

INFORMATION about a CARM for Parents / Carers

All people deserve to be protected from harm. Sometimes situations arise where children or young people cause serious hurt or harm towards others. The Scottish Government recognizes that sometimes families need extra support when this happens and so have developed a process called CARM.

What is a CARM?

A CARM is a Care and Risk Management meeting. This is a procedure designed to support children, young people and their families manage the serious risk of harm that their behaviour presents towards others.

This follows the 4 Principles of 'Getting it Right For Every Child';

- A child focused approach.
- A holistic understanding of well-being.
- A preventative approach.
- A joined up approach.

Why are you being asked to attend a CARM?

It is likely the child or young person at the centre of the CARM referral is displaying sexually harmful behaviour and / or behaviour involving serious violence towards other children or young people.

It is recognised a cohesive support network would be the best approach to manage the risk of harm which the problematic behaviour presents to both the child / young person and their victims.

Who will be attending the CARM meeting?

You, as the child or young person's Parent(s) / Carer(s) are asked to attend. The child / young person is asked to attend if it is felt this is in their best interests. The meetings can be stressful and so if you think it would be helpful, you can bring a supporter of your own.

It is usual to invite Professionals who are working with the child / young person, people deemed to be part of the 'team', the 'core group' working for you and your child. Those include people from; Education, Health, Police, Social Work and Community Groups.

Where do the meetings take place?

The meetings usually take place in Social Work Offices or Family Centres. Your child's Social Worker will help you make arrangements and support you to attend.

When is the meeting going to happen?

Once the need for a CARM has been identified, a suitable date, time and location will be organised as soon as possible. Your child's Social Worker or other previously identified relevant professional

will inform you of this meeting. It is very important you attend and so every effort will be made to support you in this.

What happens in the meeting?

Reports are written on the situation by those attending the meeting. You will be given the opportunity to read the reports prior to the meeting by your Social Worker.

At times, it is necessary to hold the first meeting as a 'Professionals Only' meeting or to hold a 'Closed Session' prior to the CARM meeting starting. This means private and confidential information is required to be shared outwith Parent(s) / Carer(s) and Young People's presence. This decision will have been made to protect peoples safety or as a result of on-going crime investigations. If this is deemed the best approach to start with, you will be informed but not invited.

Following the closed session, the meeting can commence which will include Parent(s) / Carer(s) & in most cases the Child or Young Person. The reports are briefly discussed along with an update of the current situation.

Professionals attending will be asked to classify the risk management situation as either; *Aware (Low)*, *Attentive (Medium)* or *Active & Alert (High)*.

After classification of risk management?

Following agreement by the majority of the classification of risk management required, an action plan will be developed by way of a Safety Plan. You as Parent(s) / Carer(s) and your child will be involved in writing these.

Members of the multi-agency team will be specifically identified to fulfil the role of supporting you to manage and follow the Safety Plans. It is important you are able to and do follow the Safety Plans developed for your family.

As the meeting comes to a close, it is usual for the chair to want to identify a date for a 'Core Group' meeting. This meeting is designed to 'check in' with people and assess if the Safety Plan is being followed and is working.

The overall aim of this whole process is for the risk of harm to others be reduced and with the support from your 'Core Group', for your child / young person to be happy and become the best person they can be. As your child's behaviour becomes safer, the risk category can change to a lower level or be removed.

Further support or advice?

It is usual to have questions, queries and want more information. You can ask your child's Social Worker, Education and Health staff, or look on-line. Some useful on-line sites include;

- <http://www.cycj.org.uk/>
- <http://www.childprotectionpartnership.org.uk/>
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2010).