

**PARTICIPATING IN CHILD PROTECTION PLANNING MEETINGS & CORE
GROUPS PRACTICE NOTE**

As part of your professional role, you may be invited to participate in a Child Protection Planning Meeting, (

EXPECTATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

1) You will be expected to provide a written report and single agency chronology in advance to the CPPM chair and give a verbal summary at the meeting. Parents/carers should have sight of your report prior to the meeting and depending on the age of the child, you should also ensure that the child and/or child's advocacy worker if they have one, and family have read your report. This is to ensure parents, carers and young people have had an opportunity to clarify any issues or concerns before the meeting with you. There should be no surprises

The following may be areas of concern (identification of risk) and reason for registration. All areas of concern should be recorded as part of the registration

Reasons for registration

There are 4 main areas of concern of which each child's name will be registered under:

- ® Physical Abuse
- ® Emotional Abuse
- ® Sexual Abuse, and
- ® Neglect

There are other areas of concern such as:

Domestic Abuse

Parental Substance Misuse

Parental Mental Health

Non-engaging family

Child at risk of sexual exploitation

Trafficking.

It is important that each area of concern is identified and supporting evidence provided. It is essential that parents clearly understand why their child's name has been placed on the register and why. Any support and changes the parent needs to make in order to reduce the risk of harm to their child must be clear and explained in a manner conducive to each parent's level of understanding, i.e. use plain language and no jargon. An advocate or interpreter should be provided for parents if required. If the parent does not understand what they need to do, then there will be little or no progress made .

Parents often feel judged by professionals and believe they are viewed as 'bad 'parents. Using a strength based approach ensures that the parents strengths are identified and acknowledged. This approach is based around the core belief that despite concerns parents have strengths, skills, resources and capability to effect positive change in their lives if enabled and supported to do so. Using assessment tools such as the Resilience Matrix can be helpful in illustrating where strengths and vulnerabilities lie. A visual interpretation can at times be easier to understand than words alone and would be a helpful tool to use within the core group meeting.

This approach will assist with developing stronger working relationships with parents and joint working between professionals.

Where is the child protection register?

The CPR is held by Social Work Services and is part of the social work computerised system. A senior manager with a lead responsibility for child protection maintains the register and is

known as 'the keeper of the register' Business support personnel are responsible for updating the register following any changes made

CHILD'S PLAN AND ROLE OF THE CORE GROUP

An important outcome of the meeting is that a child's plan should be written and this is usually discussed at the first core group 15 days following the CPPM that decides on registration. A timescale should also be agreed to complete a multi-agency chronology (usually presented to first review CPPM).

The child protection plan must:

- ® be developed in collaboration and consultation with the child and their family
- ® link actions to intended reduction or elimination of risk
- ® be current and consider the child's short, medium and long term risks
- ® clearly state who is responsible for each action
- ® include a named lead professional
- ® include detailed contingencies
- ® consider the sensitive direct involvement of children and /or their views.

The core group

The core group consists of the child and family, agency representatives actively involved with the child and family and is chaired by social work.

The purpose of the group is to agree actions required to reduce or manage risk, who is responsible and a timescale for completion and review.

This group also makes recommendations to the review Child Protection Planning Meeting in terms of any amendments to the plan and whether registration needs to continue or not depending on progress.

The core group meets 4 weekly with the child and family, but may need to have discussions out with the formal core group if there are difficulties needing ironed out. For example, issues and tensions between agencies around resources or indeed the plan itself and how responsibilities have been designated. It is good practice for the professional members of the group to check in with each other and assess if all are satisfied with the progress of the plan and if an extra meeting is needed if not.

Members of the core group are responsible for carrying out their actions according to the plan and contribute to supporting the parents in reducing risk and ensuring the child remains at the centre of the plan. A core group meeting is not a mini CPPM as the focus is not just about progress of the plan but how it is working and reducing risk. As a result this meeting is more focussed on parental contribution on how they are managing the risk and what their

strengths are in achieving this.

maximum of 21 working days is recommended. Until the transfer meeting, where necessary, an interim safety plan must be agreed between the relevant authorities.

REFLECTIVE MULTI-AGENCY GROUP SUPERVISION

Supporting a child and their family who are involved in the child protection process is difficult for the professionals providing the support, both as individuals and as representatives of an agency.

Argyll & Bute Child Protection Committee has produced Multi-Agency Reflective Supervision Guidance to help staff create safe spaces for discussing any concerns or issues with plans and interagency working arrangements. You can find this guidance in the resources section of *Participating in child protection planning meetings and core group* stage of A&B Child Protection Procedures