Handout 26

Child Protection – core groups explained

This handout is intended to explain Child Protection Core Groups to family members and professionals who have been invited to attend.

What is a Core Group?

A Core Group is the group of family members and professionals who meet regularly if a Child Protection Conference makes a child the subject of a Child Protection Plan. The Core Group is responsible for the implementation and review of the Child Protection Plan with the ultimate aim of making sure that the Child Protection Plan is keeping the child safe.

Core Group membership can be amended as appropriate but should include parents/carer, child (if appropriate), other relevant family members, the Keyworker (lead Social Worker) and professionals in direct regular contact with the child.

The Core Group Meetings

The date of the first Core Group is set at the Initial Child Protection Conference and subsequent Core Group meetings must take place at least every 6 weeks until the child is no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan. Core Group meetings should take no longer than 1 hour.

The first Core Group should be chaired by the Keyworker's Line Manager, with all subsequent Core Groups being chaired by the Keyworker. All other professional members of the Core Group should take rotational responsibility for taking minutes of the meeting.

Every Core Group meeting must always review and where necessary modify the child's protection plan line by line. The Keyworker will distribute the revised Child Protection Plan to Core Group members and the Conference Chair within five working days of the Core Group meeting.

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What if someone has not completed an action they committed to?

When there are significant difficulties in carrying out the Child Protection Plan consideration should be given to bringing forward the date of the review conference.

If members are concerned that there are difficulties implementing the protection plan arising amongst professional agencies or a core group member not carrying out agreed responsibilities, this must be addressed by:

- Firstly, discussion with core group members
- Secondly, if required, referral to respective professional advisers i.e. child protection co-ordinators for Children's Social Care, designated/named doctor, nurse, teacher
- If the situation remains unresolved, the matter should be referred to the senior child protection manager (Children's Services Safeguarding Manager??)

For additional information see Resolution of Professional Disagreement Procedure.

Other responsibilities

If the Keyworker has difficulty obtaining direct access to the child, the Keyworker's line manager and all core group members must be informed. In these circumstances formal agreement must be reached that a member of another agency carry out the face-to-face contact, or that a review conference is called. Such a decision must be recorded, authorised by managers of the agencies concerned and agreed in the child's plan.

Further Information

This handout is a brief introduction to the role of the Core Group. The Berkshire Child Protection Procedures contain more detailed guidance at www.proceduresonline.com/berks. Please contact the Child Protection Co-ordinator if you need further advice on the role of the Core Group on 01635 503153.

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