

NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD  
**CHILD PROTECTION PLANS**

## CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Formulation of the Child Protection Plan
3. The Lead Social Worker Role
4. The Core Group
5. Difficulties in Implementing the Child Protection Plan

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When a conference decides that a child should be the subject of a Child Protection Plan, a qualified social worker must be appointed as the Lead Social Worker to co-ordinate all aspects of the inter-agency child protection plan.

The Child Protection Plan must make clear to the child, family, and all relevant professionals the exact nature of the concerns which resulted in the child requiring the plan.

The Child Protection Plan should set out what work needs to be done, why, when and by whom. If there are obstacles to progressing the Child Protection Plan that cannot be satisfactorily addressed, an early Child Protection Review Conference must be convened.

The Child Protection Plan can be used as evidence in any legal proceedings of the services which have been put in place to work in partnership with the child and family to reduce the level of risk.

The Core Group is the forum to co-ordinate this multi-agency, collaborative work and the membership will have been identified at the initial child protection conference.

## 2. FORMULATION OF THE CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

### PURPOSE OF CHILD PROTECTION PLAN

The purpose of a child protection plan is to facilitate and make explicit a co-ordinated approach to:

- Ensure that each child in the household is safe and prevent them from suffering further harm;
- Promote the child's welfare, health and development;
- Provided it is in the best interests of the child, to support the family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child.

It must be clarified for parents:

- What the causes for concern are that have resulted in the decision that a child needs a child protection plan;
- What needs to change and contingency plans if not;
- What the intended outcomes of the intervention and services are;
- What is expected of them as part of the plan for safeguarding the child.

Review of progress on achieving the outcomes set out in the child protection plan and consideration as to whether changes need to be made should be an agenda item at each review conference and core group meeting. Contingency plans should be made, if there is no evidence of change in relation to the child's safety and welfare.

## **DETAILED CHILD PROTECTION PLAN**

The lead social worker must ensure that there is a record of the core group meetings and must ensure that they formulate the detailed Child Protection Plan setting out timescales and expected outcomes for the child.

The child protection plan should take into consideration the wishes and feelings of the child, and the views of the parents, insofar as they are consistent with the child's welfare. The lead social worker should make every effort to ensure that the child/ren and parents have a clear understanding of the planned outcomes, that they accept the plan and are willing to work to it.

The completed child protection plan should be explained to the child in a manner which is in accordance with their age and understanding. The child should be given a copy of the plan written at a level appropriate to their age and understanding, and in their preferred language.

Professionals should ensure that the parents understand:

- The evidence of the child suffering significant harm, or likely significant harm, which resulted in the child becoming the subject of a child protection plan;
- What needs to change;
- What is expected of them in the plan to safeguard the child.

If the parents' preferences have not been accepted in the plan about how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, the reasons for this should be explained. Parents should be told about their right to complain and make representations, and how to do so.

All parties should be clear about the respective roles and responsibilities of family members and different agencies in implementing the child protection plan.

Copies of the plan should be circulated to core group members within five working days of the core group meeting. Implementation of the child protection plan must begin immediately.

Any disagreements should have been discussed at the core group meeting, recorded with reasons and reflected appropriately in the written plan. It is permissible to rely on electronic signatures or emails confirming acceptance of an agency's responsibilities under the Child Protection Plan, but all such signatures and emails must be collected in the child's social care record.

The Child Protection Plan should also be on the adult service user's record if the parent is known to adult social care or health services.

All agencies are responsible for the implementation of the child protection plan and all professionals must ensure they are able to deliver their commitments or, if not possible, that these are re-negotiated.

### **3. THE LEAD SOCIAL WORKER ROLE**

It is important that the role of the lead social worker is fully explained at the Initial Child Protection Conference and at the Core Group.

At every initial or pre-birth conference, where a child protection plan is put into place, the conference chair must name a qualified social worker, identified by the Children's social care manager, to fulfil the role of lead social worker for the child.

The lead social worker should complete the Assessment of the child and family, securing contributions from core group members and others as necessary. They should co-ordinate the contribution of family members and other agencies to plan the actions which need to be taken, put the child protection plan into effect, and review progress against the planned outcomes set out in the plan.

## NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

The lead social worker should also regularly ascertain the child's wishes and feelings, and keep the child up to date with the child protection plan and any developments or changes.

