if you are offering one- to-one support.

B Review the information above and reflect on current facilitation and management practices and ensure that clear boundaries have been set and are being enforced and that duties are being carried our effectively.

C Check in with current facilitators and group members to identify if anyone would like to relinquish or take on facilitation duties and ensure that new facilitators receive proper training from NFSN.

2.10.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

- Standard 2.1: Any staff or volunteer facilitators providing 1-2-1 support sessions need to be trained in 5 step or another therapeutic model (e.g. Functional Family Therapy, trained counsellors) alongside access to clinical supervision, adherence to data protection and recording systems and a safe and confidential space to hold the sessions.
- Standard 4.1: Facilitators complete NFSN FSG facilitation training, or equivalent, as soon as it is available after starting a group or, for groups that are already running, prior to being affiliated with the quality standards.
- Standard 4.2: Facilitators attend at least one national training or event with NFSN annually
- Standard 4.3: All members are offered the opportunity to attend NFSN events and training, no matter how long they have been members.

- Standard 6.2: Family support facilitators will complete training on hidden harm as part of NFSN facilitator training

2.10.5 FAQ

Q1: What makes a good facilitator?

A1: Some attributes of a good facilitator include:

- Demonstrates commitment to the values and principles of peer participation and leadership in family support
- Practices self-care and self-development and has a positive and hopeful attitude
- Is self-aware and confident
- Has organisational skills such as planning and preparation
- Is a good active listener
- Is able to successfully:
  - ▶ Open up a group at the beginning of a meeting and seal up a group sensitively and safely at the end
  - ▶ Read and manage the energy of a group
  - ▶ Manage challenges as they arise within the group particularly traumatic or conflict situations
  - ▶ Balance the time and attention given to members
  - ▶ Provide relevant and helpful referrals to supplementary professional support

Q2: How long should each meeting last?

A1: Most groups meet once a week for around 2 hours. Ideally, everyone is given the opportunity to tell their story. However, if someone is in particular pain or crisis, they are given as much time as they need.

2.10.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in

section four to support you at this stage in the process: Resource I. Facilitator's training

2.11 Providing accurate information and relevant referrals

2.11.1 Overview

It is essential that all information provided to members of the support group is accurate and that when members have needs that cannot be met by the support group alone, appropriate outside referrals are made. This can be achieved by using the information, processes, resources, and contacts identified throughout this support pack including part four.

2.11.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Review this support pack in its entirety with particular attention to the resources shared in part four.

B Ensure that all facilitators receive training from NFSN or elsewhere and that as many members as possible attend NFSN events.

C Use the Resource H: Information and Services for Drugs, Alcohol, and Family Support from part four for sources of information and when looking for appropriate agencies for referrals.

2.11.3 Steps for existing groups

The steps for existing groups are the same as those shared above for new groups.

2.11.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

- Standard 1.6: Information on drug, alcohol and family issues is accurate, relevant and up to date. Information is from reputable sources, ie.g. HSE, NFSN, Drugs.ie
- Standard 2.3: The boundaries to 1-2-1 family supports are clearly

explained and referrals onwards are made for any needs that the intervention cannot address.

- Standard 6.1: Family members participating in family support will have access to information and support regarding kinship carer rights, child protection and hidden harm in a non-judgmental and supportive environment

2.11.5 FAQ

Q1: What do we do if a group member is sharing false information or bad advice in group?

A1: It is important to make sure that every member has accurate information and sound advice at all times while also being respectful of every member and their experiences. If a group member is sharing information or advice that is not accurate with the group, the facilitator should intervene and address the issue. If you are unsure of what to say, perhaps try something along the lines of "Thank you for sharing that experience and information with us. While that may be something that worked for you at the time or was told to you by a professional at the time, recent research says XYZ. Perhaps this is a topic we should research more as a group as it is important to make sure we are aware of current research and best practices."

2.11.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resources found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

- Resource H: Information and services for drugs, alcohol, and family support
- Resource I: Facilitator's training
- Resource J: National organisations working with minority groups
- Resource M: NFSN Child protection policy for affiliated support groups

2.12 Fundraising and budgeting

2.12.1 Overview

Family support groups will need funds for various activities such as trainings, venue fees, or meeting refreshments. These funds can be collected through a variety of means such as fundraising events, grants, or member donations and must be documented and managed appropriately and transparently. NFSN can help to support you with fundraising and can talk you through the process.

2.12.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Review the NFSN fundraising policy is part four of the support pack. It is essential that local family support group fundraising activities follow or at minimum do not contradict, the NFSN policy.

B Identify who is in charge of finances in your group. Usually, this is the treasurer.

C Identify where and how any funds raised with be stored and accessed. This may be a lock box or a group specific bank account.

D Create a budget document that tracks all transaction of money collected and spent by the family support group and share this document regularly with the group.

E If you plan to raise funds through local collections, get a licence to do so from the local gardai.

F If you receive funds from an organization, follow all rules and reporting requirements for the funder.

2.12.3 Steps for existing groups

The steps for existing groups are the same as those shared above for new groups

2.12.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standards are relevant to this topic area:

- Standard 5.1: If a group attains finance from a Task Force, philanthropist or other state fund they need to manage this in line with the requirements of this funding source.
- Standard 5.2: Family support groups adhere to the NFSN fundraising policy

2.12.5 FAQ

Q1: What are examples of ways our group can raise money?

A1: There are a number of ways of fund raising for your family support group and all require some investment of time and energy. These include fund raising from the members of the group/network, applying to a statutory body such as the local drugs task force or the HSE for a grant, or carrying out local fund-raising events or street collections. You might seek private donations from individuals or philanthropic organisations.

2.12.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process: Resource K. NFSN Fundraising policy

2.13 Responding to members exiting the group

2.13.1 Overview

It is important that groups think about and plan for members exiting their group. There may be a number of different reasons that prompt a member to exit a group, so it is important to find out why they left and to convey to them that it is okay to return at any time.

Members may someday feel that they are ready to move on and effectively exit their group and leave the group for a positive reason. This is a cause for celebration within the group for that member. Even though there

will be a touch of loss attached to this process it is an important and symbolic goal for groups to aspire to. There may also be examples of members leaving for other reasons that warrant reflection, consideration and sometimes action on the part of the group and indeed the member.

Irrespective of the reasons why a member might leave a group, it is important to 'seal the group back up' after the person has gone. After a member leaves the group must allow some space and time to reflect on the process of change, what it means for them as a group and if it evokes any response or inspires any particular conversations within the group. There will naturally be a period of time to adjust to any shift in dynamic within the group.

2.13.2 Steps involved for new groups

A In one of the first few meetings, discuss as a group how you plan to follow-up with members who decide to leave the group. Include information like:

▶ Who will contact the person who left and how many times will they reach out?

▶ What exit questions will you ask the person, and will they be asked over the phone or via survey?

▶ If the person has left on a positive note, will you celebrate as a group and if so, what might that look like?

▶ If the person left on a negative note, what will the process for reflection and response look like?

▶ What process and activities will the group engage in to 'seal back up'?

B Write this process down to refer back to later when a member leaves the group.

C Revisit the process after each exit to ensure it is working as intended or if changes need to be made.

2.13.3 Steps for existing groups

A If you have a current process for following up with people who have stopped attending group, make sure that it is written down and take time to review it as a group and reflect on who well it is working.

B If you do not have an existing process or if you feel that the current process could be improved, review the information above.

2.13.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standard is relevant to this topic area:

Standard 1.4: There is an agreed process for following up with people who have stopped attending group

2.13.5 FAQ

Q1: Once a member has left can they still attend the group from time to time?

A1: Whether or not past members are welcome to occasional drop by support group meetings is up to each group. Relapse of the person who uses drugs that the support group member cares for can trigger the need for family support once more and members should feel that the group continues to be open and welcoming to them if they return full time. Allowing previous members to attend occasionally helps to keep this door open to them. However, some members may worry that it will challenge the atmosphere or dynamic of regular sessions.

2.13.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process:

Resource D: Consent to contact form

2.14 Managing serious issues

2.14.1 Overview

It is important to know there may be times when a member shares something that evokes a sense of responsibility within the group, i.e. an imperative to report to the authorities or draw on external advice. Examples include murder, child abuse, rape and self-harm. Groups should discuss and prepare in advance for how they are going to manage such disclosures if they arise within the group.

2.14.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Discuss and write down how the group will manage issues of disclosure when developing the group contract

B In an instance where a disclosure has occurred during group support the facilitator should pause the proceedings to inform the group that it is appropriate to reference the disclosure procedures out lined in the group contract before proceeding in the discussion so that the speaker and group members can be mindful of their next steps.

C Follow the procedures outlined in the group contract and if necessary, reach out to the TUSLA liaison and the NFSN liaison.

2.14.3 Steps for existing groups

The steps for existing groups are the same as those shared above for new groups.

2.14.4 Standards related to this area

● Standard 6.1: Family members participating in family support will have access to information and support regarding kinship carer rights, child protection and hidden harm in a non-judgmental and supportive environment

● Standard 6.3: Family support groups will use consistent child protection reporting structures

● Standard 6.4: NFSN designated child protection officer will liaise with family support coordinators and Tusla when required as per Children's First.

2.14.5 FAQ

Q1: What happens if I am at my family support group and someone in the group talks about a situation involving a child or young person that makes me think that they might be at risk of harm?

A1: First, it is important to plan ahead for any potential such disclosures and include this issue in the group contract. That way, everyone in the group understands that if an issue relating to child welfare or child protection is raised, that the facilitator (or any concerned member of the group) needs to speak with a relevant person or agency in relation to this. If the group has a paid facilitator and is supported by a project/ service, then the facilitator (or any concerned member of the group) can go to the designated Child Protection liaison person in the project/service. If the group is peer-led and not supported by a project/service, then the facilitator (or any concerned member of the group) can contact the designated child protection liaison person in National Family Support Network.

