

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

Core Group Guidance & Resolution Process

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board	Date: March 2022	Status: Endorsed April 2022
Author: Protocols & Procedures Group	Previous Version: December 2021	Review Date: April 2025

1. Introduction

This guidance is provided to set out arrangements for Core Group Meetings for all agencies involved in the reviewing and implementing of Part 4 Care and Support Protection Plans. This guidance has been produced for professionals working with families who have children whose names are on the Child Protection Register in Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend Local Authority areas.

The guidance has been developed to ensure that all staff involved in child protection processes are aware of their roles and responsibilities and the expectations the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board has when Core Groups are being undertaken.

This guidance needs to be read in conjunction with the following:

- Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2020 – [Social care Wales \(safeguarding.wales\)](https://www.safeguarding.wales)
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014- Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 5 - Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk - [Statutory guidance | Information and Learning Hub \(socialcare.wales\)](https://www.socialcare.wales)

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Core Group is to develop and implement the child's Part 4 Care and Support Protection Plan agreed at the Child Protection Conference (referred to in this guidance as the Plan).

All members of the Core Group are equally responsible for its functions. All Core Group members must ensure they have a copy of the Plan (which they should bring to each Core Group meeting) and be able to provide an update of their agency's current involvement and contribution to the ongoing Plan.

The specific responsibilities of the Core Group members are:

- To develop the Outline Plan set at the Initial Child Protection Conference into a detailed working plan
- To review progress against the personal outcomes set out in the Plan in the context of the child's lived experiences
- Ensure the voice of the child is heard and their views, wishes and feelings are considered
- Identify in detail the risks of ongoing significant harm to the child and the impact this will have/has had on their wellbeing and how these will be addressed
- To identify and seek to resolve any barriers to achieving the personal outcomes set out in the plan, being particularly mindful of the need to ensure that the family are clear about what is expected of them and what they need to do to keep their children safe

- To agree the priorities to be addressed before the next Core Group meeting
- To agree priorities and identify who will be responsible for implementing the individual actions in the Plan.
- To identify any concerns that the family might be presenting with feigned compliance or 'shutting down' in terms of their involvement with any agency involved in the Core Group planning.
- Consider how practitioners can work specifically with the family to support them to make the necessary changes to improve the child/ren's lived experience and protect them from harm
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of practitioners and family members engaged in the plan
- Agree the frequency of contact with the child by the care and support protection plan co-ordinator (referred to in this guidance as social worker) and/or other core group members
- Establish what further and specialist assessments are required and who will commission these
- Establish child-focussed milestones and specific outcome measures to ensure all of the core group members understand what life will need to look like for the child/ren at the point of de-registration
- Review actions completed by the family and practitioners and the extent to which they have contributed to improving the lived experience of the child and protected them from harm
- Review any completed assessments of the needs of the child and their family and consider how findings will contribute to further developing the plan
- Agree contingency arrangements in the event family members are not complying with the plan or there is drift/delay in achieving the set outcomes
- Ensure up to date information is provided to subsequent Child Protection Conferences
- To request that the Review Child Protection Conference is brought forward where there are significant changes in the child's circumstances, or risks are escalating, or there are significant parts of the Plan which are considered to be unachievable. Equally an earlier Child Protection Conference should be arranged if all core group members agree that risks identified in the plan have been sufficiently reduced.
- To initiate the resolution process when the Plan for a child or young person on the Child Protection Register is not reducing the risk, or the child's name remains on the Child Protection Register for 15 months, or following the 3rd Review Conference, whichever is the soonest.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRING

The membership of the Core Group is agreed at the initial child protection conference. It is important to emphasise that the Wales Safeguarding Procedures state that the social worker **should not** chair the meeting and this should be undertaken by a representative from another agency. The Core Group is managed and co-ordinated by the child's social worker and needs to comprise of:

- Key professionals from agencies involved with the child and/or their family, as identified by conference or co-opted by the Core Group itself.
- The parent(s).

- The child / young person (where appropriate).
- The child's carers (family members, foster carers or residential carers).

