

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE – CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

RISK MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

A Purpose

The purpose of a Risk Management Meeting is to ensure that when young people are involved in behaviours which pose a high risk to themselves or others the resources of all community agencies are called upon and the risk is owned at an agency level, rather than being left with an individual worker.

Risk Management Meetings are intended to complement (not substitute for) formal children’s planning fora (see B below).

B Main Planning Fora

1. Child Protection Case Conference

A Child Protection Case Conference will be convened if a child is at risk of abuse or if a child poses a risk to others.

The social work service will convene a case conference if a case requires multiagency discussion and planning. Any agency can ask the social work service to convene a Child Protection Case Conference about a particular child, such requests should be made in writing to the relevant team manager.

The case conference will undertake some or all of the following tasks:-

- ensure that all relevant information is shared and collated
- assess the degree of existing and likely future risk to the child
- identify the child’s needs and any service from any of the agencies that may be needed to help him or her, whether or not the case conference concludes the child is at risk
- appoint a keyworker
- formulate a new or review a current Child Protection Plan.

The Child Protection Case Conference will decide:

- whether a child’s name should be placed on or retained on the Child Protection Register
- if the child is registered, the arrangements for the multiagency child protection plan
- when a child’s name may be removed from the Register
- whether to refer a child to the Reporter.

* For full guidance please refer to NESPC Child Protection Guidelines

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE – CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

2. Looked After Child Review – Children Looked After Away From Home

The Local Authority is required to review the cases of all children it looks after.

The overall objectives of a review are:

- to provide an opportunity to take stock of the child’s needs and circumstances at regular, prescribed time intervals
- to consult formally with parents and children
- to assess the effectiveness of current plans as a means of securing the best interests of the child
- to provide an opportunity to oversee and make accountable the work of professional staff involved
- to review, adjust and agree future plans for the child.

Where a child is not subject to a Supervision Requirement from the Children’s Hearing (eg on a Sec. 25), the Review will be the forum where decisions are made about future work with and care of the child and on any change of the care plan.

* For full guidance, please refer to the guidance on Reviews for Children and Young People accommodated by Aberdeen City Council.

3. Children Looked After at Home

Children looked after at home are also subject to review, although it is not expected that this will be arms length reviewing from a separate review team. The Team Senior can review cases of children looked after at home.

4. Children’s Hearing

When a Children’s Hearing makes a child subject to a Supervision Requirement, it decides the direction of the supervision of the child and specifies any conditions that are thought necessary (within the scope of the Supervision Requirement, there will still be many matters to be determined by the Child Care Review).

5. Multiagency Case Discussion

It is good practice for social workers to convene a Multiagency Case Discussion when there are concerns that require agencies to share information in order to accurately assess risk. Please refer to the Multiagency Case Discussions guidance and procedure. These will take place in situations where the risk is assessed as being at a lower level than that which would lead to a Risk Management Meeting being convened, or as a means to gather

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE – CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

sufficient information that would indicate the need to convene a Child Protection Case Conference or refer to the Reporter.

C Other Policies which are likely to interface with Risk Management Meetings

Risk Management Meetings also relate to policies (such as the Young Runaways Reporting Protocol and the Detention of Children in Police Stations Protocol) and to strategies in relation to various behaviours (such as drug use and abuse through sexual exploitation).

D Relationship of Risk Management Meetings to planning meetings

It is likely that a young person at high risk will be subject to other planning meetings. It may be, however, that a child remains a significant risk to self or others even with the plan in place. (It is important to keep the definition of risk as being attached to behaviours which lead to high risk situations rather than associate it to a specific resource request but this often results in a request that secure accommodation be considered).

Another occasion when a Risk Management Meeting may be requested is when a review or hearing plan is in danger of being overturned resulting in a child or young person being subject to a high risk situation (for example, a residential school or children's home may require the Local Authority to remove a child under S32(B) because of the risks posed to or by a child within an establishment). In this situation it is preferable if an emergency review could be convened to adapt the plan – but if the plan remains the same and the child remains a risk to self or others then a Risk Management Meeting may be appropriate. The reason for a Risk Management Meeting in this case is to ensure that the risk inherent in the plan is appropriately managed by all agencies.

A further example is that a Child Protection Case Conference (held in relation to a child within a residential establishment posing a risk to others) may conclude that the present arrangements within a unit do not provide sufficient protection for other young people (ie that a young person is a risk to others). A Risk Management Meeting could address those risks.

Each Risk Management Meeting will decide whether a further meeting is required.

The above examples are not exhaustive. They are examples where there is an identified risk that cannot be adequately dealt with through existing fora and processes.