The designated Child Protection liaison person will listen to your concern and ask you to give them details relating to it. If they feel that a child welfare or child protection issue is present, they will encourage you to contact your local duty social worker in Tusla (The Child and Family Agency) to discuss this further and potentially to submit a Standard Reporting Form. Both this initial discussion with Tusla and the submission of a Standard Reporting Form can be done anonymously. It's best practice that the person who has brought

the concern to the designated Child Protection liaison person is the person who directly contacts Tusla and completes (if necessary) the Standard Reporting Form. If the designated Child Protection liaison person feels that Tusla need to be contacted about the issue but the person raising the issue to them does not contact Tusla themselves then the designated Child Protection person is obligated to contact Tusla about the concern themselves.

At any time, the facilitator (or any concerned member of the group) can contact their local duty social worker and discuss concerns or issues they may have relating to a child welfare/protection issue, it is not mandatory to go to a designated Child Protection Liaison person first, but you may wish to discuss this with them first as a source of direction and support.

In no case should serious concerns be left unaddressed or unreported. In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of the designated liaison person or duty social worker, the report should be made to a Garda. This may be done at any Garda Station.

2.14.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process: Resource: M. NFSN Child protection policy for affiliated support groups

2.15 Ensuring data protection

2.15.1 Overview

Confidentiality is a core principle of family support. If you gather information from your members, be clear what the purpose of gathering the information is, what the information will be used for and make sure that no one individual is named or identifiable in any reports that use the information. The names,

addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of members should never be revealed to a third party without their specific consent. **Data Protection is a fundamental right of all individuals. The NFSN accept no liability in this regard to data collected, held and used in connection with your group. In the case of hosted group please ensure that all Data Protection requirements are reviewed and in compliance with you hosting organisation. In the case of a Peer Group please review and discuss Data protection is discussed and agreed within the group***

All information collected or written down about your group or as notes from meetings should be stored in a secure place (e.g. locked cabinet or a password protected computer file) and be in alignment with the General Data Protection Regulation.

2.15.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Make sure that confidentiality and privacy are discussed and included in the group contract.

B Make sure that each member has completed the consent to contact form in part four and that all contact made to group members follows the preferences and permissions outline in the forms.

C Decide where all forms, information collected, or notes written down about your group as notes from meetings will be stores and who will be in charge of it. The information must be stored in secure place such as a locked cabinet or a password protected computer file.

D Ensure that notes are legible, dated, fact based, use no jargon or acronyms, and record only what is necessary.

E Ensure that participants are informed that they can read and get a copy of group or their personal notes from one-to-one sessions on request.

F Make sure that any outside groups

that work with your support group also follow secure data protection practices.

2.15.3 Steps for existing groups

A Review your current data protection practices and make sure that they are in alignment with the information and guidance included above.

B Make any necessary improvements to current information storing process.

2.15.4 Standards related to this area

The following Quality Standard is relevant to this topic area: Standard 2.4: Any notes kept are in-line with good practice and data protection.

2.15.5 FAQ

Q1: Where can I learn more about the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

A1: You can learn more about the GDPR at the website http://gdprandyou.ie/ and NFSN can support you with ensuring your group is complying with these regulations

2.15.6 Relevant supporting resources

Use the following resource found in section four to support you at this stage in the process: Resource D: Consent to contact form

2.16 Starting a new family support group network

2.16.1 Overview

This section explores setting up a family support network and what the benefits of a network are. A network is a forum for local groups to come together to discuss issues of common concern and to collectively look for solutions. Networks can be organised on a local, regional or national basis.

Family support networks are representative bodies that enable

family support groups in an area or region to promote and support the work done by family support groups and to share information and good practice. Often, they provide a link to the wider community and can be represented on Local or Regional Drugs Task Forces

The benefits of being part of a network include networking and the sharing of information and ideas with similar groups. The network provides a forum for solving problems together – family support groups do not have to be isolated. Networks can also have more say in the development of policies for families or drug users by being represented on steering groups, task forces, committees, etc. They can help family support groups to access support and to exchange ideas on a wider scale.

2.16.2 Steps involved for new groups

A Identify if there is an existing family support network in your area, the best way to do this is to contact NFSN who will be able to link you in with any available networks in your area and support you to join.

B If there is no network in your area and you have identified a need begin by setting out your intentions -Who is the network for, how do groups join the network, how often will it meet, what does it hope to achieve?

C Set up a steering group of like-minded family members and interested family support group facilitators to drive the establishment of the network.

D Inform and invite all the members of local family support groups to a meeting to discuss the idea of setting up a network.

E Organise an external facilitator to facilitate this first meeting and to help local groups decide what they want the network to do.

F Agree the aims and objectives of the network and agree on what basis family support groups can be affiliated to the network.

2.16.3 Steps for existing groups

The steps for existing groups are the same as those shared above for new groups.

2.16.4 Standards related to this area

There are no standards in relation to setting up a network.

2.16.5 FAQ

Q: Are there any examples of a family support network being set up with input from a Drugs Task Force?

A: There are examples of family support networks that have been set up, some with support from the Local/Regional Drugs Task Force. One local family support network began when all the local family support groups in the area attended a facilitated weekend. The invitation was sent to every member of each of the five groups in the area. The purpose of the weekend was to discuss the need for a local network and how it might be brought into existence. Another goal of the weekend was to nominate a member to represent family support groups on the Local Drugs Task Force.

The facilitated weekend enabled groups to learn about each other, to explore common expectations and issues and to look at the feasibility of setting up a network. There was unanimous agreement that there was a need for a local network.

It was also agreed that the network would operate by setting up a steering group. Two representatives from each family support group were nominated onto the steering group. The steering group is facilitated by the Local Drugs Task Force and supported by a support worker. It meets every month for two to three hours. It elected a

chairperson, secretary and treasurer at its first meeting and then developed a work plan in consultation with the members. The steering group is responsible for accounting for any money drawn down on behalf of the network from central funds. It has an annual general meeting to report on its activities to the members of the network. During this meeting, the steering group for the next year is elected.

2.16.6 Relevant supporting resources

NFSN have resources to support groups in developing a family support network, to access these supports contact NFSN.

3

Part Two: Standards

3.1 Overview

The following Quality Standards have been developed by NFSN to define and document the practices and characteristics that family support groups must adhere to in order to be in alignment with good practice ensure that they are providing consistent and effective high-quality services.

3.2 Definitions

Principle: Core value and aspiration

Standard: How a principle should be put into practice

Indicator: Something which can be measured or estimated to show whether or not a standard has been met

3.3 Principle One

Principle 1: Family support groups operate from a peer participation and leadership approach and are committed to promoting the empowerment of family members.

Standard	Indicator(s)	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
1.1 Group members are inducted and have a clear understanding of the supports provided by the group and group boundaries.	▶ There is an induction process and information sheet that all members receive in their first or second session. ▶ An existing member checks in with new members at the beginning and end of the session. ▶ In the group contract, supports and boundaries are outlined. ▶ Family members feel that there is sufficient onwards referral for any needs not met by the group.	▶ Section 2.4: Creating a group contract ▶ Section 2.6 Ensuring accessibility ▶ Section 2.8: Welcoming new members
1.2 The group contract is written by members, explicitly discusses confidentiality, disclosure, and equality, is reviewed every year, and continues to inform the way the group operates.	▶ The group contract is reviewed every year by members; any decisions are written down and any changes which are agreed are made to the contract. ▶ The group contract includes statements related to confidentiality, disclosure, and equality.	▶ Section 2.4: Creating a group contract
1.3 Group members are encouraged to take on specific roles and responsibilities for the benefit of the group. These roles will be assigned and reviewed annually.	▶ The group divides tasks between a number of roles, which are time limited, e.g. a term of 1 or 2 years ▶ Key roles have a description of tasks ▶ The group completes a 'Roles and Responsibilities Roster' completed every year.	▶ Section 2.5: Divide up roles and responsibilities among the group ▶ Section 2.6 Ensuring accessibility

Standard	Indicator(s)	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
1.4 There is an agreed process for following up with people who have stopped attending the group, in order to ensure they have supports and that the group remains open and welcoming to them	▶ Consent for follow up contact if group member misses two meetings discussed during group induction. ▶ There is a brief written plan for following up with members who chose to leave the group, and this responsibility is assigned to someone, and is undertaken.	▶ Section 2.6: Ensuring accessibility ▶ Section 2.13: Responding to members exiting the group
1.5 Groups will promote sustainability and accessibility by actively engaging new members.	▶ There is brief written plan for advertising the group with local organisations. ▶ Contact details are up-to-date on the NFSN website. ▶ There is an agreed written procedure for following up on new enquires and referrals.	▶ Section 2.6: Ensuring accessibility ▶ Section 2.7: Creating awareness of your group ▶ Section 2.8: Welcoming new members
1.6 Information on drug, alcohol and family issues is accurate, relevant and up to date. Information is from reputable sources, e.g. HSE, NFSN, Drugs.ie.	▶ Family Support Groups are directed to up-to-date, relevant, legitimate information on services/supports in their area.	▶ Section 2.9: Receiving outside training and support ▶ Section 2.11: Providing accurate information and relevant referrals

3.4 Principle Two

Principle 2: One-to-one supports are provided by trained practitioners in line with evidence-based models and national guidelines (one-to-one family supports are provided within an organisational structure this provision will be in line with the policies of the organisation). This principle only applies to organizations/groups which have the following supports in place:

- Clinical supervision
- Relevant training and
- Appropriate premises to ensure safety and confidentiality.

Standard	Indicator(s)	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
2.1 Any staff or volunteer facilitators providing one-to-one support sessions need to be accredited in 5 Step or another therapeutic model and receive appropriate levels of supervisions (e.g. Functional Family Therapy, trained counsellors and clinical supervision).	▶ Any staff or volunteer facilitators providing one-to-one support sessions has been trained/accredited in 5-Step or another therapeutic model (e.g. Functional Family Therapy or are trained counsellors) before affiliation which can be confirmed by NFSN training logs. ▶ Any staff or volunteer facilitators providing one-to-one support sessions attends clinical supervision and has a confidential and safe space in which to host participants.	▶ Section 2.10: Managing and facilitation meetings
2.2 A needs assessment (as per 5-Step or other model) is undertaken for every participant and this informs service provision	▶ Needs assessments are completed, recorded, and stored appropriately.	▶ Section 2.4: Creating a group contract
2.3 The boundaries to one-to-one family supports are clearly explained and referrals onwards are made for any needs that the intervention cannot address.	▶ Boundaries are noted in first session as per intervention and recorded/stored. ▶ A list of 'go-to' referrals organisations and services exists.	▶ Section 2.11: Providing accurate information and relevant referrals

Standard	Indicator(s)	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
2.4 Any notes kept are in-line with good practice and data protection.	▶ Notes are maintained in a locked filing cabinet if in paper file or in a secure password protected system if in an electronic file. ▶ Notes are legible, dated, fact based, use no jargon or acronyms, and record only what is necessary. We determine this by occasional self-audits. ▶ Participants are informed every year they can read and get a copy of their notes on request.	▶ Section 2.15: Ensuring data protection

3.5 Principle Three

Principle 3: Family support groups are accessible, inclusive and promote an ethos of equality, respect and dignity.

Standard	Indicator	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
3.1 Family support groups adhere to the NFSN Equality Policy and outline their commitment to equality in the group agreement and implement this in practice.	▶ Family support groups adhere to the NFSN policy and outline their commitment to equality in the group agreement and implement this in practice. ▶ Members can articulate, when asked how they would make people from ethnic minority groups welcome to their group as well as any potential barriers to inclusivity. ▶ Facilitators have attended facilitator training which covers the issue of equality and inclusion	▶ Section 2.4: Creating a group contract ▶ Section 2.6: Ensuring accessibility
3.2 The group proactively includes minority organisations/ communities in its promotion strategy.	▶ In advertising the group, contact is made with gateway organisations that work with minority groups. This can be demonstrated by existing emails or notes from phone calls.	▶ Section 2.6: Ensuring accessibility ▶ Section 2.7: Creating awareness of your group

3.6 Principle Four

Principle 4: The provision of group family support is informed by national guidelines and standards, ongoing training and upskilling of facilitators to work in line with evidence-based practice.

Standard	Indicator	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
4.1 Facilitators complete NFSN FSG facilitation training (or equivalent) as soon as it is available after starting a group or, for groups that are already running, prior to being affiliated with the quality standards.	▶ All group facilitators have attended NFSN FSG facilitation training (or equivalent training), in the last 6 months or when last offered, and this can be confirmed by NSFN records.	▶ Section 2.10: Managing and facilitation meetings
4.2 Facilitators attend at least one national training or event with NFSN annually.	▶ All group facilitators have attended at least one NFSN training or event within the past year and this can be confirmed by the NFSN membership database, unless there are exceptional circumstances which have been noted with NFSN.	▶ Section 2.10: Managing and facilitation meetings
4.3 All members are offered the opportunity to attend NFSN events and training, no matter how long they have been members.	▶ All facilitators/family members are invited to NFSN events as they arise.	▶ Section 2.9: Receiving outside training and support

3.7 Principle Five

Principle 5: Family support groups have transparent finance and governance systems, which reflect the scope and size of their work. Groups productively engage with external agencies where relevant.

Standard	Indicator	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
5.1 If a group attains finance from a Task Force, other state fund or philanthropist, they need to manage this in line with the requirements of this funding source.	▶ Completed reports and documentation submitted to the funder, who has confirmed that requirements have been met.	▶ Section 2.12: Fundraising and budgeting
5.2 Family support groups adhere to the NFSN fundraising policy.	▶ This is reflected in any fundraising pursuits of group.	▶ Section 2.12: Fundraising and budgeting
5.3 Groups should record advocacy issues and send these to NFSN and other relevant local agencies or bodies when these arise.	▶ Group members use the group as a space to raise advocacy issues and ensure that all members are aware of the role of the group to feed issues to NSFN, as determined in an annual review. ▶ Completed advocacy templates submitted to NFSN.	

3.8 Principle Six

Principle 6: Family support will be alert to the issue of hidden harm and will respond effectively and supportively to this issue.

Standard	Indicator	Relevant Support Pack Section(s)
6.1 Family members participating in family support will have access to information and support regarding kinship carer rights, child protection and hidden harm in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.	▶ Family members will have the opportunity to attend information sessions run by the NFSN/HSE on kinship carer rights and hidden harm.	▶ Section 2.11: Providing accurate information and relevant referrals ▶ 2.14: Managing serious issues
6.2 Family support facilitators will complete training on hidden harm as part of NFSN facilitator training, or source equivalent training elsewhere.	▶ Family support facilitators will receive Facilitator training within the first 6 months of affiliating to NFSN and will be referred to attend child protection training as it arises. ▶ Family Support facilitators will complete the Children's First E-Learning Programme ▶ All group facilitators, in an annual review, confirm they were referred to attend child protection training as it was offered.	▶ Section 2.10: Managing and facilitation meetings
6.3 Family support groups will use consistent child protection reporting structures.	▶ NFSN child protection reporting structure will be clearly outlined to each facilitated group and it will be noted that this has been done.	▶ Section 2.14: Managing serious issues
6.4 NFSN designated child protection officer will liaise with family support coordinators and Tusla when required as per Children's First.	▶ NFSN designated officer will have CP training and open communication with TUSLA.	▶ Section: 2.14: Managing serious issues

4

Part Three: Review

4.1 Overview

This section outlines how the standards will be reviewed and how family support groups will be supported by NFSN to meet the standards. This section begins with a brief overview of some common models for how standards can be reviewed and why the NFSN standards are being reviewed through option two, as presented below.

4.2 A Brief Introduction: How Standards are Reviewed

Standards are proliferating across social and health fields, NESC has called this a silent revolution[1]. Standards play an important role in defining what customers, clients and service users should expect and can assist services to develop concrete plans to achieve these standards. There are a number of ways to assess standards, which include:

A No structured processes to check that these are in place or guide organisations in the improvements they need to make

B Organisations receive structured supports to self-assess as compliant

C Reviewed through a peer review process

D Reviewed by an external expect panel / external auditor

Each option for reviewing standards has pros and cons. Option two has been selected by the NFSN for the following reasons:

● This approach has a strong focus on capacity building which corresponds well with the voluntary peer-led culture of NFSN

● This process supports local FS groups to improve quality over time at a pace which is realistic, again considering the voluntary culture of the organisation

● There are currently insufficient resources available for peer or external review.

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1   http://files.nesc.ie/nesc_reports/en/NESC_133_Synthesis_Report_Exec_Summary.pdf

In time, and if resources can be accessed, if may be appropriate for this model to transition to peer or external review.

4.3 Principles Agreed

The following principles were developed by the Vision Group to guide to development of the Quality Standards and reflect the partnership approach of the review process.

- **Accessible:** The standards are easy to understand and can be achieved by a voluntary group.

- **Transparent:** How decisions are made is clear and everyone is able to access all information.

- **Acknowledgement that achieving quality is a process:** NFSN understands that meeting the standards is a process and that identifying an area to improve on is a positive not a negative

- **Appreciates diversity:** In as much as possible, we support differences in local family groups, and the standards will allow for this, while outlining a minimum level of acceptable quality.

- **Family member-focused:** Quality Standards need to capture and measure what is important to family members and involve family members in the assessment process, including the selection of suitable indicators of success.

- **Relevant:** standards need to be achievable, relevant, and meaningful to family members.

- **In alignment with the law:** The standard builds on legal requirements but will not repeat or paraphrase these.

- **Fair:** Everyone and every group is treated the same.

- **Promotes learning and connection:** The process should not be an end in itself. It exists to strengthen, enhance, and validate the work of family support groups. The process needs to support groups to attain the standards.

- Validating and acknowledging: The process needs to provide opportunities to acknowledge the work, commitment, and talent of the facilitators and leaders of the groups.

These principles should continue to guide the review process into the future as gets put in to practice.

4.4 The Process for Family Support Organisations to Achieve the Standard

For an existing family support group:

A Meet as a group to review and discuss the Quality Standards Self-Assessment tool found in part four, resource O.

B As part of this process, review all of your group policies and documents such as your group contract, group induction sheet, and other items referenced throughout this support pack.

C Once you have completed the Self-Assessment tool, identify a couple standards where you would like to make improvements to your practices and set relevant goals that you will work on in the following year.

D Share your Self-Assessment with NFSN at least once each year as part of the annual NFSN affiliation process.

E Work with NFSN development workers throughout the year to identify small changes that you can make to improve your alignment with the Quality Standards and how NFSN can support you in achieving your improvement goals.

4.4.1 For a new Family Support Group

The process followed is very similar, however the establishment of a new group supports quality standard processes being introduced from the very beginning. The NFSN staff supporting the development of the new groups will do so in a way that means the group is operating to standards.

4.4.2 Relevant supporting resources

Resource O: Quality Standards Self-Assessment

5 How to set up & run a family support group

5.1 Introduction

This section includes a variety of tools and resources such as templates to support you in launching a new group or managing an existing group in alignment with the Quality Standards of the National Family Support Network. Most of these resources can be used "as is" but you may wish to edit some to be more personalized to your group.

Please note that any policies / procedures are accurate at the time of publishing and that updates can be obtained from the NFSN upon request.

The resources below include:

A Template for induction information sheet

B Group contract development guide

C Template for specific roles within the group

D Consent to contact form

E Template for advertising group

F Equality Policy

G Outcome/needs assessment

H Resources for information and services for drugs, alcohol, and family support

I Facilitator's Training

J National organisations working with minority groups

K Fundraising policy

L NFSN advocacy template

M NFSN child protection policy for affiliated support groups

N Starting a new group checklist

O Quality Standards Self-Assessment

5.2 Resource A: Template for induction information sheet

5.2.1 Overview

As discussed in Section 2.8, each family support group should give every new member a brief information sheet when they join the group. Included on this sheet should be information on:

- The time and venue for meetings
- What support the new member can expect in their early days with the group
- The Group Contract and the expectation that the new member will agree to abide by it
- What happens, in outline, at the meetings
- Names of those with particular roles in the group, e.g. facilitator, secretary
- Contact information for the group
- A request to fill in a 'Consent to Contact' form.

