**Child Protection Core group**

**Terms of Reference (ToRs)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Family Name |  |
| Date ToRs agreed |  |

**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. This group is smaller than the Child Protection Conference and is less formal.

**Purpose of the group**

Core groups are responsible for developing the child protection plan from the agreements made at the initial child protection conference.

Core groups are also responsible for implementing the child protection plan jointly with the child and family involved. Everyone should attend each core group meeting knowing what they should be doing and by when, to ensure the plan is progressing as agreed and to deliver and sustain change for the child involved.

**Roles and responsibilities**

All core group members are jointly responsible for implementing the Child Protection Plan.

Each core group has a lead social worker who co-ordinates the multi-agency work under the child protection plan, including convening and chairing core groups. Each core group will also identify a deputy lead who, in the absence of the lead social worker, will:

* Chair the core group meeting
* Support the function of the core group and to ensure that decision making and actions are carried forward in line with the Child Protection Plan
* Should immediate changes to the Child Protection Plan in response to a situation be required, the deputy lead and core group members can make a decision in principle which is then taken to the relevant Children’s Social Care team manager for sign-off

All core group members are to:

* Remember that the child’s needs remain paramount and maintain a child-centred focus
* Contribute to multi-agency assessments and information-sharing, working openly and transparently with families in accordance with the Oxfordshire Safeguard Children’s Board (OSCB) information sharing protocol (available on the OSCB website)
* Provide a significant events chronology from their own agency's involvement if requested and appropriate
* Propose additional professional members of the core group as required to meet the provisions of the Child Protection Plan
* Attend and participate in core group meetings or other relevant meetings. If a member cannot attend, apologies and an update should be supplied to the lead/ deputy lead
* Carry out the agreed actions to implement the Child Protection Plan. If this is not possible, the core group must be consulted before any plans regarding the child or family are altered. These changes should be relayed to the Independent Chair where significant.
* Communicate regularly with the lead core group member and all members of the core group about the progress of their role in the agreed Child Protection Plan
* Inform core group members of any change in circumstances relevant to the Child Protection Plan and ensure the Independent Chair is updated of any changes.
* When required, inform core group members of the need to reconvene either a core group meeting or the Child Protection Review Conference
* Help identify where gaps in service provision are inhibiting the progress of the Child Protection Plan. When unable to address, core group members to alert the relevant team manager to escalate as appropriate

**Education**

School Applications and Transitions from primary to secondary schools should form part of all planning arrangements and there should be a named worker within the core group to support transitions.

**Joint Visits**

The core group will support for the statutory home visit required as part of the Child Protection Plan by coordinating relevant professionals to undertake this visit jointly. Observations from these joint visits should be shared and fed back to the core group as appropriate.

**Review of the Child Protection Plan**

The Child Protection Plan should be reviewed at each core group meeting and changed as necessary.

The lead core group member will distribute the revised Child Protection Plan to core group members and the Conference Chair within five working days of the Core group meeting.

**Meetings**

The date of the first core group is set at the Initial Child Protection Conference. It must take place within ten working days of this initial conference.

Each core group meeting after this must take place at least every six weeks until the child is no longer subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Where possible, a series of meeting dates will be agreed in advance, taking into consideration the normal availability of core group members.

The first core group should be chaired by a team manager or relevant Children’s Social Care representative and should be an opportunity to reflect on the journey to this point and for all involved to really understand the current position.

An outline plan will be drawn up at the initial core group meeting that will address the main aims of the Child Protection Plan.

A core group action plan will be completed and handed out at each meeting, detailing the specific actions/timescales to be completed. All core group members may be asked to take on the role of minute taker when required, using the relevant template to record the meeting.

**Membership**

Core group membership can be amended to suit any plan, but will normally consist of the following:

* Parents/carer
* Child
* Other relevant family members
* Social worker
* Early Intervention representation
* Other professionals in direct regular contact with the child and family

Please set out below the members of this core group:

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| **Core group members** | | |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact details** |
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| **Lead core group members *(to be identified at Initial Child Protection Conference)*** | | |
| Lead member |  |  |
| Deputy-lead member |  |  |
| Relevant Children’s Social Care team manager |  |  |