

Keeping Children Safe in Aberdeenshire Attending Child Protection Planning Meetings (CPPM) – Practitioner Guidance



Purpose of Child Protection Registration

All local authority areas are responsible for maintaining a central register, known as the Child Protection Register, of all children, including unborn children who are the subject of an inter-agency Child Protection Plan. It provides an administrative system for alerting practitioners that there is sufficient professional concern about a child for there to be a multi-agency Child Protection Plan. Where a child is believed to be at actual or potential risk of significant harm, their name should be placed on the Child Protection Register and a Child Protection Plan devised which protects and supports the child. Even where a child is not felt to be at risk of significant harm, there will still often be a need to develop a coordinated Child's Plan and identify a Lead Professional.

What is a Child Protection Planning Meeting?

A Child Protection Planning Meeting (CPPM) is a formal multi-agency meeting that shares agencies' assessments, including chronologies and risk assessments, and identifies necessary actions to protect a child.

Types of Child Protection Planning Meeting

Initial/Pre-birth CPPM

The purpose of an Initial/Pre-birth CPPM is to decide whether there are serious professional concerns about the likelihood of harm through abuse or neglect of a child or unborn child.

This is achieved by

- Ensuring all relevant information held by each agency has been shared and is analysed on an inter-agency basis.
- Considering the views of the child/parent(s)/carer(s).
- Making a decision about whether a child's name should be put on the child protection register.
- Making a child protection plan or child's plan to reduce risk and/or address unmet need.

After consideration of the above, the professionals in attendance have a responsibility to contribute to decision making. The CPPM will also decide whether to refer the child to the Children's Reporter for consideration of compulsory supervision.

Review CPPM

The purpose of a Review CPPM is to consider the progress of the CP plan, whether the child's circumstances have improved or whether the child is still at risk of significant harm. At Review CPPMs professionals will be expected to evidence how the Child Protection plan has addressed the risks to the child (what improvements to the child's circumstances can be evidenced), advise if any further work is required and consider if the child continues to be at actual or potential risk of significant harm. Where there has been a Pre-birth CPPM, the first review will take place within 3 months. The first review for other initial CPPM's is to take place within 6 months. All subsequent reviews take place within 6 months of the previous meeting.

Transfer CPPM

The purpose of a Transfer CPPM is to accept the child's name onto the local CPR, consider the information provided by the transferring authority and ensure that an appropriate CP plan is in place.

Structure of a Child Protection Planning Meeting

- The Chair will meet with the parents/child before the meeting to clarify the meeting process.
- The Closed Session will be held if it has been agreed it is necessary (see info below re closed sessions).
- The Chair will provide an explanation of the purpose of the meeting, introduce participants and note apologies.
- Professionals will be invited to contribute any additional information including any developments since the reports were written.
- Throughout, the chair will offer opportunities and encourage parents/carers to express their views.
- Children and young people should be supported to participate in their meeting, appropriate to their age and stage. This can mean attending all or part of the meeting or providing their views in another way that's comfortable to them.
- The Chair will summarise and state the risks to the child, strengths in the family on which safety for the child may be developed and specify what is needed to change.
- The Chair will ask Professionals to contribute to the decision on whether or not to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register, and if so, under what category (see below for categories).
- If the meeting determines that the child's name is placed on the register, a Protection Plan will be produced at the CPPM (participants should receive a copy of the agreed Plan within five calendar days of the CPPM).

- A decision to place the child's name on the CPR is made by consensus. Where no consensus can be reached the Chair will make the decision and dissent will be recorded.
- A qualified Children's Services Social Worker will be identified as the Lead Professional.
- A 'Core Group' of family members, the child (where appropriate) and professionals is agreed, with a date set for their first Core Group meeting.
- A date for a Review Child Protection Planning Meeting will be set.
- *Note – if the outcome of the meeting is that the child does not require a protection plan but does need help to promote their welfare, the Chair will ensure that the meeting draws up a Child's Plan.*

Child protection registration categories

- Domestic abuse
- Parental alcohol use
- Parental drug use
- Child experiencing mental health problems
- Parent(s) with learning disability
- Child affected by parent/carer mental ill-health
- Child displaying harmful sexual behaviour
- Online safety
- Services find it hard to engage

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Honour based abuse and forced marriage
- Underage sex
- Internet-enabled sexual offending
- Child sexual exploitation
- Female genital mutilation
- Child trafficking
- Criminal exploitation

Closed Sessions

In exceptional circumstances Closed Sessions are held at the beginning of a CPPM to share confidential information about an individual which cannot be shared with the family.' This includes:

- sub-judice information that forms part of legal proceedings and which could compromise those proceedings;
- information from a third party that could identify them if shared;
- information about an individual that may not be known to others, even close family members, such as medical history and intelligence reports;
- information that, if shared, could place any individual(s) at risk, such as a home address or school which is unknown to an ex-partner.

If you feel there is a need for a closed session, you must contact the CPPM Chairperson at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to discuss this.

Provision of Reports

- All relevant information must be shared prior to and at the CPPM, ensuring that all relevant information held by each agency has been shared and considered on an inter-agency basis
- Professionals must be aware that failure to share information available to them which leads to harm to a child will be viewed as a serious neglect of their duty to protect children
- The child's or young person's views should be obtained, presented, considered, and detailed in reports, regardless of whether or not they are present at the CPPM.
- Each agency invited to the CPPM should submit a typed report using their services agreed format, detailing involvement with the child, their family and significant adults in the child's life, including a chronology. Any queries regarding the report format please contact the Child Protection Team at CPTeam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.
- All reports should be submitted to the Chair, via the CP Team, 3 full days prior to Initial CPCC and at least 7 full days prior to Review/Pre-Birth CPPM. Reports are distributed to professionals by the CP Team, but NOT to family members, prior to CPPM. It is the responsibility of each agency to speak to the family, and where appropriate the child, about the content of their report. Each agency should then give a copy of their report to the family. This procedure is due to the sensitive content of the reports.
- 'Restricted Access Information' will not be circulated in writing prior to CPPM although will be shared verbally with those professionals/agencies who need to know.

- 'Restricted Access Information' shared or discussed at the Closed Session may NOT be shared with any other person, including the child and/or family, without the prior permission of the provider
- All information, other than Restricted Access Information, contained in reports will be shared openly with the parent(s)/carer(s) during CPPM.

Expectations of Professionals

- Every agency invited to attend a CPPM is expected to be represented. CPPMs last between 1¹/₂ – 2 hours and professionals are required to stay until the decision making is complete
- If you wish to bring along another professional or student as an observer, seek consent from the family and then contact the CPPM chair to discuss further
- Agencies must ensure that their representative is fully informed and able to bring and speak to all relevant information at the CPPM, including relevant information about parents and significant adults
- Professionals will be expected to consider the information and analyse the risk to the child, i.e. is the child at ongoing risk of significant harm?
- Professionals are required to make their decision on the evidence presented, as to whether or not to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register

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