



ONE MINUTE GUIDE: Child Protection Core Group Meeting

What is a Core Group?

When a Child Protection Conference agrees that a child is at risk of significant harm and requires a child protection plan, the conference will agree who the **Core Group of family members** and professionals are, who are best placed to **work together** to help achieve the objectives set out in the Child Protection Plan, to keep the child safe.

- Family members have **key importance** in the core group as they have the best knowledge of the child's experiences and are best placed to make changes for the child, supported by other core group members.
- Members of the core group may change as the plan develops to include additional family members or professionals helping to progress the protection plan.

How often does the core group meet?

- The core group will meet **within 10 working days of the Initial Child Protection Conference** and then **at least every month for as long as the plan is needed**.
- The core group will discuss the progress being achieved for the child, whether the child is sufficiently safe and whether any changes need to be made to the plan.
- Core Group Meetings will be arranged at a time and place that best enables family members to participate in this planning and review.

What is the purpose of the core group?

- Professionals in the core group will work with the family to achieve and complete the outcomes agreed within the plan.
- Members of the core group will be supported to work openly and honestly together, providing high support and challenge to one another for the **benefit of the children and family**.
- To develop a detailed Child Protection plan with the family based on the outline plan agreed in the Initial Child Protection Conference.
- To ensure the detailed plan will focus on the **outcomes which need to be achieved for the child**, with clarity about who is responsible for what action, when, and how progress will be measured, reported and reviewed.
- To ensure **family members are supported to identify the key objectives that they wish to achieve for their family** and to scale the progress achieved alongside other professionals.

What will the plan do?

- Address how the **child or young person will be supported** to participate in the plan. It will set out when and how the child is to be seen and **how the child's views will be shared** with the core group and Review Child Protections Conference to influence the planning (this may include direct participation or use of an advocate).
- Set out tasks and responsibilities agreed with family members and professionals - including those with routine contact with the child, such as teachers and health visitors.
- Describe to parents what is expected of everyone. This will include clarification about what action will be taken if any party does not cooperate with recommended actions in the plan. **If the child remains at risk of significant harm or if circumstances change requiring prompt action to protect the child** (this will likely include consideration of initiating family court proceedings to safeguard and promote the child's welfare).

Written record of core group meetings.

- All members of the core group will receive a written record of core group meetings with copy of the updated plan **within 10 working days of every meeting**. This will also be shared with the conference chair, who will maintain oversight of the plan, to help ensure that there is no delay in actions being implemented or core group meeting.
- The core group will report back to the Review Child Protection Conference on the progress made by the family to inform decision making about whether the child still requires the ongoing safeguards of a protection plan and whether changes need to be made to the plan.
- If the child and family's first language is not English, the social worker will plan with the family if an interpreter is required. Where an interpreter is used the written record of the core group meetings and evolving protection plan will be translated.

When does a Child Protection Plan finish?

- Decision to end a child protection plan can only be made by a Review Child Protection Conference when the chair is satisfied that the child is no longer at risk of significant harm, based upon evidence shared by the core group.

Where do I go for further information?

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