



Child Protection Conferences

**A guide for parents and
families**

Independent Reviewing Service

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What is a child protection conference?

A child protection conference is a meeting between a family and professionals that is held when there is a concern about the safety of a child.

The purpose of the child protection conference is to make sure that everyone fully understands the worries for your child and are clear about the things that are going well.

The professionals will be people involved with you and your child.

Who attends?

Parents & Carers

It is important that you attend the conference, you may want to bring someone to support you such as an advocate, a supportive friend or family member. Please let your social worker know beforehand.

If you need an interpreter, please discuss with your social worker.

Conference Chair

The Chair is an experienced social work manager who is independent from your child's social work team. Their job is to make sure that any decisions reached, or plans made at the child protection conference are done fairly and that everyone including your child has a chance to have their say.

The Chair is available to meet with you before the conference to make sure you understand the purpose of the conference and what will happen.

Can my child come to conference?

If your child is 10 years or older they can attend part or all of their conference. They can also share their views in other ways for example by writing a letter, through an advocate or talking to the Chair.

Social worker and social work manager

You have already met your social worker as this will be the person who completed the assessment with you and your family. Sometimes the social work manager attends the conference. You may meet the new social worker in the meeting if your family become involved in planning process.

Which other professionals might attend?

Education: If your child is at nursery or school, they will be invited.

Health: If you have a child under 5 years old, your health visitor or someone from the health visiting service will be invited.

If your child is over 5 years old and attends school, the school nurse will be invited.

Your GP will be invited to share relevant health information about you and your child, usually in a written report.

Police: A representative from the police will attend the first conference. They send the chair written information for every conference and their report is shared verbally in the meeting.

Other professionals working with you and your child will be invited. For example, someone supporting you with mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse or probation.

They will be asked to attend to share information about you and your child, to see how they can help and to make decisions.

Reports

All the professionals invited to the conference write a report about how they support you and your child, what they think is working well and what they are worried about. The social worker writes an assessment.

Each professional is responsible for their own report and will share this with you two working days before the first conference, and five working days before any other conferences.

Recording

The meeting will be audio recorded, you will be sent a letter confirming the decision of the conference within one working day of the meeting and a written summary of the conference and the child protection plan will be sent to you within ten working days of the meeting.

What happens at a conference?

The meeting is confidential.

You will be given an opportunity to meet with the child protection conference chair before the meeting starts. This will give you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the meeting. They will also check that you have had a chance to read all the relevant reports.

Please make sure that you use this opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about the meeting and the reports and let the child protection chair know if there is any way in which they can support you to make sure that you can take part in the meeting.

During the conference, everyone will be invited to talk about their work with you and your child. We will discuss what is going well and what we are worried about. We will talk about what needs to happen to keep your child safe.

This information will then help us decide together how best to support you and your child.

Once all of the information has been shared everyone will be asked to give their view on whether your child is experiencing significant harm and/or likely to experience significant harm in the future.

Answering this question will help professionals decide if a Child Protection plan is required.

The Child Protection plan

The Child Protection plan will identify the key risk factors to your child and what needs to be done to reduce the risk of future harm.

In the conference everyone will agree what needs to happen next to support you to keep your child safe. The core group of professionals hold the responsibility of progressing the child protection plan.

What happens after a conference?

A letter confirming the decision of the conference will be sent to you within one working day of the meeting.

If a child protection plan is made there will be regular core group meetings where family and professionals meet to look at how the plan is working.

The social worker will visit your child at least every 10 working days, usually at home.

A review child protection conference will be held in three months and then every six months.

A decision to end the child protection plan can only be made at conference.

Your right to complain

The Safeguarding Partnership Board has a complaints process to challenge the decision of the conference if you think, for example, that process was not followed, or you have reason to believe that the decision of the conference was incorrect.

If you wish to access this process, please put your concerns in writing and send this to the Chair as soon as possible. If you would like someone to help you to write this, you can speak to the social worker.