

Aberdeenshire Child Protection Plans and Core Group Guidance

Initial Child Protection Case Conference (ICPCC)

The CP Plan is agreed by the Conference and circulated to all participants and invitees within 5 Calendar days



1st Core Group Meeting

The Core Group, as identified at the CPCC, must meet within 6 weeks. (The date is set at the ICPCC)



Review Child Protection Case Conference (RCPCC)

The purpose is to review progress of the CP Plan and decide if a child's name needs to remain on the Child Protection Register.

1st Review Case Conference will be arranged within 3 months. (Subsequent Review CPCCs will be 6-monthly with exception of unborn baby registrations when 1st review CPCC will be 3 months after birth of the baby).



Core Groups Following Review Conferences

1st Core Group to be arranged at least 6 weeks after the RCPCC to review progress of the CP Plan. The Core Group should meet at least every 6 weeks to review progress of the plan and before the next Review Child Protection Case Conference

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Child Protection Plans

The Child Protection Plan will be agreed at the Initial Child Protection Case Conference (ICPCC).

The Plan must be: -

- Distributed within **five calendar days** of the conference to those attending the conference, and those who were invited but were unable to attend. The person chairing the conference must ensure this is done.
- The plan must confirm the core group of professionals who work with the family and who will have a responsibility to work together to protect and support the child or young person.
- Identify the main outcomes to be achieved to reduce risk
- Agree the key actions to be undertaken prior to the first meeting of the Core Group which must be within 6 weeks of the ICPCC. It must be clear who is responsible for each action.

SMART Protection Plans – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound

A Child Protection Plan is a working document that provides the framework for the activities of all professionals involved with a family. The plan directs action and identifies what each individual role is to support and protect a child.

Plans need to:

- Clearly identify without the use of jargon, the essential outcomes required to keep the child safe.
- Plans must be specific and focus on the needs of the child and not simply on child behaviours. This is particularly important when establishing plans for older children and adolescents. While the Child must be the focus of the plan they need to be considered in the wider context of their family.
- Plans should detail adult carer’s vulnerabilities, such as mental health problems, addictions and care experience, and what if any additional supports may be needed to help them in their caring role. This may involve referrals to other services.

- Plans must detail how outcomes will be achieved (including progress indicators), who is responsible for each action, and what resources will be required. Timescales must be attached to each. The term “ongoing” should not be used as a timescale.
- Plans should recognise and support strengths.
- The Plan must identify how progress will be monitored on a continuing basis by each agency and across the agencies.
- The Plan must include what **action** must be taken by each Core Group member if they become aware of fresh concerns or become aware that aspects of the plan are not being adhered to. This would include missed or failed visits.
- The plan must specifically identify what will happen if further concerns arise, if progress is not being made or there is a lack of cooperation with the agreed Plan.
- The Plan must set out what steps should be taken if there is disagreement about the detail of the plan or the degree of compliance with it.
- The Plan must include cover arrangements for the absence of key people, and how the Core Group will be made aware of such absence.
- The Plan must include date of next Core Group and details of the process to arrange additional Core Group if any professional considers this necessary.
- If the Core Group is recommending to a Review Child Protection Case Conference that a child’s name is to be removed from the Child Protection Register, it must consider and record plans for providing continuing support and monitoring to the child and their family for a transition period immediately after deregistration.
- The Child Protection Plan must be recorded on agreed Pro Forma and distributed to each member of the Core Group including the child (if appropriate) and their family. This must be done within five days of the Plan being agreed. Care needs to be taken that the Plan is made available to professional covering in the case of absence or for a professional joining the Core Group. It will be the responsibility of the **lead professional** to ensure this.
- Out of Hours Service must be made aware that a Child Protection Plan is in place.
- In the case of an unborn baby, a copy of the plan must also be sent to Maternity Liaison for inclusion in antenatal notes.
- **Each agency** should have in place procedures for noting on electronic systems the existence of a plan and for appropriate management oversight of Child Protection Plans.

The Core Group

Who are the Core Group?

Who will form the Core Group will have been decided at the Case Conference and will include:

- Professionals directly working with family members, including the Lead Professional and those whose work is directly with the adults and will have actions in the Child’s Plan.
- Parents or carers
- The child if they are sufficiently mature to understand and can safely and appropriately participate in the group

Functions and Responsibilities of the Core Group

The Core Group will meet **within 6 weeks** of the Case Conference. It is the responsibility of the Core Group to ensure the Child Protection Plan remains focused on achieving better outcomes for the child by reducing the known risks.

The Core Group will:

- Meet within 6 weeks of the Case Conference, and then at least six-weekly thereafter.
- Agree that attending all meetings must be a priority for all members of the Core Group.
- Any member of the Core Group can ask for an additional meeting if they believe this to be necessary. This will be arranged through the lead Professional. Requests can be made in person or by phone call but should be confirmed in writing (email included) within 3 days.
- Core Group members each have distinct roles but have an **equal** and **shared responsibility** to ensure that the Child Protection Plan is working as intended.
- The Core Group must ensure the ongoing assessment of needs and risk for the child by sharing any new information and contribute to the analysis of how any changes impact on the child. Each Core Group member will provide an Agency Update Form for every Core Group meeting to update the progress of the specific actions being undertaken by their agency. The form must be submitted in advance to the Lead Professional.
- Each Core Group member is responsible for ensuring the Child Protection Plan is up to date in that it reflects any changes to the risk and needs of the child. If the Core Group identifies there are increased risks to the child, they must discuss how the Child Protection Plan needs to change, including if emergency protection measures are needed.
- The Core Group must discuss the expectations set out in the Child Protection Plan, including who will visit to see the child, where and when. This must include a Child Protection visit by the allocated social worker, or another designated social worker. Best practice expectation is **weekly** visiting. The child must be seen alone as well as with family.
- The Core Group must agree and record what actions will be taken if key aspects of the plan, including missed appointments, are not being adhered too – either by the family or the professionals working with them.
- The Group must be clear about how they will communicate with each other between meetings and how critical information will be shared. They must ensure this is noted in the Child Protection Plan.
- The Core Group must develop a culture that encourages members who disagree with aspect of the Plan to, in the first instance, share these in the Group.
- It is the responsibility of the person chairing the Core Group to ensure that all members have a clear understanding of what is being agreed in each meeting. It is particularly important to ensure that the child and their parents understand what is being agreed.

