

Remember

- You are the most important person in your child's life.
- Your views and feelings will be heard and respected.
- There is a commitment from all Child Welfare Agencies to help and support you at this difficult time.

If you are able to work with people who are committed to help you, it is likely that your child will remain safe.

Further helpful information is available from:

- A solicitor who works with children
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Family Rights Group (Advice Line) Tel: 0808 801 0366
- Children's Legal Centre (Child Law) Tel: 0808 802 000

Complaints

If you have a complaint please contact your social worker and a complaints leaflet will be made available to you. Complaints should be made in writing to:

Customer Feedback and Complaints Officer – Children and Families Services,
Customer Feedback and Complaints Team, Staffordshire County Council,
2 Staffordshire Place,
Tipping Street,
Stafford
ST16 2DH

Contact Centre: 0300 111 8000
www.staffordshire.gov.uk

If you would like this document in another language or format, e.g. large text, please contact the Communications Team (Families First) on 01785 277135

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Core Groups

Information for Parents and Carers



What is a core group?

A core group is a group of people, including parents, identified during a Child Protection Conference, as having an important role to play with your child and family.

What does a core group do?

A core group puts in place arrangements for making positive changes to keep your child safe from harm.

Details of these arrangements will be written down in a child protection plan which you will be given a copy of, as well as core group minutes.

What is in the Child Protection Plan?

- What changes need to happen.
- How change will happen and your role in it.

How often does a core group meet?

A core group meets as often as the members think is necessary to bring about change. The first meeting will take place within 10 days of the initial Child Protection Conference. Meetings will then be every 4-6 weeks until your child is no longer subject to a child protection plan.

Only a Child Protection Conference can make the decision that your child no longer needs a child protection plan, this decision cannot be made by the core group.

Can I bring someone with me to the meetings?

If you feel you need support, you can bring someone with you to the meetings. You should ask your child's social worker who to bring as confidential information will be discussed at the meeting.

What should I do before the first meeting?

Your child's social worker will explain what is likely to happen at the meeting. Try to think of things that may need to change for your child or your family. It may help if you have your ideas written down to take to the first meeting.

What can I expect to happen at the first meeting and what will I have to do?

The person who chairs the meeting will introduce you to the other people (you should already know most of these people).

They will try to put you at ease by explaining how the meeting will work, what it hopes to achieve and how you can help to put the child protection plan together.

You will be able to contribute your own ideas and your reasons for them. Other members of the core group should be prepared to listen and to give their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with you.

What can I do if I disagree with the child protection plan?

Members of the group may not agree about what to do for the best. If you feel strongly that your views have not been properly considered, you can do the following.

Ask the group to think about the way you feel and to look for other options.

Speak to your child's social worker, or another member, away from the meeting.

Ask an experienced advocate (a person skilled in speaking up for someone else) to come to future meetings with you and speak for you. (Remember to discuss this with your child's social worker.)