

Core Groups – Information for Parents/Carers

This information sheet is also available in Welsh.

What is a Core Group

A Core Group is a group of people who have a key part to play with your child/ren and your family.

At an Initial Child Protection Conference, the conference attendees will share information about the family circumstances. They will then decide whether they feel that your child/ren is at risk or experiencing significant harm.

If they feel that they are at risk or experiencing significant harm, a Care and Support Protection Plan is started and a Core Group meeting will need to be held. The Core Group members will have been identified during the Initial Child Protection Case Conference although other people may join the Core Group as and when appropriate.

You are an important part of the Core Group. The Core Group will be responsible for supporting you and your family to make the necessary changes to keep your child/ren safe. This may not always be easy work, disagreements may happen. It is important that these are worked through as the most important thing is to keep your child/ren safe.

We know that in difficult conversations humans will naturally avoid, deny, minimise, this is really normal and is part of the process. It is the role of the whole Core Group to understand these potential barriers and to work through them with empathy and understanding. This is best done when everyone takes time to listen and validate the views of each other.

Who will be in the Core Groups?

The Core Group is usually made up of a small group of people who work directly with you and/or your child/ren. This could include teachers, health visitors, drug and alcohol workers but it will always include your child's Social Worker.

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As a general rule, as a parent or carer you will be part of the Core Group. If this is not the case, the reasons why you are not in the Core Group will be discussed with you before the first meeting.

Depending on the age of your child/ren and if they have sufficient understanding, they may additionally be part of the Core Group.

What does a Core Group do?

A Core Group is about you and the professionals who are involved with your child/ren and family working together to make changes to ensure your child/ren doesn't experience significant harm.

The main function of the Core Group is to work on the Outcome Goals within your child/ren's Care & Support Protection Plan. It is the responsibility of every member of the Core Group to work together to bring about the changes as detailed in the Care & Support Protection Plan.

What is a Care & Support Protection Plan?

The Care & Support Protection Plan sets out what needs to be done by the Core Group in order to reduce the risk of significant harm to your child/ren. The plan will include things like:

- Things that you need to do to keep your child/ren safe.
- Who will be involved with your family.
- When and where you will see professionals.
- What professionals need to do and when they need to do.

The plan is made up of Outcome Goals that will address the priority risks that have been identified within the Child Protection Conference. The Core Group will use the Steps to Change Ladder tool to work through each of the Outcome Goals and describe what needs to happen for things to be 'good enough'.

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Once these ladders are complete, the Core Group will then work together to support you and your family to make the changes and also measure how this progress is going. This will mean everyone is clear about how things are progressing and what else needs to be achieved. This will enable a decision to be made as to whether your child/ren needs to continue to have a Care & Support Protection Plan.

How often do Core Groups meet?

The Core Group will meet within ten working days of the Initial Child Protection Case Conference.

There will be at least 2 Core Group meetings between the Initial Case Conference and the first Review. The meeting will happen about every 6 weeks until 3 months after your child/ren's name is put on the Child Protection Register.

The Core Group will be responsible for making a recommendation as to whether your child/ren remains on or comes off a Care & Support Protection Plan. This will depend on whether or not the Core Group has been working well to make progress on the Care & Support Protection Plan. The decision will be made at the Review Child Protection Conference.

What happens after a Core Group meeting?

You and the other Core Group members will be sent an updated plan and a record of what has been agreed at the meeting so that everyone knows what they should be doing and when they need to do it by.

What if I'm not happy with the meeting?

If you are not happy with the meeting, you should talk to your child/ren's Social Worker, the Child Protection Conference Chair or the Education & Children's Services Complaints Officer.

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Complaints

If you want to make a suggestion, compliment or complaint about any of the services provided by the Education & Children's Services you can contact the Complaints Officer in any of the following ways:-

Freephone number: 0800 032 1099

Email: ssdcomments@denbighshire.gov.uk

Write to:- The Complaints Officer, Russell House, Churton Road, Rhyl, Denbighshire, LL18 3DP

Web: www.denbighshire.gov.uk/yourvoice

This Information Sheet can be made available in alternative formats upon request.