

## LOCAL MEETINGS

There are six Scottish local meetings each month,

### **ABERDEEN**

*(3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday – 7-9pm)*

Aberdeen Grammar School FP Club, 86 Queens Road, AB15 4YQ

### **CENTRAL SCOTLAND**

*(2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday – 7-9pm)*

Family Life Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 61-63 Murray Place, Stirling FK8 1AP

### **DUNDEE**

*(3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday – 7-9pm)*

Dundee Voluntary Action, 10 Constitution Road, DD1 1LL

### **EDINBURGH**

*(1<sup>st</sup> Monday – 7-9pm)*

10 Palmerston Place, Haymarket, EH12 5AU

### **GLASGOW**

*(3<sup>rd</sup> Monday – 7-9pm)*

O'Neill's Bar, Merchant Square, 71-73 Albion St., G1 1NY

### **RENFREWSHIRE**

*(1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday – 7-9pm)*

Kennedy's Bar, 33 Causeyside Street, Paisley PA1 1UL

SKYPE meeting – email [info@fnfscotland.org](mailto:info@fnfscotland.org) to be notified of next meeting date.

These meetings are a chance for anyone affected by contact problems after separation to obtain information, discuss what has happened and explore options with other people who are facing similar issues. The majority of people attending are fathers, but most meetings also include grandparents, new partners and other family members affected by these issues.

You can also find out about the campaigning work that is being done by FNF Scotland to seek changes in the legal system and make sure both separated parents get access to school and health information relating to their children. Many of the issues that we campaign on are suggested by the people attending local meetings.

Meetings are organised by local FNF members or the FNF staff, so there is always someone to talk to if you want to discuss your own situation in more detail or in confidence. A solicitor is in attendance at meetings on a pro bono basis to give general guidance on law and legal procedures.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We ask everybody who comes to meetings to respect the confidentiality of any personal information that is discussed. You don't have to share any details if you don't want to - it's ok to sit and listen. We ask people attending for names, emails and phone numbers so that we can keep you in touch with future meetings and other events, but these details won't be shared with others unless you agree. Minutes of meetings and reports to funders never mention names and avoid identifiable details.



**Both parents matter**



## **FAMILIES NEED FATHERS SCOTLAND**

10 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh EH12 5AA. Phone 0131-557 2440

Web site: [www.fnfscotland.org.uk](http://www.fnfscotland.org.uk) Email: [info@fnfscotland.org](mailto:info@fnfscotland.org)

FNF Scotland is a Scottish charity which provides support and information for parents who encounter difficulties in securing meaningful parenting time with their children after separation or divorce.

FNF Scotland isn't a "fathers' rights" organisation. Our starting point is that research from around the world demonstrates that children do better in most areas of their life when they can count on the love and support of both parents. They do better at school; they form better relationships in and out of school; they score higher in most measures of wellbeing and lower in the range of adverse life events.

In recent decades the realities of family life in Scotland have changed dramatically with more sharing of the parenting role. As work patterns have changed so have the expectations of mothers and fathers within families. But sometimes when the relationship breaks down the shared parenting stops.

FNF Scotland campaigns for changes in Scottish family law that set shared parenting as the norm and for other changes to promote shared parenting.

We run monthly support groups in six cities – and a 'virtual' meeting on skype for those who aren't able to attend (see over). FNF Scotland has two staff based in the Edinburgh and one in Glasgow.

To support our work donate at <http://bit.ly/2G81wd5> or scan this image:



Scottish Charity: SC042817

## SHARED PARENTING

There is much discussion of terminology for the involvement of both parents in the lives of their children: shared parenting, equal parenting, involved parenting, co-operative parenting, parallel parenting and others. The term preferred by Families Need Fathers Scotland is “*Shared Parenting*”. Unlike some of the others, it literally implies that both parents must share this role. This is not to say, for example, that co-operation should not be sought, or that equality is not a desirable long-term objective.

### What do we mean by Shared Parenting?

It does not mean that there should be a stated or fixed proportion of parenting time allocated to a parent. However, if one of the parents only has a very limited amount of parenting time then parenting can scarcely be said to be shared. The standard offering to children - a fortnightly visit to their non-resident parent, plus some time around holidays – can’t be said to be sharing parenting. Nor can parents with so little parenting time be effectively involved in any decisions that need to be taken.

Our definition revolves around the objectives to be achieved, which are as follows:

- *That the children feel that they have two properly involved parents.*
- *That one parent is not able to dominate the lives of the children at the expense of the other or to control the other parent via the children.*
- *That the parents have broadly equal ‘moral authority’ in the eyes of the children and that the children have free access to both their parents if there are issues affecting them.*
- *That the children are able to share the lives of both their parents - for example not spending all ‘routine time’ with one parent and only ‘leisure time’ with the other.*
- *That the parents are in a position of legal and moral equality, and are considered in this light by the children as well as friends, neighbours, teachers etc. and public authorities, over routine as well as major matters.*
- *That there is no part of the children’s lives - for example their school life or their friends - that one parent is excluded from by virtue of the allocation of parenting time.*
- *That there is no part of the parent’s life that the children are excluded from by virtue of the allocation of parenting time.*
- *That the children spend enough time with both parents to be able to negate any attempts at “parental alienation”*
- *That the children do not develop stereotypical ideas from their parents about the roles of the sexes, for example that a father’s role is chiefly financial and a ‘giver of treats’, and that mothers have responsibility for everything else.*

How to apply these criteria to particular families will be a matter of discussion and negotiation, taking into account the individual needs and wishes of the children and parents and practicalities such as how near the parents live to each other and how far each is from school etc.

Below are some practical suggestions on how to proceed in the necessary direction:

- *That week-end contact begins with picking up the child(ren) from school/nursery on Friday and continues to delivering them on Monday. This will increase equality of parenting time, allow sufficient time for real shared activities and bonding, allow contact between the non-resident parent and the school and other parents and their children (which are likely to be their own children’s friends). In the event of concerns about the parents meeting each other, it will reduce the ‘handover’ tension.*
- *That there be mid-week contact, normally picking up the child from school/nursery, and if practical the child staying overnight. This will increase the range of activities that the children share with both parents. It is important, for example, that both parents are involved in homework.*
- *That both parents share, preferably equally, attending to the children in any leisure activities - for example children’s parties – in which they are involved.*
- *That “half the holidays” should be interpreted as half the time school children are not at school. It should include half school training days, half of other holidays and festival days - if the parents cannot both be involved. The lives of babies and children too young to go to school are less constrained. Shared parenting will often mean a more equal allocation of parenting time than is possible for older children.*
- *That special days - for example Christmas or other festival holidays, the children’s and their brothers and/or sisters birthdays - be equally shared if the parents cannot be together for them. That the children also be allowed to be with the relevant parent for days that are special for that parent - for example their birthdays and those of their grandparents, or for other festivals and important events. Examples are work Open Days and sports fixtures (for both the children and the parents), Mothers’ Day with their mothers and Fathers’ Day with their fathers.*
- *That the children are not put into day care, after school clubs, babysat or other alternatives to parental care, if one of their parents is available to look after them.*
- *That time for the children to see their grandparents and wider family, on both sides of the family, must be adequate.*