**Final Core Group Meetings during the COVID-19**

**This document describes the process for children’s Core Group Meetings during the period of the COVID-19 arrangements.**

The Core Group Meeting is the key mechanism for monitoring and implementing the Child Protection Plan outside of the Child Protection Conference.

Following an Initial Child Protection Conference – Core Group Meetings should be held within 10 working days of the initial Conference. The Core Group should review the outcomes of and agree the SMART objectives of the Child Protection Plan, including expectations of all Core Group members.

Minutes will be completed and circulated within 10 working days, and should include the prearranged date of the next Core Group Meeting. (Best practice – minutes circulated in 5 working days).

Subsequent Core Group Meetings should be held 4 weekly but can be held more frequently depending on the family situation and the individual needs of the children. 2 weeks prior to the Review Child Protection Conference, a Core Group Meeting should be held.

During the COVID-19 arrangements Core Group Meetings will continue to be held in a timely way in accordance with the Child Protection procedures. The Social Work team will continue to chair Core Group Meetings. The meetings will be conducted via Skype.

The Social Worker will send by email the Child Protection Plan and the last Core Group Meeting minutes to members (professionals) a week prior to the meeting requesting updates on progression of actions and Child Protection Plan, to be returned the day before the Core Group Meeting.

The Social Worker will invite the Child Protection Chair to the Core Group Meeting held prior to the Review Child Protection Conference, to be part of a discussion about whether or not the child(ren) should remain the subject(s) of a Child Protection Plan. Evidence should be provided if professionals believe that the threshold for the child continuing to suffer significant harm, or risk of suffering significant harm remains.

The Social Worker will ensure that the family GP is invited to all the Core Groups meetings.

The Social Worker will arrange for the Core Group Meeting to be held through video calling (Skype) to enable parent(s) and professionals to participate fully in the discussion and decision making regarding progressing and developing the Child Protection Plan.

If a parent is unable to participate in the virtual Core Group Meeting, their views must be obtained prior to the meeting and a further telephone discussion held with them following the meeting where all professional views will be shared with them.

The Social Worker will write up the Core Group Meeting minutes and update the Child Protection Plan in accordance with procedures. The minutes will be shared with the parents and members of the Core Group within 10 working days.

Any dispute or complaint about the outcome of the Core Group Meeting should continue to follow the existing Child Protection Procedures.