

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.)

Complaints

If you have a complaint this should be made in writing to:

Complaints Manager
Staffordshire County Council
Social Care and Health Directorate
The Walton Building
Martin Street
Stafford
ST16 2LH

www.staffordshire.gov.uk

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 is a member of the Law Society's Children's Panel.
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Family Rights Group (advice line)
Tel: 0800 7311 696
- Children's Legal Centre (advice line for young people) – Tel: 0800 783 2187

The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board is a partnership between:

Staffordshire County Council – Children and Lifelong Learning

Adult Social Care

District Councils

The Police

Probation

Youth Offending Services

Health

Connexions

CAFCASS

Young Offenders Institutes

The Voluntary Sector

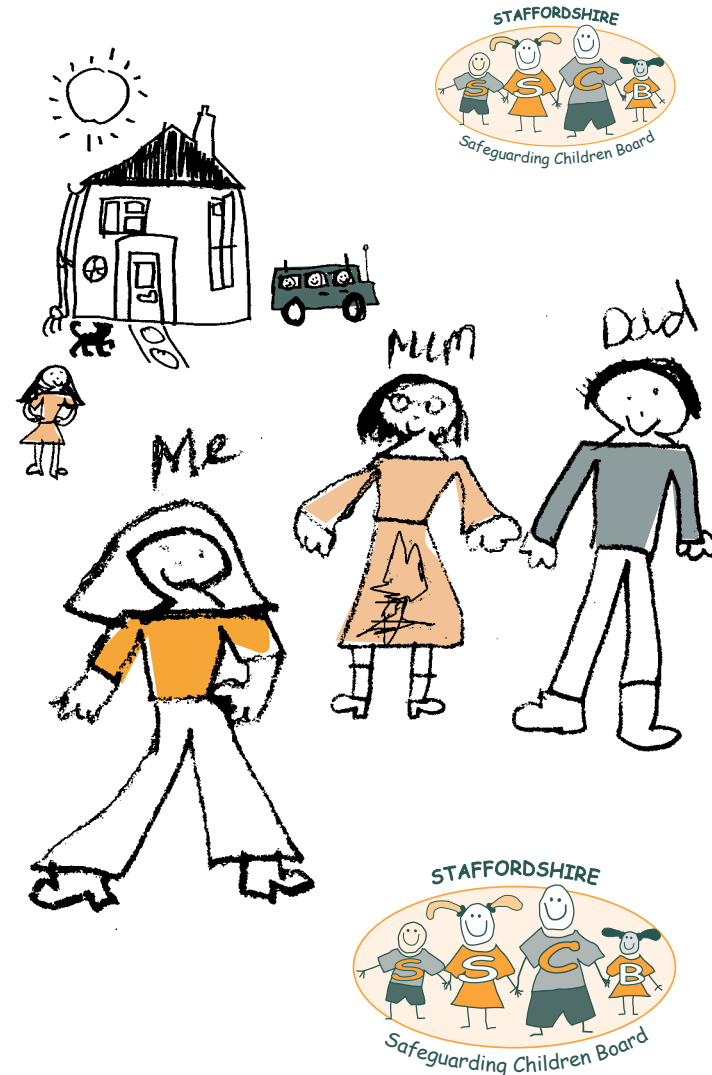
If you would like this document in another language or format, e.g. large text, please contact the Communications Team (Children and Lifelong Learning) on 01785 278666.
www.staffordshire.gov.uk

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Core Groups

Information for Parents and Carers



What is a core group?

A core group is a group of people identified, during a Child Protection Conference, as having an important role to play with your child and family. It is an opportunity for you to work with professionals in protecting your child.

Who will be in the core group?

You will normally be invited to take part. If you cannot be directly involved, we will discuss the reasons for this with you before the group meets.

The group normally includes professionals who are in close contact with you and your child. It will always involve your child's social worker and other people such as health visitors and teachers. If your child is of sufficient age and understanding they may also choose to be involved with the core group.

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.

What might be in the child protection plan?

- How your child's health and development will be monitored.
- What services will be provided to your family.
- How family relationships affect your child.
- Things you need to do to keep your child safe.
- The dates and times you will see professionals.

The progress of the child protection plan will be discussed at future meetings called child protection reviews. This will help us to decide whether your child will continue to need a child protection plan.

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 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.