

Stirling Council

**Managing Children & Young People Who Present A Risk Of
Serious Harm To Others Through Care & Risk Management
(CARM) Operating Procedure**

March 2024

1. Introduction

Stirling's Care and Risk Management (CARM) is concerned with ensuring the risks presented by children and young people are managed effectively and minimised through effective communication, information sharing, assessment, multi-agency decision making and the implementation of effective risk management plans.

This procedure seeks to achieve a balance between addressing the risk presented by children and young people whilst ensuring that their needs (which ultimately support their behaviours) are similarly addressed.

Meeting the needs of children and young people, in addition to implementing any essential controls necessary to protect individuals and manage the risks they present, is necessary to safeguard them and their communities.

It is imperative that those children and young people who pose a risk of serious harm have support and opportunities to grow, develop and reach their full potential. This must be aided by proportionate and effective risk management strategies which will include interventions that minimise risk presented by the child and reduce the likelihood of further harm.

This operating procedure has been produced for Stirling to ensure that Children and Young People who present a risk of serious harm to others as a result of their potential for damaging sexual or violent behaviour, are managed effectively to minimise those risks. This operating procedure implements Scottish Government guidance on Care & Risk Management (CARM) planning for children and young people who present a risk of serious harm, and the Framework for Risk Assessment Management Evaluation (FRAME).¹

This procedure comes under the governance of Stirling's Child Protection Committee. Whilst this is specific to the Stirling Council area, it is noted that Police Scotland operate one service across the Forth Valley area. Where possible Care and Risk Management (CARM) processes will seek to align across Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannanshire.

This operating procedure for the management of children and young people who present a serious risk of harm is effective from 12th March 2024. This procedure will be subject to review in March 2025.

The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 (updated 2023)² and the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)³ approach provide a national framework to promote the welfare and safety of children and young people. To ensure consistency with this national agenda relating to children and young people who present a risk of serious harm to others, this procedure adopts the use of the term "Care and Risk Management (CARM) Meetings".

¹ [Section 2: Operational requirements for implementing Care and Risk - Youth justice: risk assessment management framework and evaluation guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/section-2-operational-requirements-for-implementing-care-and-risk-youth-justice-risk-assessment-management-framework-and-evaluation-guidance/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

² [Supporting documents - National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021 - updated 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-guidance-for-child-protection-in-scotland-2021-updated-2023/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

³ [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-it-right-for-every-child-girfec/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

2. Which children and young people are to be supported under this Protocol?

This protocol applies to children aged between 12 and 18 years where any or all of the following is present:

- sexually harmful behaviour and/or violence is displayed
- intent and potential for harm requires formal risk management processes
- a pattern of behaviour suggests a more serious incident may be imminent
- where a child or young person has been involved in an incident of a serious nature (irrespective of the legal status of the incident)

Where there are significant concerns in relation to the behaviour of a young person under the age of criminal responsibility, risk management processes should be facilitated by the Child Protection System.⁴

Where a young person meets the criteria noted above, they should be considered as part of the Stirling's CARM Approach. This should not prohibit the young person's needs being considered as part of other child's planning forums such as LAC (Looked After Child) or Child Protection, rather the CARM approach will sit alongside this. This ensures that plans are in place to assess and manage potential risk to and from the young person being considered.

3. Source of Referrals

Referrals to Care and Risk Management (CARM) may come via a number of channels:

- **From the Police** on receipt of information about the alleged involvement of a child or young person under the age of 18 in an offence of a serious nature;
- **From the lead professional** who holds case management responsibilities for a child or young person where there are significant concerns about the escalation in the frequency and/or seriousness of a child or young person's offending behaviour which is likely to include violence and/or sexually harmful behaviour;
- **From any professional co-ordinating a child protection investigation** into the victimisation of a child or young person where harmful behaviour of a serious nature by another child or young person under the age of 18 is identified;
- **From any professional co-ordinating an adult protection investigation** into the victimisation of a vulnerable individual over the age of 16 where harmful behaviour of a serious nature by a child or young person under the age of 18 is identified;
- **From the Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) Co-ordinator**, multi-agency screening groups or equivalent who have significant concerns about the escalation in the frequency and/or seriousness of a child or young person's offending behaviour which is likely to include violence and/or sexually harmful behaviour.

4. Referral to CARM & Timescales

When there is concern that the behaviour of a child or young person meets the necessary threshold for CARM consideration they should contact the identified CARM representative in

⁴ [Child Protection Policies, Procedures and Guidelines – Forth Valley Practitioner Pages \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.glowscotland.org.uk)

the authority. In Stirling, this is the Service Manager with responsibility for Youth Justice. The Service Manager will also be the CARM Chair. Where these risks are identified, the discussion with the Service Manager should take place within 24 hours.

This discussion will form an initial screening as to whether or not an Inter-Agency Referral Discussion (IRD) should be convened to discuss the risks and consider progressing to an initial CARM meeting. Where an IRD that considers progression to CARM, a child, young person and their parents should be informed.