Where other agencies become involved, the social worker must include them as members of the Core Group.

Child Participation at Core Group Meetings

Depending on the age/level of understanding the child, it may be appropriate for them to be given the opportunity to attend the core group.

When making this decision the following should be considered:

- What are the views of the child or young person? Do they want to attend in person, have an advocate or have their views fed into the core group in other ways?
- Do practitioners who know the child well believe it is appropriate for them to attend?
- What is the potential impact on family relationships?

If the child attends the core group, then:

- The venue and time of meetings should take into account their needs;
- Every effort should be made to facilitate active participation without detracting from the aim of the meeting and plan.

Where a child does not attend the core group, it is primarily the allocated Social Workers responsibility to:

- Ascertain the child's view about the situation;
- Establish whether the child feels safe;
- Gain the child's view as to whether the quality of their lived experience has improved

Where appropriate a child can identify another professional and/or advocate to ascertain the above to share at Core Group.

The Role of the Chair of the Core Group Meeting

The Chair of the Core Group can be any member but **should not** be the social worker who is responsible for recording agreed amendments to the Plan and completing the Care and Support Protection Plan Review document after the Core Group meeting.

Chairing should be carried out on a rota basis with all agencies taking on the role in turn. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that:

- Discussion in the meeting is focussed on the Plan and that where information is shared about recent events or developments, it is made clear what the impact has been on the progress of the Plan and the lived experiences of the child.
- All those at the meeting contribute to reviewing the progress of the Plan and deciding the priority areas that will be addressed before the next Core Group meeting

- All members are clear about their roles and responsibilities in implementing the Plan.
- Core Group members agree what action is to be taken if the Plan is not reducing the risks or is no longer relevant (for example because there has been a significant change in the child's circumstances)
- Core Group members consider the work that has been undertaken by family members and practitioners and the degree of success against the child-centred objectives and positive outcomes for the child
- Challenge both the family and practitioners if there is a lack of meaningful engagement with the plan
- Ensure the group remains task focussed and the timescales for actions do not drift;
- Ascertain progress of any commissioned specialist assessments not yet completed and how any findings to date will contribute to further developing the plan

The Social Worker's responsibility is to:

- Actively engage with the child
- Act as the point of contact for the child and their family.
- **Coordinate** Core Group meetings within specified timescales
- Make sure the record of the meeting, any actions and Plan is updated and circulated to members of the Core Group within five working days following the meeting.
- Coordinate the contributions of family members and other agencies and plan individual's actions within the Plan.
- Coordinate and share any assessments including toolkits and risk assessments completed, with the other members of the Core Group.

The responsibilities of other Core Group members are:

- To chair the meeting as necessary. This is a multi-agency responsibility.
- To prioritise attendance at Core Group meetings
- To participate fully and contribute to the development and review of the plan
- In the event that a practitioner cannot attend they should provide a report that provides sufficient detail regarding contact with the family, work undertaken and any challenges and successes, to enable those at the Core Group to assess the quality and effectiveness of the family and practitioners engagement with the plan
- Bring a copy of the plan to Core Group meetings
- To carry out agreed tasks, including contributing to any assessments
- To alert the social worker to any new concerns or change in circumstances without delay
- To raise concerns when the plan is not addressing risk
- To alert the social worker to any issues of feigned compliance or parental refusal to engage without delay
- To manage interaction with the family
- To provide a report to the Review Child Protection Conference in relation to the progress of the plan

- To escalate any professional disagreements to their safeguarding leads as necessary

4. CORE GROUP MEETINGS

Frequency

The initial Core Group needs to meet within a maximum of 10 working days from the Initial Child Protection Conference being held. Thereafter it needs to meet no later than every six weeks, but must be more often if necessary to safeguard the child.

Venue

The family's personal circumstances must be considered when arranging the venue for the Core Group meetings.

Adding to the Plan

It is the Core Groups' responsibility to develop the outline care and support protection plan. If the Core Group identifies any additional actions for completion that would contribute towards safeguarding the child or family and reducing risks, these should be added to the outline plan that is produced by the Initial Conference.