Below you will find a sample induction information sheet for peer-led groups with two co-facilitators.

Sample Information Sheet For New Members

Welcome

You are very welcome to our group. We hope that you will enjoy being with us, and that you will find support and strength from joining us. In turn, we hope that you will help us to support one another.

Meeting details

Our meetings take place from
7.30 to 9.30 p.m. every Wednesday in
_____(INSERT LOCATION)

What to expect

As a new member, one of us should already have met you to explain more about who we are and what we do. This person will also contact you after each of your first _____4___ meetings, to see how you are getting on. They will keep checking in with you one-to-one at least once a month until you feel that you have settled fully into the group.

The attached **Group Contract** shows the purpose of our group and the ground rules we have agreed among ourselves. The ground rules are about how we run our group and what we expect of each other. In joining us, we ask you to agree to abide by these rules. Every so often, we review them together, and when we do this you will have the chance to suggest any changes that you might like to see made to them.

The meetings have two facilitators,
_____ and _____
Their role is to guide the discussion so that we stay focused on why we are here, and so that everybody feels that they are listened to and can listen to others.

_____ and _____
have each been members of the group for a few years.

Each week, we start arriving at 7.10 p.m. for a cup of tea. We begin the meeting at 7.30 p.m. sharp, with the facilitators reminding us why we're here and leading us in a short exercise to 'ground' us in the room. After that, everyone gets a chance to share with the group what's going on for them.

We all try to focus on supporting whoever is talking about their situation and on helping them to find solutions to problems they are facing. We finish each session with an exercise stressing positive things about the coming week. The meeting ends at 9.30 p.m. sharp, with tea and biscuits afterwards.

If there is anything about the group with which you are uncomfortable, but which you do not wish to speak about with the whole group, please approach the facilitator(s) or your regular contact from the group about it as soon as possible.

Apart from the facilitators, the following are the members of the group who have particular roles:

_____Secretary

_____Treasurer

_____(Insert any other roles
                            you have in your group)

Contact details

If you need to contact the group, please get in touch wit:
[Secretary] _____ ___
at   [Phone number(s)]   .

In order to maintain your privacy and confidentiality we would like you to tell us if and how you would like to be contacted by our group. Please fill in the attached '**Consent to Contact Form'** and give it to _____at your first meeting.

For health and safety reasons, the form also contains spaces where we ask you to fill in the phone number of someone close to you whom we can contact in the event of an emergency, and information on any particular medical condition which affects you.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

_____ _Family Support Group_

5.3 Resource B: Group contract development guide

5.3.1 Overview

As discussed in section 2.3, each family support group must create a group contract that outlines a set of principles and values that the group will adhere to, as well as a statement of purpose, based on the values, unique needs, and interests of its members. The contract sets out the purpose and practices of the group.

The following guide can be used to help draw up a group contract and make sure that key topics are addressed.

Group Contract Development Guide

What the group contract is

The group contract consists of ground rules for how the group will work, how the members will relate to one another and what they expect from each other. It is up to the members themselves, with the facilitator, to agree those rules.

When to create the group contract

Coming together to draw up a group contract that everyone understands, agrees and accepts is an important part of the group's development. It should be done the first or second time the group meets.

How to create and revise the group contract

Meet as a group to discuss, brainstorm, and write down everyone's ideas for what to include in the group contract. It is a good idea to use a flip chart for this process so that everyone can see all of the suggestions and to have written notes to refer to throughout the discussion. At the end of the session write a final list of the agreed-upon items that make it in to the group contract.

One way to get the conversation started is to ask the group to consider the following: "This group gives us a chance for everyone to support each other and to speak openly and honestly in a safe place. What ground rules should we agree to help ensure that this happens?"

When finalising the contract, the group should also agree to revisit it regularly, to assess how it is working out in practice and if and how it needs to be changed. It is good practice for the group to review the contract together in this way every three months and, at minimum, it should be reviewed at least once a year.

How to use the group contract

It is important that the group contract always guides the conduct of the group. It is useful to read the contract at the start of each meeting and always to have it on display on a flip-chart page.

The group contract should be explained to every new member before or at their first group meeting, and they should be asked to agree to abide by it. This can be done in conversation with the facilitator or another representative of the group, or it can be done with the whole group (offering another opportunity for the group to review the contract).

What to include in the group contract

The group contract should outline a set of principles and values that the group will adhere to as well as a purpose statement based on the values, unique needs, and interests of its members that explain the purpose andt practices of the group.

The group contract or ground rules can be very simple. At a minimum, they need to cover the following checklist of topics:

» The purpose of the group and who it is for

» Confidentiality – Members need to spell out what they mean by 'confidentiality, and they need to acknowledge that there are a very limited number of issues, to do with the welfare of children, harm to others or self-harm, which cannot be covered by absolute confidentiality

» How the group will address issues related to disclosure and child protection

» A commitment to equality

» The general atmosphere within the group, including how people will listen to and support one another

» Respect and inclusion within the group

» How all members share responsibility for how the group works

» Group and facilitation boundaries

» Time-keeping – Apart from individuals' commitments to attend and be on time, many groups find that it is best to stick very tightly to the starting and finishing times.

In addition, some groups set down if and how members will support each other outside meetings, when necessary.

Sample Group Contract

Statement of Purpose:

We are a support group for members of the local community who are coping with addiction in their families. Our aim is to provide each other with support, and to help each other to obtain information, respite and new skills, so that we can cope better with the worries and stresses in our lives.

Contract:

The following are the ground rules we have agreed for our group:

» We will respect confidentiality. This means that we will never bring up or discuss outside the group any other member's personal issues that are mentioned at a group meeting. This rule of confidentiality will not apply to issues to do with the welfare of children, harm to others or self-harm.

» We will each contribute at the level at which we are comfortable

» We will try to create an atmosphere in which everyone feels safe to speak, or not to speak, as they wish

» We will respect each other's opinions and experiences

» We will listen to each other respectfully

» We will help each other to explore solutions to our problems

» We will care for each other and for ourselves

» We will do our best not to judge one another

» We will all share responsibility for the atmosphere and relationships within the group, and how well we support and encourage one another

» We will welcome and support new members, whatever their background and wherever they are from

» If any one of us does not feel comfortable and safe, she/he will tell the facilitator or the whole group

» We will do our best to come to each session and to be on time

» We will turn off our mobile phones during meetings. If somebody is expecting a very important call, she/he will tell the group and seek permission to leave her/his phone on.

Date written: 25/07/2016

Most recent review date: 08/11/2018

5.4 Resource C: Common group roles and responsibilities

5.4.1 Overview

The following resource provides examples of common responsibilities shared by local family support groups and common roles assigned within groups to help manage these responsibilities. In addition, it includes a simple template to fill out to track who is responsible for certain tasks and the dates that those roles and responsibilities have been assigned and revisited. Use the following resources to guide your group in ensuring that the workload is dispersed and that the group is operating from a peer participation and leadership approach.

Common Group Responsibilities and Roles

Common Member Responsibilities

Each group will operate slightly differently and therefore have its own set of responsibilities and tasks that needs to be accounted for within the group. These may grow and change over time as the group grows and changes. The common tasks and responsibilities to spread across the group include:

» Reserving, opening and closing the place where you meet

» Facilitating meetings

» Being the liaison and point of contact with NFSN

» Contacting external agencies or sources of support

» Organizing refreshments for meetings

» Developing promotional materials for recruiting new members

» Managing group notes and files

» Raising funds and managing the money and budget for the group

» Being the initial contact person for potential new members

Common Group Roles

Some groups, especially small ones, find it helpful to create roles or positions within the group that may oversee more than one task or responsibility. Common group roles include:

» NFSN liaison – The NFSN liaison – is responsible for communicating and coordinating with NFSN about key issues such as group alignment with the quality standards, requests for advocacy support, or help managing challenges experienced by the group.

» Facilitator - The facilitator is responsible for running meetings and guiding the group.

» Secretary - The secretary is responsible for keeping a record of decisions made by the group and handling any correspondence.

» Treasurer - The treasurer is responsible for managing the finances of the group.

Groups Roles and Responsibilities Roster Template

Role / Responsibility	Group Member Assigned	Date Assigned	Date(s) Reviewed	Date Ended

5.5 Resource D: Consent to contact form

5.5.1 Overview

In order to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of group members, each member should decide and inform the group if and how they would like to be contacted by the support group. The following 'Consent to Contact' form should be completed by each member of the group at their first meeting.

Consent to Contact Form

I, _____, give my consent that the following people may contact me regarding my participation in the Family Support Group. (Check the box next to the people that you give permission to contact you)

_____ Facilitator

(insert name of group)

_____ Members

(insert name of group)

National Family Support Group Network

Prospective new members

Preferred contact method (check all that apply):

☐ phone: _____

☐ email address: _____

☐ mail: _____

In case of emergency, you have my permission to contact

_____ at (Phone) _____

Please state any medical details which we should be aware of in the event of an emergency, e.g., diabetes, epilepsy:

_____

_____

_____   _____

Signature   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Group Facilitator   Date

5.6 Resource E: Template for advertising group

5.6.1 Overview

How you decide to promote your support group can vary depending on the circumstances of the group, but the general tips and advertisement example provided below should help in any situation.

Promoting your Family Support Group
General tips

Involve the group

Get participants involved in developing and promoting the group from the start. This encourages ownership of the group and gives you a wider reach with your promotion.

Use posters

Get posters or flyers printed (this doesn't have to be professional, you can adapt the template below and print copies with almost any printer) and post them in local organizations and centres where people who may be interested will see them. Always ask permission before putting the posters up anywhere.

