



# **Complex Case Meetings Practice Guidance**

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## Document Control

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Change Description</b>	<b>Approved / Quality Checked By &amp; Date</b>	<b>Target Audience / Circulation</b>	<b>Document Review Date</b>
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## Impact Assessment Record

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Assessment Conducted (e.g. environmental, diversity &amp; equalities, Human Rights Act 1998, Crime &amp; Disorder Act 1998 &amp; Children Act 2004)</b>	<b>Stage/ Level Completed (Where applicable)</b>	<b>Summary of Action Taken / Decision Made</b>	<b>Completed By</b>	<b>Impact Assessment Review Date</b>
	Impact Assessment not required. Document content does not impact directly on gender, race, disabled people, sexual orientation, age, faith groups	Initial screening	No action required		Review not required unless significant change to type of document content

<b>Document Retention Period</b>	Destroy 5 years after administrative use has concluded
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## **1 Introduction:**

Complex Case Meetings provide a mechanism to support services to address potential drift and delay in cases which are 'stuck.' This practice guidance sets out the way these meetings operate in Redcar & Cleveland whatever the circumstances of the child or their legal status.

Where inter agency planning forums have not made sufficient progress to reduce risk and secure improved outcomes, professionals should discuss matters with their line manager. In some cases, if a solution is not found it may be that the case would benefit from a Complex Case Meeting.

The Complex Case Meeting is a multi-agency advice and consultation group which meets as required and aims to improve interagency risk management with children, young people and their families. The meeting can get involved in very difficult or 'stuck' cases to offer a fresh perspective and draw on a wealth of experience already within services. For example, cases can be referred in when the planned outcomes for young people have not been achieved and risks are increasing, or progress has stalled. The meeting will be comprised of the allocated worker and representatives from the relevant partner agencies involved with the child. Meeting attendees will have a wealth of experience and knowledge and a relentless focus on improving outcomes for children and their families.

For cases which are stuck, or where inadequate progress has been made, the Complex Case Meeting will only be considered if a multi-agency group supervision has already been held and failed to facilitate an agreed way forward.

## **2 Case Responsibility**

Cases can be proposed for a complex case discussion from any of the practitioners involved with the case if they are feeling stuck.

## **3 Roles of Members**

Members will:

- Ensure the most appropriate agencies are involved in the meeting.
- Research their own agency's involvement with referred cases and bring relevant information to the meeting.
- Bring their best thinking and an up to date knowledge of the case.

- Take a solution-focussed approach to cases discussed.
- Agree actions with clear timescales and lines of communication before the next meeting.
- Ensure learning achieved through the meeting is shared with the Principal Social Worker for dissemination through the Quality Assurance Framework to relevant teams and individuals and through other agencies lessons learnt processes.

#### **4 Criteria for Complex Case Planning**

The process seeks to deliver a flexible and holistic, multi-agency response for children and young people where planned outcomes are not being achieved despite the best efforts of the professionals involved and where risks are increasing or progress is stalled. For example:

- Early Help or Child in Need cases where families have engaged but no progress has been made.
- Cases where adolescents living in the community, whether with their families, or in care; who are exhibiting behaviours which create a high level of risk whether to self or others, through violence, offending, self-harm or serious substance misuse or child sexual exploitation.
- Neglect: cases with a Child Protection Plan, which have had a plan for approaching 18 months and where there are concerns about the level of progress made.
- Cases where Care Proceedings have been concluded but progress is still not being made.

This list is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

Complex Case Planning is not intended to 'escalate' or 'sweep-up' serious cases which are making acceptable progress through usual case-management frameworks. Rather, it is intended to be used for a small number of cases where improved outcomes are not being achieved and risks are increasing. Features of such cases may include:

- Agencies working in contradiction to one another.
- Agencies responding to short-term crises not achieving long-term outcomes.

- Rigid application of process criteria hampering combined inter-agency effort.
- Disputes amongst professionals, unresolved by line managers.
- Professionals have become 'stuck', run out of ideas, repeating unproductive patterns of service delivery.

**Leading to children and young people's increased risk of significant harm:**

## **5 Intended Outcomes of the Process**

The Complex Case Meeting process can lead to:

- Encouraging creativity in the workforce whilst maintaining a safe approach to practice.
- Reflect on the case to develop a shared understanding and shared learning
- Identifying and agreeing the next steps, taking a multi agency approach to move the case forward.
- A solution focussed plan.
- Support defensible decision making based on robust analysis.
- Actions agreed by individual agencies to 'unblock' progress, to reduce risk and improve outcomes within specific timescales.
- Improved ownership through communication.

## **6 Process:**

### **6.1 Request for Complex Case Discussion at Meeting:**

Any professional can propose that a child or young person should be discussed at a Complex Case Meeting, so long as the normal case planning, dispute resolution processes and group supervision have been tried and have failed to improve outcomes.

The concerned professional, having discussed whether a complex case meeting would be useful with the allocated social worker and or their manager, should make the request for a complex case meeting via the allocated worker. The request

should be made in writing by way of email and will be reviewed by a nominated service manager to ensure it is appropriate. Any decision not to progress this should be placed on the electronic case record under the Management Decision case note tab, or equivalent.

The child or young person's worker should be consulted about the request, to ensure the timing is congruent with other processes affecting the case. For example, if the case is about to receive an expert assessment or decision in care proceedings, the request for the meeting may not be timely.

The referring agency should bring the case jointly with all involved key professionals. The referring agency must attend the meeting and attendees should have a full working knowledge of the case.

Where the child's current plan is being overseen within the Child Protection or Children in Our Care Framework, the Independent Reviewing Officer or Independent Chair should be consulted.

Once agreement has been obtained, the request should be passed to the meeting administrator at least 10 working days in advance of the meeting, so that written information is sent out in advance and agencies can check their index systems.

Once agreed agencies need to come with their best thinking and up to date knowledge.

## **6.2 Written information**

The practitioner should take care in completing the request and ensure it addresses the following:

- Basic information and family structure (and wider family/community networks where the connections are important).
- Brief history and overview.
- Index of assessments completed.
- Agencies/professionals involved.
- Analysis of current risks (known and unknown).
- Identified issues or obstacles to effective case planning or provision.
- The anticipated benefits of a complex case plan.

- The specific outcomes being sought.

In addition, the following information should be prepared in advance for circulation to meeting members: chronology, current risk assessment, last case review report (e.g. review case conference report).

### **6.3 Conducting the Meeting**

- This will be facilitated by a Service Manager from Children's Services.
- Each case will be presented by the lead worker or the professional with the most up to date knowledge of the case.
- Case recommendations and agreed actions will be recorded, signed by the chair and shared with the group.

### **6.4 Following the Meeting**

- The administrator will ensure the recommendations are received by the key worker and or lead professional for the child and agencies involved.
- Feedback on the effectiveness of the Complex Case meeting will be sought by the panel administrator within three months of the meeting.
- Progress on the case and any actions arising from the meeting will be checked by the Team Manager at the next case supervision.

### Complex Case meeting flowchart