Though the personal outcomes can only be changed with agreement at conference, the actions in plans should change in response to the family's circumstances and progress in achieving the outcomes - no positive change probably means the case is drifting.

Deciding Not to Implement Any Aspect of the Plan

Core Group members have responsibility for overseeing the Care and Support Plan and may make amendments to the plan as appropriate i.e. Provision of new service. Core Group members can mark tasks as achieved. If the Core Group feels there is a significant change to the Care and Support Plan then the allocated social worker should have a discussion with the conference chair about whether a child protection conference needs to be convened earlier. The outcomes set at Conference can only be removed at the Review Child Protection Conference.

Record of the Core Group Meeting

All Core Group meetings must be recorded in writing, including notes on actions agreed and decisions taken. The written record of the meeting will be completed by the social worker. The record of the meeting and amended care and support protection plan should be circulated within 5 working days.

The record should include:

- Attendance – and apologies received;

- A review of the record of the previous meeting for accuracy and any outstanding matters;
- Actions undertaken by family and practitioners on the plan since the last meeting: progress towards personal outcomes in the context of the child's daily experiences;
- Evaluation of progress should be considered in terms of achieving child-focused outcomes;
- Any adjustments or revisions to the plan and agreed with timescales;
- Plan of work to be completed and by whom before the next meeting;
- Date of next meeting.

Families who are not co-operating with safeguarding concerns

There can be a wide range of behaviours that indicate a lack of engagement and all agencies that work with children and their families will come into contact with families whose compliance is apparent rather than genuine, or who are more obviously reluctant, resistant or sometimes angry or hostile in their approach.

In these cases, the Core Group should also refer to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Protocol for [Working with Families who are not Co-operating with Safeguarding Concerns](#).

Disagreement amongst Professionals about the Plan

Members of the Core Group are encouraged to actively support and challenge one another to ensure that the personal outcomes in the Care and Support Protection Plan are achieved.

In cases where any issues cannot be resolved in the Core Group, members should refer to the [J4 Protocol for Resolving Concerns regarding Inter-agency Safeguarding Practice - September 2019 \(cwmtafmorgannwgsafeguardingboard.co.uk\)](http://cwmtafmorgannwgsafeguardingboard.co.uk)

5. RESOLUTION PROCESS

If a member of the core group believes the Care and Support Protection Plan is not reducing the risk to the child/children, the resolution process can be initiated by any professional involved in the Core Group at any time. It can also be initiated by conference chairs and Chairs of CSE Strategy meetings. Tier 1 should be triggered by submission of document see Appendix 3.

The resolution process will automatically be triggered following the third review conference or 15 months on the register, whichever is earliest. The Independent Reviewing Officer will be responsible for explaining this to the parent including the detail about the reasons for this happening, what is trying to be achieved and how this is done. Each local authority will make internal arrangements for notifying relevant managers of the automatic trigger.

It is possible to delay this trigger under some circumstances when a Tier 1 meeting could not progress, for example, ongoing Criminal or Private Law Proceedings. This

delay will only occur where the Independent Reviewing Officer and Team Manager both agree this delay is needed. This decision must be reviewed at Core Group and also by Team Manager and should be considered as an agenda item in subsequent core group meetings following the automatic trigger.

Where the core group has triggered the resolution meeting the core group member making the referral is responsible for arranging a Tier 1 resolution meeting within 10 working days of the request and for informing the parent this is taking place. The core group member is also responsible for explaining to the parents the reasons for this happening, what is trying to be achieved and how this is done.

Tier 1 Resolution Meeting

1. The core group member raising the resolution will convene a meeting for the professionals involved in the Core Group and their line managers (see Tier 1 list - Appendix 2). The meeting should not include the family.
2. Consideration will also be given to inviting a representative from the local authority's legal department and a police representative if there is significant involvement.
3. The meeting will be chaired by the Children Services Team Manager and a set agenda will be followed (Appendix 4), to include:
 - A review of the Plan and any completed/reviewed assessments, as well as any specialist assessments (see list - Appendix 5).
 - **Consideration of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Working with Families who are not Co-operating with Safeguarding Concerns protocol.**
 - Ensuring that the conference chair, the parents and the child/young person are updated following the meeting.

