



Developing Practice Briefing 1: Core Groups

What is the purpose of them?

The Core Group's purpose is to **improve the daily lived experience of the child**, keep them safe from harm and work with the parents/carers to reduce risk. The Core Group is a key mechanism for developing, monitoring and implementing the Child Protection Plan outside of the Child Protection Conference.

What is your role in them?

All members of the Core Group share **joint responsibility** for developing and implementing the Child Protection Plan and ensuring that the group remains child-focussed, with the child's needs taking priority.

Arranging and Attending Core Groups

- The initial Core Group date is agreed at the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) – held within 10 working days of the conference.
- All subsequent Core Groups due to be held between conferences are arranged at the first core group meeting after the conference (at a frequency of every 4 weeks);
- Core Group Meetings **should be given absolute professional priority** and should only be cancelled or re-arranged in 'exceptional circumstances'.
- Core Groups will appoint a vice chair for subsequent core groups to stand in when required

Information Sharing in the Meeting

- If a professional is unable to attend a core group meeting a written report should be submitted.
- **Information should be shared openly and honestly**, agencies should own their information and share with the parents/carers prior to the meeting.
- All updates (written or verbal) should include:
 - what has changed for the child(ren) and parents/carers and what does this tell you;
 - what is working well and what is not (including completion of any actions assigned to you); and
 - what are your worries at this point in time and potential solutions to address these worries.

Core Groups actions

- The Child Protection Plan is reviewed at each Core Group and **actions correlate to the plan, are centred around risk and are SMART** (specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).
- Actions arising from the Core Group will be reviewed at subsequent meetings.

Meeting Recording

- All meetings should have a partnership approach to chairing and note taking (shared responsibilities)
- The final core group before the conference should **provide a recommendation to the Review Conference**.
- Notes will be distributed within 10 working days of the Core Group.

For the full multi-agency child protection procedures please follow this link:

<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>