The most important information to include is the name of the group, its aim, any relevant details about time, date, and location, and contact details. This information will allow prospective members to decide if the group is for them and to get in touch with any questions that they might have. If your group feels uncomfortable sharing such detailed information on the advertisement, or has confidentiality concerns, an alternative is to include

a contact name and number on the advertisement, rather than a venue, time and date. The first point of contact can then be a screening phone call or initial meeting with the named contact person, before the complete details of the meetings are passed on.

Promote your group regularly

It's a good idea to regularly promote your group and recruit new members throughout the year. Each time you learn of a new organisation or service in your community that you have not recruited with before, ask if you can put up posters in their lobby or common area or if they will help to spread the word about your group with the people who go there. At the very least, you should promote your group within the community at least once a year to remind people of the group's existence.

Reach out to a variety of community organisations

It is good to reach out to a wide variety of organisations in your community, but the following are the best ones to start with:

» Local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces

» Local GPs

» Community Centres

» Family Resource Centres

» Drug treatment centres

» Local organisations that work with minority groups

Encourage word-of-mouth

Make sure that current group participants know that it is OK for them encourage anyone they know who may benefit from the group to give you a call. Word-of-mouth is a powerful tool for promotion. It's important to emphasise that this is entirely optional, however, as members may feel uncomfortable talking about the group to people they know, and you don't want them to feel pressured to promote the group.

Use social media

Social media is free and effective, so it's a good idea to promote the group every few months in this way. For groups attached to established organizations, it can be useful to promote the group on the organization's social media accounts, such as Facebook or Twitter. Independent peer-led groups can also create social media account to promote themselves and their activities. Responsibility for the social media accounts can be shared among the members. If there are any Facebook pages or group dedicated to your local area, you can promote the group here too.

Local media

Approaching a local newspaper is another way of promoting the group, as they may be able to include an advertisement or perhaps even write a short piece about the group. While there may be fees for advertisement, these are often negotiable and if reasonable, could be paid for with each member chipping in.

Promote through NFSN

NFSN would of course be delighted to help you promote your group, so please get in touch with us and we'll post the details on our website, newsletter and social media accounts.

Advertisement example:

The template below is a guideline of what we have found to work well in the past. Adapt the example as needed:

Worried about a family member struggling with a drug or alcohol addiction? Looking for support?

Dublin Family Resource Centre is now hosting a Family Support Group in their offices at **15 O'Connell Street, Dublin 1 every Thursday evening from 7 – 9pm**.

This Family Support Group is a place to talk openly about living with a family member's addiction and the impact that this can have on a person's life. We guarantee confidentiality within normal limits. In the group, people share their experiences and support each other through an often-difficult situation. All who have been affected by a family member's substance use are welcome to attend this free service.

5.7   Resource F: Equality Policy

5.7.1 Overview

The NFSN quality standards state that local family support groups must adhere to the NFSN Equality Policy. Use the NFSN Equality Policy included below to inform your group contract and daily practice.

Equality Policy

National Family Support Network

Approval date:

Revision date:

1.Responsibility for approval of policy	
2.Responsibility for implementation	
3.Responsibility for ensuring review	

Policy Statement

Equality, anti-discrimination and inclusion are a central and integral part of National Family Support Network's vision and values. National Family Support Network is committed to ensuring our work is guided by accepted good practice and relevant equality and anti-discrimination legislation and policy.

1   Purpose

1. 1   The purpose of the National Family Support Network's (NFSN) Equality Policy is to outline the organisation's commitment to equal treatment, combatting discrimination, accommodating diversity and promoting equality. The NFSN's Equality Policy further reflects the organisation's commitment to meeting its obligations under the Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2008, which prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services to members of nine equality grounds (gender, civil status, family status, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, race and membership of the Traveller community).This policy has been approved in consultation with members of staff, the management committee and with a cohort of service users accessing family support in groups affiliated to the NFSN.

2   Scope

2. 1   This scope of this Equality Policy refers to and intends to cover the direct contact made by NFSN to service users, the organisation and facilitation of events, fundraising and media activity which NFSN staff and management engage with.

3   Glossary of Terms and Definitions

3. 1   This policy understands 'Equality' as referring to the equal treatment of persons in respect of status, rights and opportunities, while taking proactive steps to ensure equal outcomes are met.

4   Principles

NFSN seeks to ensure that the services that it provides

4. 1   Are free from discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and victimisation;

4. 2   Accommodate diversity across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation and meet needs that are specific to particular groups of service users;

4. 3   Make reasonable accommodation for service users with disabilities;

4. 4   NFSN seeks to ensure that the needs

of service users from across the groups covered by the equality legislation are taken into account in the planning, design and delivery of its events, developments and advocacy.

5 Other policies

5. 1 This policy should be read in conjunction with NFSN's Complaints Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Service User Charter.

6 Taking Action

NFSN will ensure that in its communication with service users:

6. 1 Information, event and other materials produced for and by NFSN will be provided in a relevant and accessible manner to service users from across the nine grounds.

6. 2 Different formats such as Braille and large print are used where possible

6. 3 Different media such as an accessible website where possible

6. 4 Different languages where possible

6. 5 Materials produced to promote NFSN activities will be non-discriminatory and will communicate the organisation's commitment to equality for service users.

7 Direct Contact

In its direct contact with service users NFSN seeks to ensure that:

7. 1 Service users are dealt with in a considerate, courteous and professional manner;

7. 2 Service users experience a harassment free environment;

7. 3 Language barriers are effectively addressed, including through the use of interpreters;

7. 4 Reasonable accommodation is made for people with disabilities

8 Service user feedback

8. 1 NFSN encourages the participation in their feedback systems of service users from across the nine grounds and from organisations representing groups experiencing inequality. Methods and processes to facilitate service user feedback are outlined in NFSN Service User Involvement Policy.

9 Reasonable accommodation of people with disabilities

9. 1 NFSN seeks to anticipate the requirements of service users with disabilities (including those with physical, intellectual and sensory disabilities and mental health issues) and to ensure that service users with disabilities are not excluded by physical, systemic or communication barriers.

10 Implementation

10. 1 Senior management are responsible for implementing this policy and for ensuring that service users do not experience discrimination, that diversity is accommodated, and that equality is promoted for service users.
The terms of reference of this role will include:

- Sustaining a focus on the employment equality and equal status policies in all sections and at all levels of the organisation;

- Ensuring that the commitments included in the employment equality and equal status policies are implemented;

- Supporting the development of an equality action plan;

- Reporting to the management committee on the progress made in implementing the commitments made in the Equality Policy.

10. 2 All staff should cooperate in the development and implementation of policies and procedures to promote equality for service users.

10. 3 Actions to implement the policy will be included in the organisation's strategic plan.

10. 4 This policy will be reviewed and monitored for its effectiveness every two years by senior management and the management committee.

5.8 Resource G. Outcome / Needs Assessment

5.8.1 Overview

The National Family Support Network have developed a Family Needs Assessment in line with the protocols within the National Drugs Rehabilitation Implementation Committee framework. This assessment was piloted in the South East region and in Dublin 15 and is now being used nationally by family support services. To access a copy of the template and to implement using it in your service contact NFSN.

5.9 Resource H. Resources for information and services for drugs, alcohol, and family support

5.9.1 Overview:

The chart of resources below includes relevant national websites and services for information and resources on drugs, alcohol and family issues in Ireland. Use these organisations for findings additional support for group members. Track local organisations and contact details in the template provided below the national organisations. Frequently review and update the information for accuracy with contacts at each service, the HSE website, or other online sources.

Information and Support Services for Drugs, Alcohol, and Family Support

National Services: The organisations listed below are relevant national websites and services for information and resources on drugs, alcohol and family issues in Ireland

Name	Type of Support	Contact Details
The National Family Support Network	Umbrella body for Family Support in Ireland.	Website: http://fsn.ie/ Phone: 018980148 Email: info@fsn.ie
Drugs.ie	Online resource for information and support regarding Drugs and Alcohol in Ireland.	Website: www.drugs.ie
HSE Drugs and Alcohol Helpline	Provides support, information, guidance and referral to anyone with a question or concern related to drug and alcohol use and/or HIV and sexual health.	Phone: 1800459459 Email: helpline@hse.ie
The Samaritans	Phone and email support for those who are feeling suicidal.	Web: www.samaritans.org Phone: 116123 Email: jo@samaritans.org

Local Services: Family members may benefit from also connecting with local organisations, services and supports. Use the chart below to list local organisations and services used by members of your group or suggested by the local drug and alcohol taskforce.

Name	Type of Support	Contact Details

5.10 Resource I: Facilitators' training

5.10.1 Overview

The National Family Support Network has developed a basic facilitation course aimed specifically at current and potential facilitators of family support groups. The facilitators of existing groups will be expected to have completed this course, or some equivalent facilitation training, before their group signs up to the Quality Standards. For new groups, it is expected that the facilitators will complete the first available NFSN training course, or an equivalent training from another source, after the group is set up.

The course will cover the following topics:

- Skills for facilitation
- How groups work
- Personal development and self-awareness
- How families can be affected by substance misuse, and how they can be supported
- Quality Standards for family support groups, including procedures and approaches in relation to disclosure, child protection and hidden harm, equality and cultural diversity.

The course will be largely experiential in nature; in addition to the presentation of information by the trainers, there will be an emphasis on participants sharing their experiences with each other and practising group work and facilitation skills.

Contact NFSN for more information.

5.11 Resource J: List of national organisations working with minority groups

5.11.1 Overview

The below contact sheet includes information for national organisations that serve minority population. Use these resources when raising awareness of your group and recruiting new members. These national organisations and websites are a starting point for connecting with local groups that serve minority groups in your community. Some of the organisation's websites below include lists and maps that identify local groups by country region. Track contact information for local organisation below the national details in the template provided.

