

## **Guidance for individuals attending core group meetings in the role of supporter and contract of expectations**

### **Introduction**

Children's wellbeing directorate encourages the meaningful participation of parents at all core group meetings, including through the presence of advocates or supporters. The role of supporter is distinct from the role of advocate: an advocate represents a recognised, regulatory body and is present in a professional capacity, whereas a supporter will have a prior personal relationship with the parent they are supporting.

This guidance explains the role of supporters at core group meetings, and the standards of conduct that are expected.

This guidance has been written in accordance with Herefordshire safeguarding children board's procedures in relation to children subject to a child protection plan (West Mercia consortium procedures).

### **The role of the chairperson (the child's social worker, case manager or other professional member of the core group)**

- the presence, number and contributions of supporters at a core group meeting is subject to the agreement of the chairperson
- the level and manner of involvement from supporters should be discussed and agreed with the chairperson in advance of the meeting
- the chairperson should, at the start of the core group meeting, make clear the presence and role of the supporter in attendance and ensure that parent(s) are happy for the supporter to hear the information shared, which is likely to be personal and sensitive
- the chairperson is responsible for ensuring that all core group members conduct themselves appropriately and any person can be asked to leave the meeting as a result of their conduct
- the decision of the chairperson in relation to the presence and role of the supporter is final

### **Supporters CAN:**

- attend a core group meeting with a parent (or person with parental responsibility), for the purpose of expressing the parent's views and supporting the parent to participate in the discussion
- in exceptional circumstances, attend a core group meeting on behalf of a parent for the purpose outlined above, but only with the explicit, written consent of the parent being represented and only where the parent has discussed this directly with the social worker
- ask for clarification of information shared at the core group meeting, through the chairperson

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- be present throughout the core group meeting and hear all information shared
- contribute to discussions in relation to the plan, as appropriate and as part of the core group membership and the family's ongoing support network

### **Supporters CANNOT:**

- express their own views or opinions about any of the information shared
- challenge or question any of the core group members directly
- share any of the information discussed outside of the core group meeting: an intentional breach of data protection in relation to confidential information could result in criminal action being taken against you
- partake in the decision-making at the core group meeting with regard to the detail of the child protection plan
- act as interpreter of any kind – it is the responsibility of the child's social worker to ensure that alternative arrangements are in place where an interpreter is required
- receive core group meeting minutes

### **Complaints**

Supporters are not entitled to make representations by way of complaint in relation to the outcome of, or decisions or recommendations made at, a core group meeting. They may however, in their role as supporter, support a parent or child to make such representations. Supporters are entitled to make a complaint on their own behalf if the manner in which they themselves have been treated causes them concern.

### **Statement**

I have read the guidance above and understand my role and contribution to this core group meeting, as supporter. I have had the opportunity to discuss my role with the social worker in advance of the meeting, and to ask clarifying questions in relation to my role, where appropriate.

I understand the importance of the confidentiality of highly sensitive information and that I must not share any information discussed at core group meetings outside of the meeting.

I understand that should concerns arise before or during the core group meeting regarding my conduct or any aspect of the guidance above not being adhered to, the chairperson may request that I leave the meeting and that ultimately the meeting may be adjourned and reconvened without my presence. I understand that in this regard the decision of the chairperson is final.

Signed:

Print name:

Date: