

GUIDANCE FOR CORE GROUP MEMBERS



This guidance aims to make clear the roles and responsibilities of all Core Group members during the period a child has a Child Protection Plan.

Professor Munro states in her report “A child-centred system” that effective multi-agency working across a wide range of professionals is critical to building an accurate understanding of what is happening in the child or young person’s life, so that the right help can be provided. The Core Group is a multi agency group jointly responsible for implementing and reviewing the detailed Child Protection Plan following a Child Protection Conference. Core groups are an important forum for working with parents, wider family members and children of sufficient age and understanding. Where there are conflicts of interest between family members in the work of the Core Group, the child’s best interests should always take precedence.

Membership of the Core Group

Membership will be identified at the Child Protection Conference and must include:

- The Lead Social Worker;
- Parents and relevant family members;
- The child/young person if appropriate;
- Professionals involved with the child / parent, ie. child’s Health Visitor or School Nurse, Teacher & parent’s social worker or support worker, Education Social Worker etc.
- Foster carers or residential care staff if involved with family

Chairing the Core Group

The Lead Social Worker’s First Line Manager must chair the first Core Group meeting with the Lead Social Worker in attendance.

Consideration should be given to the First Line Manager or Team Manager chairing Core Group meetings where one of the following apply:

- Legal proceedings are taking place
- Where there is a formal complaint against Children’s Services

- Where there is Inter-agency disagreement
- Where the Key worker is inexperienced or new to practice
- Where the case is of such complexity that a chair other than the Lead Social Worker would assist the Planning process

The Lead Social Worker or another member of the Core Group will chair all subsequent meetings where the above criteria are not present.

It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that the level of risk is reviewed and noted in the minutes and that any dissent is also noted.

It is the responsibility of the chair/lead social worker to agree the date of the next core group to include time and venue, bearing in mind the needs of the parents, child and key professionals

Frequency of Core Group Meetings

- The Initial meeting of the Core Group will take place on the date agreed by the Independent Chair at the Initial Child Protection Conference. This will be within 10 working days of the Conference.
- The second Core Group meeting will usually be held within 6 weeks of the first meeting, unless the conference decides that meetings should be more frequent.
- Meetings will usually be held every 2 months after the first Child Protection Review Conference, although the needs of the child may require more frequent meetings.
- The Core Group should meet sufficiently regularly to facilitate working together, monitor actions and outcomes against the Child Protection Plan, and make any necessary alterations as circumstances change.

Roles and Responsibilities of Core Group members:

- Collecting and sharing information to assist the key worker in completing the Core Assessment;
- The formulation and implementation of the detailed Child Protection Plan, using either the full record of the Child Protection Conference or the Outline Child Protection Plan
- Carrying out their part of the plan;
- Monitoring progress against specified outcomes of the detailed Child Protection Plan;
- Making recommendations to subsequent review conferences about future protection plans and needs;

- Attending both the initial and subsequent Core Group meetings and ensuring there is no drift in planning and intervention.
- Contributing to the risk assessment
- Attending the core group and if unable to attend send their apologies and a report

The Lead Social Worker will:

- Act as the lead worker within the multi-agency network
- Convene the Core Group meetings
- To ensure the wishes and feelings of the child/ren are recorded and consideration is given to the young person attending when appropriate.
- Chair the meeting where this role is not undertaken by the First Line Manager, Team Manager or another member of the Core Group
- Ensure a written record of meetings using the agreed [standard format](#)
- Circulate the Core Group record to the Lead Social Worker's manager, the Conference Chair and the Core Group members within 10 working days of the Core Group Meeting, and ensure Core Group members sign their agreement and return it to the Lead Social Worker within a further 10 working days
- Ensure that the outline Child Protection Plan is developed, in conjunction with members of the Core Group, into a detailed multi-agency protection plan
- Clearly note and include in the written record any areas of disagreement
- Ensure parents/carers confirm undertakings and action required by the protection plan
- Complete the Core Assessment of the child and family, securing contributions / information from Core Group members and any other agencies with relevant information
- Co-ordinate the contribution of family members and all agencies in putting the plan into action and reviewing the objectives stated in the plan
- Ensure that the Child Protection Plan is formally reviewed
- Ensure that parents/ carers and the child/young person is fully engaged
- Ensure a copy of the Core Group record is placed on the child's record

ESCALATION PROCESS: Concerns related to the effectiveness of the Child Protection Plan

- Consideration should be given to the need for further action to be taken where:
- The CPP has not been effective in reducing the risk of harm, or there is an in-creased risk of harm, to the child

- There is a failure to obtain or retain the cooperation of the parents/ carers or child in working on the plan
- Changed or unforeseen circumstances

Any of the above must be brought immediately to the attention of the Lead Social Worker, who must inform his or her manager. A decision will be made regarding the need for any immediate protective action and/or a Section 47 Enquiry and/or a RCPC.

Concerns related to the effectiveness of the Core Group may arise from:

- Difficulties implementing the CPP due to disagreement among professionals
- Core Group member/s not carrying out his or her responsibilities outlined in CPP
- Continual absence from Core Group meetings by members
- Failure to provide information for Core Group
- Delay and drift with CPP

Action to be taken:

- Discussion with the Lead Social Worker and Manager
- Discussion between Core Group members
- Involvement of relevant managers and/or Designated Professionals within agencies where issues remain unresolved.

ALL MEMBERS OF THE CORE GROUP SHARE RESPONSIBILITY AND OWNERSHIP OF THE CHILD PROTECTION PLAN AND MUST CO-OPERATE TO ACHIEVE ITS AIMS.

For more information about core groups visit the surrey safeguarding children board website

www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguarding

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