In addition to screening these referrals, the CARM Chair will take responsibility for ensuring that the discussion and outcomes are documented within a child's record, to demonstrate transparent decision making.

As with the identification of Child Protection concerns, holding an IRD to consider CARM would enable collaborative decision making in response to the needs of children and young people.

In Stirling, where possible, the Team Leader responsible for Youth Justice would attend all IRDs where CARM is being considered for a child or young person.

The IRD function will allow the sharing of proportionate and relevant information that would inform interim safety planning, and enable a decision to be made about the proportionality of progressing to an Initial CARM meeting.

Where appropriate risk management plans will be implemented from the IRD and there will be continued support from agencies, IRDs may not always require progression to CARM.

CARM Processes should not be delayed as a result of Police Investigation. Any intervention should be proportionate and balance the young person's rights against public protection.

5. Decision to Arrange an Initial CARM Meeting

Where an IRD agrees that CARM discussion is required, the CARM Chair should be notified and an Initial CARM meeting should be held within 28 days.

However, interim safety planning and preventative actions should not await the initial CARM meeting. Interim tasks may include:

- Development of safety plans in relation to particular settings (home, school, residential unit) outlining interim risk management measures to be put in place;
- The need for a case to be referred to the Children's Reporter;
- The need for a case to be referred to specialist services (e.g. for completion of relevant offence-related risk assessments); and,
- Identification of Lead Professional (if this has not already occurred) to coordinate the development of the risk management plan.
- A visit by the Lead Professional to the child/young person and family **(this is an expectation)**.

Ahead of the Initial CARM meeting, information pertinent to the referral should be gathered. This may include:

- A copy of a full Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF) report or equivalent and Single Plan for the relevant child or young person;
- Copies of any completed risk assessments; and,
- Copies of any specialist assessments or assessments from other practitioners/agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) or Education.

If a child or young person is subject to Police investigation this should not delay the convening of a Care and Risk Management meeting, but may have a bearing on discussion with the child or young person and/or within the CARM meeting.

Children and young people will be encouraged to seek legal advice & representation if they are subject to a Police investigation.

Assessment and intervention processes will need to be proportionate to the legal status of the case, balancing the child or young person's rights alongside any identified issues in relation to public safety.

6. Initial CARM Meeting

6.1 Child/Relevant Person Attendance

The child and parent/carers should be informed that the Initial CARM meeting is being convened.

The child and their parents/carers should be offered the opportunity to share their views with the CARM Chair in advance of the meeting.

Attendance at the Initial CARM should be discussed with the child and parents/carers. Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of full or partial attendance, with an emphasis on providing a means of participating in the process even if not in attendance.

6.2 Group Membership

While the standing membership of a Care and Risk Management meeting will vary according to case specific circumstances, it is anticipated that the following agencies (in addition to the Chair and minute-taker) will be represented:

- Referrer;
- Education – named person
- Youth Justice Social Work / Locality Social Work
- Police;
- Health (e.g. CAMHS);
- Housing, including the Sex Offender Liaison Officer.
- Justice Social Work.

Consideration may also be given to the inclusion of a range of other agencies, depending on the needs and circumstances of the child/young person.

6.3 CARM Considerations

The CARM meeting should consider the following:

- Whether or not a child or young person is subject to any form of statutory order(s) (e.g. Compulsory Supervision Order (CSO), Community Payback Order (CPO), contact requirements, bail conditions etc.) and the implications of related legal obligations.
- The home circumstances, educational arrangements and community integration of the referred child or young person in order to identify any on-going and potential protection issues.
- The potential negative impact of a sudden change to a child or young person's living arrangements.
- The nature and level of risk to others (particularly other children and young people) in the home environment;
- The impact of family dynamics in either sustaining or preventing further behaviour of a harmful nature;
- The nature and level of risk to others in educational establishments and the community;
- The relationship between the referred child or young person and the victim(s);
- The views of the referred child or young person and their parents/carers

6.4 CARM Meeting Menu of Options

The CARM meeting options are:

- No further action required – minimum intervention principle; or
- Further action required:
 - What action (if any) needs to be taken to keep the referred child or young person safe?
 - What further action (if any) needs to be taken to keep the referred child or young person's family member(s)/carer(s) safe?
 - What further action (if any) needs to be taken to keep other members of the community safe (e.g. peers, teaching staff, victim(s), residential care staff etc.)?
 - Which risk assessments require to be undertaken?

6.5 Risk Assessments

If a full and detailed risk assessment has not been completed in advance of a CARM meeting, the Chair must identify an appropriate agency/individual to complete the necessary risk assessments, as appropriate to the legal status of the case, prior to any further CARM meetings. The Chair ought to stipulate those which are required with respect to the child or young person's age, behaviour, circumstances and capacity. In the Scottish Youth Justice context those most likely to be appropriate include:

- AIM 3: Assessment of Adolescents who display Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- START-AV Short -Term Assessment of Risk and Treatability: Adolescent Version
- LSCMI.

