



Strategic Partnership Boards
SAFETY SAFEGUARDING WELLBEING



Bitesize video guide: Core groups

My name is Janine Sherborne and I am a health visitor working in the Leyton area of Waltham Forest. I am going to talk to you about core groups.

When there are significant child protection concerns regarding a child, a multi professional child protection conference takes place. Where there is a risk of significant harm to the child a child protection plan is drawn up detailing what needs to change in the family, and how professionals will work together with the family to reduce the safeguarding risks.

A core group is then formed to support the family and professionals working on the plan and ensure progress is made against it. Parents and relevant family members should always be part of the core group. At the first meeting after the conference the core group are responsible for reviewing the plan and to fine tune it and make any necessary changes.

In Waltham Forest we Think Family and core groups may include workers from adult services who are also working with the family.

At the moment it is mostly the social worker who chairs the core group but any professional can do this and it is good to take turns so the social worker has the opportunity to contribute more.

The meeting must be recorded, and the notes shared with all the professionals and family in a timely way.

At the meetings it is important to review progress and identify if there has been any delay or drift with the actions. If there has been drift the group needs to identify if this has increased the risk to the children and if so, make a decision about addressing this.

The discussion should also include analysing if the risks in general are reducing because of the positive progress of the plan and the work of the parents, or if the risks are increasing. It

is also important to highlight achievements, listen to the views of the parents, discuss what is working well and explore what is not working well for a family. This discussion should include professionals being curious about what is being

said, exploring and asking questions of parents and professionals and not making assumptions.

The progress or lack of progress should be discussed in the context of whether the children should stay on a child protection plan, come off the plan or action should be stepped up to proceedings. This also makes it transparent and clear for parents about the consequences of not making progress or engaging with a plan.

If you are a member of a core group and you cannot attend the meeting, then you should ensure the chair has an update from you and any areas of concern or positive achievements are included.

So, your three messages to take away are:

1. The core group's main function is to ensure that the work agreed in the child protection plan is undertaken. Core groups are expected to drive and monitor the work and discuss as a group what will be recommended at the next conference.
2. core groups need to happen regularly, usually 6 weekly or as agreed at the conference. If core groups are not happening, it is up to each practitioner to escalate concerns to their managers regarding this.
3. core groups are a multi-agency responsibility, if you are a member of the group and cannot attend the meeting you should send an update on progress. The chairing of the core group should be shared by all professionals and not be seen as the responsibility of the social worker.