- Core Groups for more than one child (sibling group) will be managed based on need and ensure informed participation and proportionate information sharing is discussed with parent(s)/carer(s).
- Emergency Protection measure can be taken out with the Core Group, but in such circumstances Core Group members must be notified, within 24 hours of the action being taken and the reasons for such action explained.
- Members of the Core Group will report back to the RCPCC on the progress of the Child Protection Plan. Where a core group identifies a need to make significant changes to the plan, they should notify the service manager/CPCC Chair **within 3 calendar days or as soon as is practicable**.
- The meeting of the Core Group prior to a Review Child Protection Case Conference where appropriate, may discuss the need or otherwise for continued registration and make a collective recommendation. This decision should then be reflected in each professional's report.
- The record of the core group meeting should be shared within **10 working days** to all Core Group members.

Lead Professional

Every child on the Child Protection Register must have an allocated social worker of appropriate experience and skill to carry out the tasks allocated to them within the Child's Plan. The social worker will be the Lead Professional.

The roles of the lead professional shall be to -

- Co-ordinate and support effective inter-agency working
- Undertake and update the child protection risk assessment and a multi-agency chronology
- The child should be seen on their own and observed both in their home and other settings. Depending on the age and stage of the child the worker should record who is present when they saw the child
- Undertake any subsequent child protection investigations that may be required

Participation of Children/Young People – a right's-based approach

[Children's Rights](#) are the foundation for best practice and sit at the heart of the GIRFEC approach. Articles in the *United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child* ([UNCRC](#)) include the right to an education and good quality health care, the right to play, and rights to protection from being hurt or badly treated.

Article 12 says that every child and young person has a human right to have an opinion. This means we must take children/young people's views into account when making decisions which affect their lives and provide information and support which helps them take part in that decision-making as far as possible. The importance of this to local children and young people is reflected in Statement 1 of [Aberdeenshire's Children & Young People's Charter](#).

- Consideration of the involvement of the child should take cognisance of their age and the emotional impact of attending a meeting to discuss risks they have been

placed at.

- Children attending must be prepared beforehand to allow them to participate in a
- meaningful way. It is crucial that their views are obtained, presented and considered during the meeting.
- This group should provide a less formal way for children, parents and carers to interact with agency and service providers.

Further resources and guidance can be found in the Aberdeenshire [GIRFEC Toolkit](#)

Participation of Partnership Agencies

- To ensure their Agency is represented at all Core Group Meetings
- To ensure that an Agency Update Form is submitted for each Core Group meeting to the Lead Professional

Agency Update Form Template

Agency Update of Action for Child Protection Core Group Meeting

Please note this report will be shared at the Core Group to inform the review of the Plan

Date of Meeting (dd/mm/yyyy)	
Purpose of Core Group	To provide an update of agency action since the CPCC/Review CPCC dated DD/MM/YYYY

Personal Details:

Child/Young Person's Name			
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		Age in years	
Current Address (state if not to be disclosed)			
Name/s of Parents/Carers/ others with parental rights			

Child Protection Plan	
Desired Outcome	
Action	Update
Action	Update
Action	Update
Desired Outcome	
Action	Update
Action	Update
Action	Update
Desired Outcome	
Action	Update
Action	Update
Action	Update

New Information

Information Discussed with child/young person/parents	Yes	No
Please state reasons for not discussing:		

Practitioner Signature:	
Role/Agency	
Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	

Please submit this to the Lead Professional in advance of the core group.

Record of Core Group Meeting Template

Child Protection - Record of Core Group Meeting

Date of Meeting (dd/mm/yyyy)	
Purpose of Core Group	To review progress of actions within Child Protection Plan

Personal Details:

Name		Child's CareFirst Num	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)		Age in years	
Main Address			
Current Address			
Has address or other information to be withheld?		Date of Address Change (dd/mm/yyyy) (If applicable)	
Name/s of Parents/Carers/ others with parental rights			
School/Nursery			
GP			
Named Person		Contact details	
Legal Status			

How were the views of the child reported to the meeting?
Give details eg Viewpoint, Having Your Say etc

In Attendance:	Name	Relationship to Child/Young Person	Report provided Yes/No
Apologies:			

Child Protection Plan	
Desired Outcome:	
Action	Progress Indicator
Update	
Action	Progress Indicator
Update	
Action	Progress Indicator
Update	
Action	Progress Indicator
Update	
Desired Outcome:	
Action	Progress Indicator
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New Information/action (including update to risk assessment and parental views)

Date of Review Child Protection Case Conference

Inaccuracies or omissions in this Record of Meeting should be notified immediately to the chairperson; otherwise it will be assumed that the record is agreed.

Chairperson's Signature

Signed: Chairperson of the Meeting	
Date (dd/mm/yyyy):	