6.6 Risk Management Strategies

The Chair should ensure that consideration is then given to the following risk management strategies:

- Monitoring, or repeat assessment - aims to look for factors indicating changes in risk over time.
- Supervision - aims to decrease the likelihood of violence or offending by restricting an individual's freedom.
- Intervention - covers all aspects of the Single Plan that are designed to reduce risk over time.
- Community disclosure - involves sharing information with individuals, agencies or organisations to help them manage risk more effectively.
- Victim safety planning - aims to reduce the likelihood and impact of psychological and physical harm to known previous and potential victims.
- Contingency Planning - gives particular prominence to key factors which may indicate that risk of violence is escalating or imminent.

6.7 Actions Incorporated to Single Plan

Where a referred child or young person already has a Single Plan in place, it will be the responsibility of the Social Worker to update the plan and for the Chair to sign it off reflecting the risk management strategies agreed at the CARM meeting.

When a Single Plan has not yet been drafted, or is in the process of being drafted, it will be the responsibility of the meeting to set out the risk management strategies agreed at the CARM meeting.

The young person's CARM Plan will be distributed within 5 working days of the meeting. Where required the minute of the meeting will be distributed within 15 working days.

6.8 Recording

The child/young person's details, nature of behaviour (sexual/violent/both) and category of risk shall be recorded on the CARM register within Stirling Local Authority.

6.9 Need to Review

A young person placed on the Care and Risk Management Register will be reviewed initially after 3 months with a date for this being agreed at the end of the initial meeting. Subsequent reviews and frequency of meetings will be informed by the risk and need as identified within the CARM meeting. Following a young person's name being placed on the CARM Register, CARM Core Groups should take place on a monthly basis and will be chaired by the Youth Justice Team Leader.

Where a young person is already within the Looked After process, CARM meetings would be aligned to prevent duplication.

Should a significant incident occur outwith these timescales, a CARM review would be convened.

7. CARM Review Meetings

7.1 CARM Chair

The role of the Chair at any CARM review meeting will be to direct attendees to:

- Consider any further offences or incidents of concern involving the referred child or young person in the intervening period since the previous CARM meeting;
- Review the risk management elements of the Single Plan and to identify what progress has been made, if any, as regards the implementation of agreed risk management strategies, particularly with respect to interventions with the referred child or young person;
- Consider whether modifications or additions to the existing risk management strategies, as encompassed in the Single Plan, are necessary and to ensure that the lead professional records any such changes;
- Evaluate progress in relation to risk reduction;
- Re-assess the risk classification under which the child or young person's behaviour is being managed;
- Consider if other specialist services are required, and
- Determine if CARM registration is still proportionate.

7.2 Recording of the CARM Review

The *Forth Valley Integrated Assessment Framework*, IAF 6, shall be used for the recording of the meeting. The single plan will use the IAF 4 template. The actions from the meeting shall be circulated within 5 working days.

8. CARM Links to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

When risk management strategies are in place for a child or young person charged but not yet convicted of an offence of a serious nature, it is possible that during the course of the CARM process their legal status will change.

As a result of a conviction in the Adult Justice system, a child or young person under the age of 18 may become subject to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA).

It will be the responsibility of the CARM chair to liaise with the local MAPPA Co-ordinator to agree on the most appropriate local arrangements by which to safely manage any risks presented by the child or young person, and where appropriate will agree a plan for transition from CARM to MAPPA.

For all young people aged 17 and above, Adult Justice Social Work shall be invited to attend CARM meetings pre-conviction.

9. Reintegration & Transition

9.1 Exit planning

In accordance with the principle of minimum intervention, every effort should be made to ensure that a child or young person is retained within the CARM process for no longer than is absolutely necessary. The overriding objective in managing a child or young person's transition out of the CARM process to an environment with reduced supervision. Monitoring must be to ensure that there is continuity in the provision of support, advice and guidance to the child or young person.

9.2 Case Transfers / Accommodated Outwith Area

When a child or young person who is being actively managed through CARM processes moves from Stirling to another authority area, there should be direct liaison between CARM Chairs.

The receiving authority should be informed of the relevant information including legal status, risk assessments, background reports and the risk management plan.

10. Accountability, Performance Management and Quality Assurance

Stirling's Child Protection Committee shall provide the governance structure for CARM procedures in Stirling. The Child Protection Lead Officer shall include CARM statistics in their quarterly and annual reports to the Child Protection Committee. This will include the following:

- Total number referrals received;
- Age;
- Gender;
- Origin of referrals;
- Number of Initial CARM meetings held;
- Number of Review CARM meetings held;
- Nature of concerning behaviour (e.g. sexual, violent or both);
- Re-offending by the child or young person in the care and risk management process (within six months of the entering the process) and
- Number of children or young people exiting the CARM process.

Appendix A - CARM flowchart