National Organisations Working With Minority Groups		
Organisation		Contact Details
Migrant organisations	National Immigrant Support Centre (NASC)	Website: http://www.nascireland.org/ Phone: 021 450 3462 Email: info@nascireland.org
	Irish Refugee Council (IRC)	Website: https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/ Phone: +353 1 7645854 Email: info@irishrefugeecouncil.ie
	Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)	Website: https://www.mrci.ie/ Phone: 01 889 7570 Email: info@mrci.ie
Family Resource Centres	Family Resource Centre National Forum	Website: www.familyresources.ie Email: info@familyresources.ie
Traveller organisations	Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre	Website: www.paveepoint.ie Phone:+353 (01) 87802 Email: Info@pavee.ie
	Irish Traveller Movement	Website: http://itmtrav.ie/ Phone: +353 (1) 679 65 77 Email: info@itmtrav.ie

Local Organisations and Services			
Population Served	Organisation	Contact Details	Notes

Resource K: Fundraising policy

5.11.2 Overview

The NFSN Quality Standards state that all local family support groups must adhere to the NFSN fundraising policy and cannot have any separate policies or practices that contradict this policy. See the NFSN Fundraising Policy below to guide your policies and practices.

Fundraising Policy

National Family Support Network

Approval date:

Revision date:

1 Policy Statement

1.1 National Family Support Network is committed to the highest standards of good practice regarding fundraising, ensuring that all fundraising activities are respectful, honest, open and legal.

2 Purpose

2.1 To clearly outline fundraising procedures and to detail practices adopted to ensure the organisation is exposed to minimum risk, is accountable to funders, and meets the expectations and needs of donors.

2.2 This policy addresses general responsibilities in fund-raising as well as specific responsibilities related to fundraising activities, and as related to the use of and accountability of funds.

3 Scope

3.1 The Statement offers principles and guidelines to assist in all fundraising activities. Such activities include: grant funding, capital campaigns, special events, product fundraising (e.g. selling a product to raise funds) in-kind gifts or street 'face-to-face' fundraising.

4 Principles

4.1 Any donations received will be used solely to further the organisation's mission.

4.2 Respect: National Family Support Network will respect the rights, dignity and privacy of its supporters and service users. The organisation will:

4.2.1 Not represent their service users in a disrespectful way in their promotional activities, and where possible and appropriate, service users will have an input into the organisation's promotional strategies.

4.2.2 Not put undue pressure on anyone to make a gift or not to cease giving.

4.3 Honesty: The organisation will answer honestly all reasonable questions about its fundraising activities and fundraising costs and it will do so within a reasonable timeframe. It will also ensure that all funds raised will be used for the purposes for which they were raised.

4.4 Openness: The organisation will make information about its purposes and practices freely available

4.5 National Family Support Network will abide by legal requirements. This includes all accounting requirements, compliance with the Data Protections Act 1988, 2003 &2018, and compliance with the Charities Act 2009.

5 Definitions

5.1 Donor: this is any person or organisation donating money or resources to benefit the organisation.

5.2 Grant fundraising: this involves applying to an established fund as outlined in their terms of reference.

6 Roles and Responsibilities.

6.1 The board of management are ultimately responsible for the activities of those associated with the organisation, as well as those responsible for financial accounting and reporting.

6.2 Management are responsible:

6.2.1 For ensuring that all fundraising efforts are respectful, honest, open and legal.

6.2.2 For ensuring that fundraisers are aware of and can communicate the purpose of the organisation and of the specific fundraising efforts they are involved in.

6.3 Staff and volunteers, who are engaged in fundraising activities, must represent the organisation professionally, and adhere to the standards outlined in this policy.

7 Procedures

7.1 National Family Support Network will give the following commitment to all donors and funders:

7.1.1 They have the right to be assured that their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.

7.1.2 They have the right to have their names deleted from mailing lists or databases if so requested.

7.2 In raising funds National Family Support Network will accurately describe its activities and needs.

7.3 Where donations are made for a specific purpose, the funder/donor's request will be honoured. If the organisation invites the general public to donate to a specific cause, then the organisation will have a plan for handling any shortfall or excess.

7.4 Grant Fundraising

7.4.1 In general (unless authorised by the manager) applications for external funding will be completed by senior management.

7.4.2 Final authorisation for all grant application will be the responsibility of the management committee.

7.5 Street 'face –to-face' fundraising

7.5.1 Donors have the right to be informed of the status and authority of those soliciting donations; for example, donors will be informed if fundraisers are employees of the organisation or third-party agents.

7.5.2 It shall be made clear at all times as to whether the fundraising in question is for the organisation in general or for a specific purpose.

7.5.3 Garda Permits will be obtained for all types of fundraising including non-cash collections.

7.5.4 The organisation's name, logo, address, telephone number, web address and charity registration number, as well as its general purpose, shall always appear on fundraising material. Where more than one organisation is collecting together, the names, logos, addresses, telephone numbers, web addresses and charity registration numbers of all organisations must appear on the material in question and must be made known to the donor or prospective donor.

7.5.5 Organisations will show their charity name and number on collector's garments and on collection boxes.

7.5.6 Collection Boxes should be sealed at all times while on the street.

7.6 Fundraising at events

7.6.1 At the event, cash should be held securely, for example, through the use of money belts.

7.6.2 If tickets are being sold, collections should be recorded on a summary sheet with a signature from the sellers signifying the amount of cash collected or standard priced tickets should be provided.

7.6.3 All final amounts including floats ought to be collected and recorded from all locations at the end of an event.

7.6.4 A manager should review the summary sheets, or the amount of tickets sold to ensure that these tally with the final figure of cash received.

7.7 Handling of donations

7.7.1 All monetary donations should be forwarded to the financial administrator

7.7.2 The following process should be followed for cash donations:

7.7.2.1 Cash received ought to be collected, counted and recorded by two individuals.

7.7.2.2 Wherever possible, cash ought to be banked immediately. Where sums over €500.00 are involved, cash should be banked in stages during an event and, preferably, by two individuals.

7.7.2.3 Cash not banked immediately must be placed in a sealed container in a secure place. If cash cannot be banked immediately, handling procedures ought to be agreed in advance. Cash ought never to be left unattended or in an unattended environment.

7.7.3 The following processes should be used for cheque donations:

7.7.3.1 Donors ought to be encouraged to send cheques made payable to the charity, not to a named individual.

7.7.3.2 Donations ought to be sent to the organisation's offices and not the fundraiser's home.

7.7.4 Income summaries ought to be made at the point of counting for reconciliation with banking details at a later date.

7.7.5 Where appropriate, records must be made of donations for specific purposes to ensure donors' wishes are met.

7.7.6 If an individual donation is given of above €50.00, then the organisation will acknowledge this donation by sending a notice of appreciation. Notice of appreciation may be sent for any amount if staff or management see fit.

7.8 Gifts In-kind

7.8.1 Gifts in-kind (gifts to the organisation that are non-monetary e.g. equipment, supplies, professional services, furniture, books, artwork, etc) may be accepted by the organisation.

7.8.2 Such gifts are reviewed with care by management to ensure that acceptance will not involve financial commitments in excess of budgeted items or commit the organisation to other obligations disproportionate to the usefulness of the gift.

7.9 Reporting

7.9.1 The organisation will record and publish in the Annual Report and the Statement of Annual Accounts details of individual gifts, including gifts-in-kind where the organisation judges that those gifts may be construed to have the potential to influence the independence of the organisation's decision making.

7.9.2 While an organisation is not obliged to accept anonymous donations, where anonymity is requested by a donor this will be respected if the donation is accepted. However, the other details of the gift will be recorded and published (such that anonymity is preserved).

7.9.3 Complaints Procedure

7.9.4 A funder or donor has the right to complain using the National Family Support Network complaint policy.

5.12 Resource L: NFSN Advocacy template

5.12.1 Overview

This template is for groups who have noted issues with regards to the sustainability or running of the group, alongside broader themes such as lack of representation on local taskforce, issues with not having access to respite or funding to travel to events, or members of the group being kinship carers. It's a way for members to communicate issues to us that we can either resolve with our development workers or take higher as we are represented on the National Oversight Committee for the National Drug Strategy.

Advocacy Request Template

If your group has issues arising that you would like to ask support with from the National Family Support Network, you could complete an 'Advocacy Request'. These issues could range from problems with not having a place to meet, identifying a need for further information or training, or identifying a trend from the group such as kinship care issues or bereavement support needs. We may not always be able to resolve the issue, but we will do our best to help you or to let you know where is best to access help and support. You are always welcome to phone our office number (018980148) or email development@fsn.ie to speak with us about these issues too, however an advocacy request is a good way to document these issues and plan for next steps.

Example of an Advocacy Request:

Name of Group & Contact Details	Balbriggan Family Support Peer-led Group/ Geraldine (facilitator) 0841623555
Issue being highlighted	Premises we used to meet in (parish hall) is being closed down in a month, then we will have nowhere to meet
Desired Outcome or Goal	A safe space to meet once a week (evening time) with wheelchair access in the centre of the town if possible
Attempts to resolve at local level	We wrote to the town council but we didn't get a response
Suggestions of next steps	Could you help us to follow up with the council or let us know who else we could speak with about getting a venue
Other Comment	

5.13 Resource M: NFSN Child protection policy for affiliated support groups

5.13.1 Overview

To ensure that all NFSN affiliated family support groups follow best practice procedures regarding child protection, in accordance with Children's First legislation, all family support groups must review and follow the enclosed policy below. The following policy applies to all family support groups who are registered as affiliated member groups of the network and who are not affiliated to another project or service, that is; groups who are not already obliged by another child protection reporting structure in an external organisation/ service.

Child Protection Policy {Affiliated Groups}

National Family Support Network

Approval date:

Revision date:

1 Policy Statement

1.1 National Family Support Network aims to be fully compliant with the standards outlined in *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children: 2011.*

1.2 This policy is structured on the *Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, 2011*, which is a reference document to support skilled practice in relation to child protection. This policy is not a complete or authoritative statement on the law. Individuals and organisations should consult with *Children First* and relevant legislation as indicated in this document where required.