The lead social worker should:

- See the child (infants and babies to be seen awake) every two weeks;
- See the child on their own on at least alternate occasions;
- Explain the plan to the child in a manner which is in accordance with their age and understanding and agree the plan with the child;
- See the child's bedroom as agreed in the plan but not less than alternate occasions;
- Undertake direct work with the child and family in accordance with the child protection plan, taking into account the child's wishes and feelings and the views of the parents in so far as they are consistent with the child's welfare;
- Convene and lead second and subsequent core group meetings (the first core group meeting having been led by their manager). Complex cases will continue to be led by a manager;
- Provide a written record of meetings for all core group members and the Children's social care manager;
- Ensure that the outline child protection plan is developed, in conjunction with members of the core group, into a detailed multi-agency protection plan;
- Clearly note and include in the written record any areas of disagreement;
- Produce a written agreement from the protection plan to be maintained on the child's file and circulated to the core group members;
- Obtain a full understanding of the family's history, which must involve reading previous social care files as well as current records in use in Children's social care, including those relating to other children who have been part of any households involving the current carers of the child. Additional information should be obtained from relevant other agencies and local authorities;
- Complete the assessment of the child and family, securing contributions / information from core group members and any other agencies with relevant information;
- Co-ordinate the contribution of family members and all agencies in putting the plan into action and regularly reviewing the objectives stated in the plan;
- The lead social worker must maintain a complete and up-to-date signed record on the child's current file, electronic or manual.

## 4. THE CORE GROUP

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The core group is responsible for the detailed formulation and implementation of the child protection plan, previously outlined at the conference. Agencies should ensure that members of the core group undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively in accordance with the agreed child protection plan.

All members of the core group are jointly responsible for:

- Collecting information to assist the lead social worker in completing the assessment;
- Participating in the compilation and analysis of the assessment;
- The formulation and implementation of the detailed child protection plan, specifying who should do what, by when;
- Carrying out their part in implementing the plan including the commitment of identified resources;
- Monitoring and evaluating progress against specified outcomes for the child of the detailed child protection plan;

## NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

- Making recommendations to subsequent Review Conferences about future protection plans and the child's needs being met stipulating specific outcomes;
- Attending core group meetings and reviewing progress to ensure that there is no drift in achieving the aims of the Child Protection Plan;
- The core group must ensure that the child protection plan sets out the frequency for all core group members to see the child and the frequency of all contacts;
- All action points must be clearly recorded, analysis of the risk of harm to the child should be made and all the information should be shared with the lead social worker and the core group. All core group members are responsible for keeping a record of the outcome of the meeting.

If the lead social worker or any other involved professional has difficulty obtaining direct access to the child, the Children's social care manager/ child protection adviser/ conference chair should be informed, as well as other core group members. This must result in a plan of action agreed between core group members and the police including consideration of convening a review conference.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership of the core group will have been identified at the initial child protection conference and must include:

- The lead social worker/ first line manager. Which one of these professionals chairs/ leads the core group is dependent on the complexity of the case;
- The child if appropriate;
- Parents and relevant family members;
- Professionals involved with the child and / or parent;
- Foster carers or residential care staff who will have direct contact with the family.

Core groups are an important forum for working with parents, wider family members, and children of sufficient age and understanding. Where there are conflicts of interest between family members in the work of the core group, the child's best interests should always take precedence.

### **TIMING**

The date of the first core group meeting must be within ten working days of the initial child protection conference. After that the core group should meet within four weeks of the first meeting and at a minimum frequency of once every month following the first review conference. More regular meetings may be required according to the needs and age of the child.

The first core group meeting date must be arranged at the end of the conference.

Dates for future meetings must be agreed at the first core group meeting following each conference. Where a meeting needs to be rescheduled, this must be confirmed in writing to all concerned by the lead social worker.

## **5. DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE CHILD PROTECTION PLAN**

Where any member of the core group is aware of difficulties implementing the protection plan, the lead social worker must be informed immediately and a core group meeting / discussion co-ordinated to agree a reconsidered child protection plan. Alternatively a strategy discussion/meeting should be convened to consider the need for immediate emergency police action to gain access to a premises where appropriate, a Section 47 Enquiry, legal action, and/or to bring forward the date of the review child protection conference. Arranging a legal planning meeting should be considered by the lead social worker with their line manager.

## NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Circumstances about which the lead social worker should be informed include inability to gain access to a child who is subject to a child protection plan, for whatever reasons, on two consecutive home visits (the second visit being a second attempt to see the child in close succession of the first attempt).

If members are concerned that there are difficulties implementing the protection plan arising from disagreement amongst professional agencies or a core group member not carrying out agreed responsibilities this must be addressed by:

- First, discussion with core group members;
- Second, if required, involvement of respective managers / child protection advisers (e.g. child protection manager for Children's social care, designated / named safeguarding children doctor / nurse, teacher or police DCI);
- If the situation remains unresolved see **Concern and Conflict Resolution Escalation Procedure**.