Practice Guidance

Core Group & Care Team Meeting Guidance 2020

*This document should be read in conjunction with the Core Procedures Manual*

Core Group & Care Team meetings are held for children in care, children on Child In Need plans (Care Team Meetings) and children subject to Child Protection Plans (Core Group Meetings).

In this document you will find best practice guidance in relation to Care Team & Core Group Meetings. Social workers and Practitioners should also refer to the TriX Core Procedures Manual in relation to the performing of all statutory tasks linked to Children in our care, those in need and those in need of protection.

Practice Guidance

**Purpose:** The purpose of these meetings is to share information and ensure the Plan for the child/ren who are either “Looked after” by the local authority, subject to Child Protection Plans, or subject to Child In Need plan are being followed and progressed.

Life isn’t static, things change all the time, so it’s important to have these meetings so that everyone is informed and up to date with how the child/ren are doing and how the plan is supporting us to progress things for the child/ren and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

The Plan (Care Plan, CIN Plan, CP Plan) should be reviewed and considered within each meeting and details of how actions have progressed or been completed documented within the minutes. Where there is drift or delay, this should also be noted and how this will be appropriately addressed and escalated recorded within the meeting minutes.

**Frequency:** Core Group and Care Team meetings should held regularly, at intervals not exceeding 4 weeks (child protection) or 6 weeks (CIN and Children in Care). The frequency of meeting should be determined by the Care Team or Core Group and reviewed by the IRO. **The frequency of meetings should always be scheduled in line with the child’s level of need and the child or family’s individual circumstances**.

**Recording:** As the social worker, you are responsible for ensuring that each Care Team/ Core Group Meeting is minuted. **Care Team Meetings and Core Group Meetings should be recorded using the ICS Care Team and Core Group Minutes Form on CareFirst.** Minutes from the meeting should be shared with all members of the core/care team including parents and where appropriate children and young people **within 5 working days of the meeting**.

**Involving Parents:** Parents must always be encouraged and supported to attend Care Team and Core Group Meetings. At times, it will be necessary to hold split meetings for parents and you should always ensure that where relevant and appropriate an interpreter is made available or the parent/ young person has access to and support from an advocate. Parents views should be recorded within the meeting and should always be sought and considered if for any reason, they are not in attendance.

**Involving Children & Young People:** Children and young people should be actively encouraged and supported to attend their meetings between Reviews, where this is practicable and age appropriate. Where children do not attend their meetings, it is critical that they are informed of the meeting and are provided with an opportunity to discuss the meeting, share their views and wishes and have any questions answered or considered by the Care or Core Team. These discussions and the outcome should be included in the minutes and wider case recordings on the child’s file where necessary.

**Venue:** Core Group/Care Team meetings can take place within Children’s Social Care offices, schools, a nursery, appropriate community settings with private rooms, a family home or placement address. As the Social worker you must ensure that the venue is suitable for the child and their family and should consider how people will get to the meeting and if this is accessible to all parties. At times, meetings may be held virtually, or certain members of the Care/ Core Team may provide an update or join remotely. This should always be noted within the minutes of the meeting. Children, young people and their families must be consulted about the venues for meetings to ensure that they are spaces the family feel comfortable attending or having meetings about their lives and circumstances take place. For example, some children and young people do not wish for their meetings to take place in school as they are concerned about teachers or peers seeing their parents and professionals in the building and the questions that might be asked of them. Where relevant, reasonable support should be provided to parents to attend meetings – this may include support with transport costs.

As the social worker you are responsible for inviting others to the meeting, arranging the venue and chairing the meeting. Minutes of the meeting should be recorded on the child’s file using the Carefirst ICS Form and shared with all parties within 5 working days of the meeting taking place.