The agreed outcome of the Tier 1 Resolution Meeting will be a revised Care and Support Protection Plan. The Tier 1 meeting participants should decide who is responsible for sharing the outcome of the Tier 1 meeting and the revised plan with the parents, child/young person (where appropriate), core group members and conference chair without delay. The Plan should then be reconsidered at the next Core Group meeting that will be chaired by the allocated social worker. This will take place no later than 6 weeks following the Tier One meeting, to formally review the progress of the revised Care and Support Protection Plan. The social worker must update the Team Manager on progress of the plan or any ongoing concerns in achieving the child's wellbeing outcomes.

Following this core group meeting, if there is no evidence of significant risk reduction, the social worker should discuss this with their Team Manager and/or relevant Principal Officer/Service Manager. The maximum time Tier 1 can be sustained without significant risk reduction is 12 weeks. Tier 2 must be triggered unless there is evidence of significant reduction in risk.

Tier 2 Resolution Meeting

If there has been no positive change after 12 weeks, the Childrens Services Team Manager must escalate the case with their Principal Officer/Service Manager who will convene and chair a meeting within 10 working days with the relevant senior managers from partner agencies. A full options appraisal to agree what action is needed to safeguard the child/young person or break down barriers that are preventing the plan from progressing. Consideration to be given to the Local authority Legal Representative being present.

Monitoring and Reporting

- The Chair of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 meetings will report the outcome to the Children's Services to their Senior Manager/Head of Service and the conference chair using the template in Appendix 4.
- The local authority performance management team will report to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Children's Quality Assurance and Performance Subgroup on the number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 meetings being held and develop a trigger for review after 6 months.

6. REPORTING TO THE REVIEW CONFERENCE

The Core Group is jointly required to provide an updated Plan to the Review Child Protection Conference. Practitioner members of the Core Group must produce individual agency reports and updated chronologies for the review conference. Where possible, particularly if there are concerns about feigned compliance/disengagement from services, group members should formulate a multi-agency chronology.

When making recommendations to remove a child's name from the Child Protection Register, this should be informed by any completed assessments and a careful and thorough analysis of all the information available **that evidences that the risk of significant harm has reduced.**

If Core Group members feel that a decision to remove a child's name from the Child Protection Register is unsafe, they should speak to the conference chair and/or their own safeguarding leads at the earliest opportunity and where appropriate use the resolution process to resolve any disagreements.

If Core Group members are satisfied that the threshold for continuing risk of significant harm is no longer met at the review conference, consideration should be given to any continuing support needs for the child and family and make recommendations in respect of these. There should never be an automatic withdrawal of support.

Appendix 1:

List of assessment tools that can inform the Child Protection Care and Support Plan:

Risk Assessment Tool
SERAF Assessment
CSE Strategy Meetings Guidance
Neglect Tool
Risky Behaviour Tool
Chronology Table
DASH Assessment
IFST Assessment
PAMS Assessment
Parenting Assessment
Vulnerability and Resilience Tool (Health)
RIC Assessment
AIM2 Assessment
Schools Risk Assessment
Safety Plan (Barnardo's)

Visit <https://www.cwmtafmorgannwgsafeguardingboard.co.uk/> to access these documents.