2 Purpose

2.1 *Children's First* legislation places clear duties on service providers to protect children from abuse and neglect. It is therefore the responsibility of National Family Support Network to report any concerns about physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect to the Health Service Executive or the Gardaí. Family Support Groups which are affiliated to the National Family Support Network do not provide support to anyone aged under 18 however this policy acknowledges the potential for issues concerning child protection to arise within the work of family support groups.

2.2 The National Family Support Network endeavours to ensure that all affiliated family support groups follow best practice procedures regarding child protection, in accordance with Children's First.

3 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all family support groups who are registered as affiliated member groups of the network and who are not affiliated to another project or service, that is; groups who are not already obliged by another child protection reporting structure in an external organisation/service.

3.2 The National Family Support Network has a separate Child Protection Policy which applies to all staff, volunteers and locums working under the banner of the National Family Support Network within the remit of the organisations everyday activities, events and outreach.

3.3 Where any family support facilitator, volunteer, group member or employee becomes aware of an act of non-compliance with this policy, they have a responsibility to address the issue with the person concerned and if there is not a satisfactory outcome to bring it to the attention of the National Family Support Network's Designated Liaison Person (Aoife Frances, NFSN Policy Worker) or the CEO (Sadie Grace) as appropriate.

4 Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Section 1.4 of *The Child Protection &Welfare Practice Handbook 2011*provides guidelines on definitions and recognition of child abuse (pg 10): (note, comprehensive updated definitions of same can be found in *Children First, 2011*)

4.1 Physical abuse: where it is known or suspected that injury was deliberately inflicted.

4.2 Sexual abuse: the use of children by others for sexual gratification. This can take many forms and includes rape and other sexual assaults, allowing children to view sexual acts or to be exposed to, or involved in, pornography, exhibitionism and other perverse activities.

4.3 Emotional abuse: adverse effects on behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection or exposure to on-going domestic violence.

4.4 Neglect: the persistent or severe neglect of a child whether wilful or unintentional which results in serious impairment of the child's health, development or welfare.

5 Children First Principles Summary

5.1 The welfare of the child is of paramount importance.

5.2 A balance must be struck between protecting children and respecting the needs of parents/carers and families. Where there is a conflict, the welfare of the child must come first.

5.3 National Family Support Network recognises that every child has the right to be safe at all times, and to be treated with respect and understanding.

6 Training

6.1 A PDF copy of *Children First 2011* will be made available to all Family Support Facilitators upon affiliation to the network and group members can further access this through the facilitator of their group or by contacting the National Family Support Network Office.

6.2 All family support group facilitators are required to attend the National Family Support Network's (NFSN) facilitation training, or equivalent training. The NFSN training will cover principles of child protection and hidden harm.

Facilitators who have completed facilitation training equivalent to that provided by the NFSN, but which did not cover principles of child protection and hidden harm, will also be expected to have completed equivalent training on these principles.

6.3 The NFSN Development workers are required to ensure Facilitators attend training as described in Section 6.2 within 6 months of affiliation or as soon as capacity allows.

6.4 National Family Support Network recognises that dealing with child protection can be distressing; facilitators will be provided with supported around Child Protection issues within the context of peer-supervision sessions facilitated by NFSN's Development staff.

7 Confidentiality

7.1 No undertaking regarding secrecy can be given in any situation. The boundaries and limits regarding confidentiality must be identified and agreed in the group contract and this contract is to be reviewed annually and on occasions where issues which surpass the capacity of confidentiality arise in the group, to include issues of child protection.

7.2 The National Family Support Network's Confidentiality Policy contains clear guidance regarding extensions of confidentiality regarding issues relating to Child Protection. The confidentiality policy takes accordance of Children First, which states; *"the provision of information to the statutory agencies for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality or data protection"* (p16). The National Family Support Network policy states that confidentiality may not be extended when a service user discloses that:

7.2.1 They have perpetrated sexual / physical abuse on another person.

7.2.2 They intend to perpetrate sexual / physical abuse on another person.

7.2.3 Any other issues in relation to

Child Protection, as described in Children First.

8   Reporting A Concern

8. 1 Designated Liaison Person

8. 1.1 National Family Support Network has a designated staff member(s) in the role of Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for child protection issue. Their duties are:

8. 1.1.1 To ensure that procedures and arrangements are in place within the organisation to protect children in line with national guidelines.

8. 1.1.2 To act as a liaison with statutory services in matters relating to child protection as appropriate

8. 1.1.3 To act as a resource person to the staff, Family Support Facilitators, volunteers and locums of the organisation, providing guidance in matters relating to child protection

8. 1.1.4 Take the lead role in ensuring the reporting and follow-up of referrals to the HSE / Gardaí and ensuring that National Family Support Network's procedures are followed systematically and thoroughly.

8. 1.1.5 To ensure the provision of support to staff and Family Support Facilitators who are dealing with child protection issues.

8. 1.1.6 To promote opportunities for on-going practice discussion/training in relation to child protection practice.

8. 1.1.7 To ensure proper records are kept on any interventions / decisions made during the process.

8. 1.1.8 Where the CPO is going to be absent from work, s/he will agree with the CEO a designated staff member to undertake DLP responsibilities in his/her absence.

8. 2 Reasonable Grounds for Concern
In accordance with the Child Protection and Welfare Practice Handbook, section 2.2 (p30) reasonable grounds for concern are defined as:

8. 2.1 An injury or behaviour that is consistent both with abuse and an innocent explanation, but where there are corroborative indicators supporting the concern that it may be a case of abuse.

8. 2.2 Consistent indication over a period of time that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.

8. 2.3 Admission or indication by someone of an alleged abuse.

8. 2.4 A specific indication from a child that he or she was abused.

8. 2.5 An account from a person who saw the child being abused.

8. 2.6 Evidence (e.g. injury or behaviour) that is consistent with abuse and unlikely to have been caused in any other way.

8. 3 Responsibility when a Child Protection Concern ArisesIf a Facilitator of an affiliated Family Support Group or a family member participant within the group becomes aware, through disclosure, discussion or a report within the context of the support group, of a concern of an abuse or child welfare situation they should:

8. 3.1 Receive the information: Listen carefully to what is being said or observed and record what has been said in the words in which it was said as soon as possible.

8. 3.2 Refer to the National Family Support Network's Designated Liaison Person by contacting the organisation and discuss the concern (this is not a mandatory step, at any point a concerned person can contact Tusla/Gardaí with a concern, however if they wish to seek initial support, advice or information the Designated Liaison Person will fulfil this role.

8. 3.3 In line with good practice it is optimal that the person who has directly observed, witnessed or become aware of the concern reports it to the Child and Family agency by contacting the duty social worker for the geographical area and, if advised by social worker on duty, submitting a Standard Reporting Form outlining the concern and person's involved (this can be submitted anonymously).

8. 3.4 Seek support: It is important to remember that dealing with child abuse concerns is stressful and can have an impact on one's emotional well–being, members of Family Support Groups can contact staff in the NFSN office to seek this support.

8. 3.5 The Designated Liaison Person should confirm with the Child and Family Agency that the person who has the concerns has contacted them. If they have not, the Designated Liaison Person should pass the concerns on to the HSE, referring the HSE to the source of the information.

8. 3.6 Where serious abuse is suspected immediate action will be required. Individuals are to inform the Designated Liaison Person/ CEO/NFSN Staff at the earliest possible opportunity and as a matter of urgency.

8. 3.7 In no case should serious concerns be left unaddressed or unreported.

8. 3.8 In the event of an emergency, or the non-availability of the HSE, the report should be made to a Garda. This may be done at any Garda Station (page 35 of The Child Protection &Welfare Practice Handbook 2011).

9   Contact Details for Relevant Statutory Services

9. 1 NFSN Designated Liaison Person: 018980148/ info@fsn.ie

9. 2 National Duty Social Work Contact information : www.tusla.ie/services/child-protection-welfare/contact-a-social-worker/

9. 3 Emergency Police Contact Number; 999

5.14 Resource N: Starting a new group checklist

5.14.1 Overview

This document lists the basic steps to starting a new family support group to be used alongside the detailed guidelines outlined throughout this document. Where relevant, corresponding resources from part four have been noted for each step in the checklist.

Starting a New Family Support Group Check-List

☐ Create a core group of founding members.

☐ Read the Set up and Support Pack.

☐ Reach out to NFSN to inform them of your new group and create a supporting relationship.

☐ Decide how often, where, and when the group will meet.

☐ Create a group contract and purpose statement. (Resource B in part four of the support pack.)

☐ Create awareness about your group and actively recruit a diverse group of new members. (Resource E in part four of the support pack.)

☐ Create a process for welcoming and inducting new members. (Resource A in part four of the support pack.)

☐ Identify the roles and responsibilities of the group and the process for filling them. (Resource C in part four of the support pack.)

☐ Assign/ fill roles and responsibilities.

☐ Work with NFSN to identify a TUSLA liaison /Local Duty Social Worker.

☐ Receive facilitator training from NFSN and other relevant community organisations as needed. (Resource I in part four of the support pack.)

5.15 Resource O: NFSN Quality Standards Self-Assessment

5.15.1 Overview

The Quality Standards Self-Assessment is a questionnaire that allows you to identify where your group practices are in alignment with the NFSN Quality Standards and where improvements can be made. The Self-Assessment should be completed at least once a year by the whole group.

Quality Standards Self-Assessment

Instructions:

At least once a year, complete this self-assessment as a group. As part of this annual self-review process, look through your files and documents that you have completed using the Start-up and Support Pack and have a group discussion to reflect on your activities of the past year and decide which of the practice descriptions next to each standard is most like your group's practices.

After you have selected a description for each Quality Standard, review all of your answer choices and see where you have selected "**we are working on it**". Work as a group to find small changes that you can make to your routines and practices that will help you to be better in alignment with the descriptions under "**we have achieved it"** or "**we have surpassed requirements"** and write down steps that you will take over the next year to make these improvements. Because you are a voluntary group and only have so much time, you may want to select 1 – 3 standards to focus on each year rather than trying to work on all of the Quality Standards at the same time.

Share both your self-assessment and plan for improvement with NFSN and have a conversation around tips or suggestions that you could give to other groups who are looking to improve in the areas where you have rated yourself as "**we have achieved it"** or "**we have surpassed requirements"** as well as how they can support you to meet your improvement goals.

Principle 1: Family support groups operate from a peer participation and leadership approach and are committed to promoting the empowerment of family members.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
1.1 Group members are inducted and have a clear understanding of the supports provided by the group and group boundaries.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ There are additional steps involved in the induction process, such as 1-2-1 meetings with new members	All of the below: ☐ There is an induction process and information sheet that all members receive in their first or second session. ☐ An existing member checks in with new members at the beginning and end of the session ☐ In the group contract, supports and boundaries are outlined. ☐ Family members feel that there is sufficient onwards referral for any needs not met by the group.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
1.2 The group contract is written by members, explicitly discusses confidentiality, disclosure, and equality, is reviewed every year, and continues to inform the way the group operates.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ The group contract is on the wall at all meetings	All of the below: ☐ The group contract is reviewed every year by members. Any decisions are written down and any changes which are agreed are made to the contract. ☐ The group contract includes statements related to confidentiality, disclosure, and equality. ☐ The group contract is referred to regularly throughout the year to guide decision making and/or to resolve any issues that arise.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
1.3 Group members are encouraged to take on specific roles and responsibilities for the benefit of the group. These roles will be assigned and reviewed annually.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ The process for assigning roles and responsibilities is well understood and supported by all members ☐ Everyone who wants an active and meaningful role or responsibility with in the group has opportunities to be engaged in a specific role. ☐ There is a clear process for role handover and induction into new roles. ☐ People in key roles change every 1 to 2 years	All of the below: ☐ The group divides tasks between a number of roles, which are time limited, ie.g. a term of 1 or 2 years ☐ Key roles have a description of tasks ☐ The Group's Roles and Responsibilities Roster template is completed every year.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
1.4 There is an agreed process for following up with people who have stopped attending the group, in order to ensure they have supports and that the group remains open and welcoming to them.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Members who leave are asked how the group could improve, and these observations are bought back to the grou	☐ Consent for follow up contact if a group member misses two meetings is discussed during group induction. ☐ There is a written plan for following up with members who chose to leave the group, and this responsibility is assigned to someone, and is undertaken.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
1.5 Groups will promote sustainability and accessibility by actively engaging new members.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Every new enquiry in the last year was responded to in alignment with the written procedure. ☐ We advertised our group and tried to recruit new members at least twice within the last year.	All of the below: ☐ There is brief plan for advertising the group with local organisations. ☐ Contact details are up-to-date on the NFSN website. ☐ There is an agreed written procedure for following up on new enquires and referrals.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.

Principle 2: One-to-one supports are provided by trained practitioners in line with evidence-based models and national guidelines (If one-to-one family supports are provided within an organisational structure this provision will be in line with the policies of the organisation).
This principle only applies to organizations/groups which have the following supports in place:

- Clinical supervision
- Relevant training and
- Appropriate premises to ensure safety and confidentiality.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
2.1 Any staff or volunteer facilitators providing one-to-one support sessions need to be trained/ accredited in 5 Step or another therapeutic model and receive appropriate levels of supervisions (e.g. Functional Family Therapy, trained counsellors and clinical supervision).	Not applicable	☐ We do not provide one-to-one support OR Any staff or volunteer facilitators providing one-to-one support sessions meets all of the criteria below: ☐ Has been trained/ accredited in 5-Step or another therapeutic model (e.g. Functional Family Therapy, or are trained counsellors) which can be confirmed by NFSN training logs ☐ Attends clinical supervision and ☐ Has a confidential and safe space in which to host participants.	☐ We provide one-to-one support and are not able to check all of the items in the Sufficient column.
2.2 A needs assessment (as per 5-Step or other model) is undertaken for every participant and this informs service provision	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Follow-up needs assessments are completed everything 6 months to track progress	☐ We do not provide one-to-one support OR ☐ Needs assessments are completed, recorded, and stored appropriately.	☐ We provide one-to-one support and we are not able to check all the items in the Sufficient column.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
2.3 The boundaries to one-to-one family supports are clearly explained and referrals onwards are made for any needs that the intervention cannot address.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ The referral list has been reviewed and updated for completeness and accuracy with in the last year ☐ Referrals were made any time a member had needs that could not be addressed by the FSG with in the last year ☐ One-to-one clients are asked at least annually about the quality of service, this includes a question on referrals and boundaries	☐ We do not provide one-to-one support OR All of the below: ☐ Boundaries are noted in first session as per intervention and recorded/ stored. ☐ A list of 'go-to' referrals organisations and services exists.	☐ We provide one-to-one support and we are not able to check all the items in the Sufficient column.
2.4 Any notes kept are in-line with good practice and data protection.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Facilitators are familiar with the GDPR guidelines and know where to find more information if people have questions.	☐ We do not provide one-to-one support and keep notes OR All of the below: ☐ Notes are maintained in a locked filing cabinet if in paper file or in a secure password protected system if in an electronic file. ☐ Notes are legible, dated, fact based, use no jargon or acronyms, and record only what is necessary. We determine this by occasional self-audits. ☐ Participants are informed every year they can read and get a copy of their notes on request.	☐ We provide one-to-one support but are not able to check all of the items in the Sufficient column.

Principle 3: Family support groups are accessible, inclusive and promote an ethos of equality, respect and dignity.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
3.1 Family support groups adhere to the NFSN Equality Policy and outline their commitment to equality in the group agreement and implement this in practice.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Group members always treat each other with respect and use respectful language when talking about ethnic minority groups, as determined in an annual review with the group.	All of the below: ☐ Family support groups adhere to the NFSN policy and outline their commitment to equality in the group agreement and implement this in practice. ☐ Members can articulate, when asked, how they would make people from ethnic minority groups welcome to their group as well as any potential barriers to inclusivity. ☐ Facilitators have attended facilitator training which covers the issue of equality and inclusion.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
3.2 The group proactively includes minority organisations/ communities in its promotion strategy.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Members make presentations to relevant community groups to increase awareness of the group	☐ When advertising the group, contact was made with gateway organisations that work with minority groups. This can be demonstrated by existing emails or notes from phone calls.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.

Principle 4: The provision of group family support is informed by national guidelines and standards, ongoing training and upskilling of facilitators to work in line with evidence-based practice.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
4.1 Facilitators complete NFSN FSG facilitation training or equivalent training as soon as it is available after starting a group or, for groups that are already running, prior to being affiliated with the quality standards.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Any members who have expressed an interest in becoming a facilitator have either attend or been invited to attend the next NFSN facilitator training or equivalent	☐ All of our facilitators have attended NFSN FSG facilitation training or equivalent, in the last 6 months or when last offered, and this can be confirmed by NSFN records.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
4.2 Facilitators attend at least one national training or event with NFSN annually.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Any members who have expressed an interest in becoming a facilitator have either attended or been invited to attend the additional annual NFSN events	☐ All of our facilitators have attended at least one NFSN training or event within the past year and this can be confirmed by the NFSN membership database, unless there are exceptional circumstances which have been noted with NFSN.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
4.3 All members are offered the opportunity to attend NFSN events and training, no matter how long they have been members.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ FSG members who are not facilitators attended an NFSN event or training in the last year	☐ All facilitators/group members were invited to attend every NFSN event held within the past year.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.

Principle 5: Family support groups have transparent finance and governance systems, which reflect the scope and size of their work. Groups productively engage with external agencies where relevant.

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
5.1 If a group attains finance from a Task Force, philanthropist or other state fund they need to manage this in line with the requirements of this funding source.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Learning from activities completed with this funding were documented by the secretary to inform future activities and fundraising	☐ All required reports and documentation were completed and submitted to the funder, who has confirmed that requirements have been met.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
5.2 Family support groups adhere to the NFSN fundraising policy.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Learning from fundraising activities was documented to inform future planning and decision making	☐ We did not perform any type of fundraising in the past year OR ☐ The NFSN fundraising policy was reviewed and adhered to for all fundraising activities within the past year.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
5.3 Groups should record advocacy issues and send these to NFSN and other relevant local agencies or bodies when these arise.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ We filled out an advocacy template for any issues that arose in the past year and sent it to relevant local agencies or bodies in addition to NFSN ☐ We discuss feedback from NFSN with members when this is available	☐ Group members use the group as aa space to raise advocacy issues and ensure that all members are aware of the role of the group to feed issues to NSFN, as determined in an annual review. ☐ Advocacy templates have been completed and submitted to NFSN for any advocacy issues that arose in the past year.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.

Principle 6: Family support will be alert to the issue of hidden harm and will respond effectively and supportively to this issue

Standard	We have surpassed requirements (ideal)	We have achieved it (sufficient)	We are working on it (needs improvement)
6.1 Family members participating in family support will have access to information and support regarding kinship carer rights, child protection and hidden harm in a non-judgemental and supportive environment	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Group members attended information sessions run by the NFSN/HSE on kinship carer rights and hidden harm.	☐ Group members were given the opportunity to attend information sessions run by the NFSN/HSE on kinship carer rights and hidden harm.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
6.2 Family support facilitators will complete training on hidden harm as part of NFSN facilitator training, or source equivalent training elsewhere.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ All group facilitators have attended information sessions run by the NFSN/HSE on kinship carer rights and hidden harm. ☐ All group facilitators have attended child protection training	☐ All of our facilitators have attended NFSN FSG facilitation training or equivalent including the Children's First E-Learning Programme and this can be confirmed by NSFN records. Unless there are exceptional circumstances which have been noted with NFSN. ☐ All group facilitators, in an annual review, confirm they were directed to attend child protection training as it was offered.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.
6.3 Family support groups will use consistent child protection reporting structures.	We are able to check everything in the Sufficient column plus the following: ☐ Each member can describe the NFSN child protection reporting structure when asked.	☐ NFSN child protection reporting structure has been clearly outlined to our support group and it has been recorded that this has been done.	☐ Our practices do not meet all of the criteria under the Sufficient column.

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