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE – CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

E What will a Risk Management Meeting do

The above situations leave senior social workers in a difficult position. A young person is at high risk (**or** a decision is about to be made which may substantially increase risk **or** a young person is a risk to others) and in this small percentage of cases may remain so even after the relevant planning meetings have taken place.

1. The Risk Management Meeting will assess immediate risk relative to that young person's current behaviour and/or living environment and produce a plan to manage that risk. If that plan is in conflict with the plan from the formal planning meeting, then the planning forum must be reconvened.
2. The plan will be endorsed by the team manager present and, if it is felt necessary, forwarded to the Head of Service: Quality of Life (Health & Care) and the Chief Social Work Officer for their consideration.
3. Agencies that have an interest in the case (such as police, health, education, specialist drugs or child abuse workers) will be asked to attend to ensure that specialist knowledge and access to services are available.
4. The meeting will, whenever possible, have access to the child's and parent's views in relation to their situation and the Children's Rights Officer may be asked to attend.
5. If secure accommodation is being considered, the Team Manager – Children's Services (Commissioning) should be updated on the situation of the young person every 4 days and this information will be collated and e-mailed to all members of the Risk Management Meeting, the Heads of Service (Health & Care) and the Chief Social Work Officer. In other cases, each Risk Management Meeting will discuss the communication strategy. The guidance and procedure on secure accommodation should also be referred to.
6. The team manager chairing the Risk Management Meeting will consider the need for additional resources to support the Risk Management Plan.
7. The risk management plan will identify the responsible person for each action.
8. The date of any future Risk Management Meeting will be agreed. In some cases, a regular cycle of meetings may be appropriate.
9. A copy of the minutes should be sent to the Team Manager (Commissioning) and to any other relevant team manager.

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE – CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

F Involvement of others

All relevant professionals should be invited to a Risk Management Meeting. This includes those from statutory agencies such as Aberdeen City Council, Health Board, Police, Careers Scotland. It also includes the voluntary sector such as projects that may inform or be part of a plan.

It is important that young people and their parents are aware that a Risk Management Meeting is taking place and are aware of any decision made and have the opportunity to discuss this with the Chair if they so wish.

This is, however, a planning meeting for professionals to ensure that they are clear about the professional information that informs any plan (from each professional perspective) and that work is co-ordinated to ensure risk is managed. If this is not consistent with a plan decided at Review, Case Conference or Hearing, then the proposed plan must go back to that forum for consideration. There are a number of meetings in which the management of cases are discussed without the child and parent being present (supervision, consultation, inter-agency discussion) and this meeting falls into that category.

Because the Review Chair for a child looked after away from home is required to have impartiality of judgement at the Review, it is not appropriate that he/she attend the Risk Management Meeting as this could be seen to be a Review without the child and parent being present. Further, the function of a Risk Management Meeting is not to consider the longer term plan but to pragmatically, in consideration of the needs of the child, formulate a safety plan as far as is possible within the overall care plan. A decision to place a child in secure accommodation from foster care, for example, does not mean the longer-term care plan should not continue to be a foster placement.

G What if a planning meeting disagrees with the outcome of a Risk Management Meeting?

It is likely that Risk Management Meetings will consider the needs of young people that cannot easily be met within available resources. Whereas it would be expected that any planning meeting (Review, Child Protection Case Conference, Hearing) would take into account the Risk Management Plan, the planning meetings are the fora where decisions are made.

If the arrangements in the Risk Management Plan are considered not to meet the needs of the child, this should immediately be communicated to the senior social worker. At this point, the case may have moved on, the risk subsided and there will be no need for a further Risk Management Meeting – the planning meeting will simply have taken the care plan forward. If the risks remain high, the senior social worker will discuss the reconvening of a Risk Management Meeting that will then take account of the planning meeting considerations.

**ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
SOCIAL WORK SERVICE – CHILDREN’S SERVICES**

H Process and responsibility

1. Secure Accommodation

The Secure Accommodation guidance and procedure has its own specific protocol in relation to Risk Management Meetings and this should be followed.

2. Concerns not involving consideration of secure accommodation

- The Senior Social Worker – alerts the Team Manager of the risk (preferably immediate line manager in the first instance), discusses a Risk Management Meeting and completes the referral form.
- The Team Manager makes the decision to proceed or not.
- The Senior Social Worker forwards the latest assessment of need / careplan to the Team Manager.
- The Senior Social Worker convenes the meeting with representatives from appropriate agencies.
- The Senior Social Worker asks the Children’s Rights Officer to ascertain the views of the child.
- The Team Manager chairs the meeting.
- The Senior Social Worker is responsible for the minute of the meeting.
- The Senior Social Worker is responsible for determining whether a planning meeting (Review, Child Protection Case Conference, Hearing) needs to be convened.