Appendix 2: Invitees to Resolution Meetings

Tier 1 List - to be invited in addition to Core Group members:

Children's Services Team Manager
Safeguarding Lead (School) or Head Teacher
Health Visitor Safeguarding Supervisor
Police Sergeant
Probation Team Manager
CRC Team Manager
Adult Services Team Manager (Health)
Adult Services Team Manager (Social Care)
YOS Manager (if appropriate)
Legal Rep (if appropriate)
Any other advisors appropriate to the case

Appendix 3: Resolution Request Document
Core Group Guidance Resolution Request

Core Group Escalation Request	
Name of Child/ren	
D.O.B	
Home Address	
Name of allocated social worker	
Name of Person/Agency making Request	
Date of last Core Group meeting	
Brief Summary of Concern including the desired outcome for the child/ren	
Any actions core group members have undertaken to resolve the concern	
Any action your agency has undertaken to resolve the concern	
Date	

Appendix 4: Agenda for Resolution Meeting

Tier 1 or Tier 2 Resolution Meeting

AGENDA TEMPLATE

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Summary of the case and the presenting issues
3. Summary and review of partners' involvement to date (including a review of the Plan and any assessments undertaken)
4. The views of the child(ren) and parent(s)/family members about working with the Care and Support Plan?
5. Analysis of risks, protective factors, parents' ability to change (to include consideration of the Cwm Taf Multi Agency Protocol On Working With Non-Cooperative Families)
6. Agreed outcomes and any actions/timescales (update Plan)
7. Agree on how the outcomes of the meeting and revised plan will be communicated to the family and by whom
8. Date of next Core Group meeting

Appendix 5: Record of Resolution Meeting

Tier 1 or Tier 2 Resolution Meeting

DATE		TIME		VENUE	
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FAMILY DETAILS:

Name	Address	DOB	Relationship to child/young person
			SUBJECT

1. IN ATTENDANCE:

Name	Agency / Involvement

2. SUMMARY OF THE CASE AND PRESENTING ISSUES BASED ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED:

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3. SUMMARY OF PARTNER AGENCIES INVOLVEMENT TO DATE:

4. THE VIEWS OF THE CHILD(REN) AND PARENT(S)/FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT WORKING WITH THE CARE AND SUPPORT PLAN?

5. ANALYSIS OF RISKS, PROTECTIVE FACTORS, PARENTS ABILITY TO CHANGE:

6. AGREE OUTCOME AND ACTIONS/TIMESCALES

7. AGREE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

8. DATE OF NEXT CORE GROUP MEETING:

Flow Chart for C24 Core Group Resolution Process

There are 2 ways to trigger the CP resolution process

Resolution process is triggered when the 15 month point of registration is reached or at 3rd review child protection conference.



It is possible to delay a Tier one meeting in some circumstances if Children's Service Team Manager and Conference chair agree. To be reviewed in Core Group and by Team Manager



Social worker arranges Tier 1 meeting within 10 working days and ensures the parent is aware and understand what is happening



A member of the core group feels that the plan is not protecting the children effectively. They have discussed this with other core group members



Core group member completes the resolution process form requesting a Tier one meeting be held and sends it to the LA social worker



Core Group Member arranges Tier 1 meeting within 10 working days and ensures the parent is aware and understands what is happening



Tier 1 meeting held, chaired by Team Manager. Appendix 4: Agenda to be followed
Plan is revised. Parents informed and new plan shared. Plan active



Social Worker chairs next Core Group within 6 weeks. Risk reduction discussed and new plan reviewed. Team Manager updated.



Risk Significantly Reduced



Risk Does Not Significantly Reduce within 12 weeks
Team Manager escalates

Outcomes of Tier 1 meetings will be collated and reported on a bi-annual basis to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board



Resolution Process Ends

Move to Tier 2

**Tier 2 of the Resolution Process must begin if there has been no significant reduction of risk to the child/children noted in the Tier 1 process above.
(Whether the original trigger was initiated by a core group referral or reached 15 months on the CPR)**

**Tier 2 meeting is arranged no later than 10 working days from the 12 weeks deadline & chaired by a Senior Manager in Social Services.
Attended by senior representatives from each of the Core group agencies and the LA Legal representative
Barriers preventing the plan from progressing established
Actions needed to safeguard the child/children agreed.
Appendix 4: Agenda to be followed**

Outcomes of Tier 2 meetings will be collated and reported on a bi-annual basis to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board