

What other responsibilities do I have as a member of a core group?

Attendance at core groups is essential. If you cannot attend you should send a representative from your agency or send a written report. You should let the lead Social Worker know and ensure you get the date for the next Core Group meeting. It is vital for a child protection plan to be effective that all core group members participate fully and demonstrate their commitment to the protection of that child.

If there is an occasion when the lead social worker cannot attend but other core group members can the meeting should go ahead. Meetings should only be cancelled as a last resort.

The **contribution** you can make will depend upon the child protection plan and your level of involvement with the child and family. Research says that child protection planning works best when we work in partnership with children and families.

All Core Group Members are responsible for the **Child Protection Plan**. The plan should include desired outcomes for the child and actions needed to achieve these outcomes with a defined timescale for completion.

What do I have to do in preparation for a review conference?

All core group members need to agree what goes into the review child protection conference report in terms of progress made and outstanding areas of work. A recommendation about the continuation of the Child Protection Plan needs to be made by core group members, not only by the lead Social Worker.

What to do if I am concerned that the Child Protection Plan is not working & the child is at increasing risk of harm?

You should discuss this with your line manager, the lead Social Worker or Team Manager and evidence your concerns. Aim to reach an agreement on the next steps to address your concerns.

If you cannot reach an agreement about the progress of the case you will need to discuss the matter with your line manager and thereafter contact the Conference Chair. Any core group member can request a conference be reconvened if they believe the child protection plan is failing.

Contacts

Cumbria Independent Children's Safeguarding Unit:

| | |
|------------|--------------|
| Carlisle | 01228 227021 |
| Barrow | 01229 407878 |
| Workington | 01900 706464 |

Cumbria LSCB:
www.cumbrialscb.com



Core Groups

Information for Professionals



Purpose of this guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to support professionals in their role as Core Group members in order to promote effective working within the group and to encourage best practice in promoting children's welfare and protecting them. Research tells us that when Core Groups work well, the outcomes for children are more positive; effective Core Groups can help safeguard vulnerable children.

What is a Core Group?

A Core Group is a group of relevant professionals and family members who work together to create, implement and review a Child Protection plan.

The Core Group has a vital role in ensuring that a child has a detailed Child Protection plan for which all Core Group members have responsibilities. Although you may work with adults in the family, you will have an important role in the assessment of parental capacity and parental support needs. You may also have relevant information that could be crucial to the protection of a child.

All core group members have specialist knowledge and skills which contribute towards shared best practice with children and families.

When & where will the Core Group meet?

The first Core Group will meet within ten working days of the Initial Child Protection Case Conference. The Core Group should meet four weekly as a minimum, and they should be held in premises that are comfortable, accessible for all and that allow for privacy.

Now I am a Core Group Member – what do I need to do?

Following the Initial Child Protection Conference the core group members must agree a date, time and venue for the first core group. Contact details should be shared with the lead Social Worker and other core group members.

Record the date for the first review Child Protection Conference as the Core Group will need to report the progress of the Child Protection plan at that meeting.

Inform your manager that you are a member of a core group and advise them that priority will be needed to be given to you attending Core Group meetings.



What will happen at the first Core Group Meeting?

At the first Core Group Meeting you need to introduce yourself and be clear about your professional role and responsibilities i.e. what you do and what your role is with the child and family.

At the first Core Group the outline protection plan must be developed into a detailed child protection plan.

A chair and a minute taker for the Core Group need to be identified. It is not reasonable for one person to both chair and minute the meeting, nor does the chair of the meeting have to be the lead Social Worker. The primary aim of the first Core Group is to develop the outline child protection plan and to ensure that members of the Core Group have a clear sense of purpose, what tasks they have responsibility for and the timescale for completing them. Not only does the Core Group need to look at sharing information and assessment but there needs to be a focus upon desired outcomes and actions needed to achieve these.

By the end of the first meeting you should be clear not only about the tasks that you are responsible for but for all other core group members. The family should be especially clear about your tasks and theirs.

A copy of the detailed child protection plan should be sent to all core group members.

The dates, times and locations for future core groups should be agreed.