



# Child Protection Conferences

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A guide for parents and families



**Haringey**  
LONDON



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# 1. 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 professionals will be people involved with you and your child.

As a parent you can bring one person to support you if you wish. This could be a family member or friend. The conference chair will need to agree in advance that this is an appropriate person to bring to the meeting. Please remember this person will hear all your family information.

You can bring a solicitor to listen and give you advice, but they cannot talk in the conference or ask people questions.

If you do want to bring someone to support you, please inform the social worker and chair at least 2 days before the conference.

## Record of the meeting

A written summary of the conference and the plan will be completed in and after the meeting, by the chair. It will be sent to you with the reports from the social worker and other professionals involved, and your and your child's contribution forms.

## Where the conference will be held

There have been changes in how meetings have been held in Haringey. Your child's conference is likely to be held in a conference room, with yourselves, the chair and some

professionals present and others taking part through video conferencing. However the meeting could be a video conference only. The chair will discuss this with you when they contact you before the meeting.

## 2. Who attends

### Conference chair

The chair is an experienced social work manager who is not part of your child's social work team. Their job is to run the meeting, following child protection procedures.

The chair will contact you before the meeting to talk about it, and how they can support you to take part. They may also talk to your child before the meeting, depending on their age and understanding.

The chair will give everyone a chance to speak and will help to build a plan of what needs to happen. They are responsible for the final decision about whether the plan is called a child protection plan.

### Social worker and social work manager

You have already met your child's social worker as this is the person who completed an assessment with you and your family. The social worker will come to the conference to talk about the work they have been doing with your child and yourself.

Sometimes the social work manager attends the conference.

You may meet a new social worker in the meeting if your family needs continuing support.

## 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 goes to 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 police representative attends. They send the chair written information for every conference which is shared in the meeting.

**Other professionals** working with you and your child would 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 discuss how they can help, and to take part in making decisions and making a plan.

## Can my child come?

If your child is 10 years or older the social worker will talk to them and to you about whether they want to attend their conference. This could be part of the meeting, or all of it. If your child wants to come, the social worker will discuss this with the chair.

The social worker can put your child in touch with an advocate from Barnardo's. An advocate is independent, works for your child and can support them at the meeting.

Your child can also share their views in other ways. There is a contribution form they can fill in, or they might want to write a letter, or draw a picture. The chair will offer to talk to them. Younger children will also be encouraged to share their views.

## **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 for sharing this with you. This should be two working days before the first conference, and five working days before review conferences. The police only share their report verbally at the meeting.

## **3. What happens at the meeting**

The chair will settle you into the conference room and answer any questions you have before anyone else joins you.

The chair asks everyone to introduce themselves at the start of the meeting.

They will ask the social worker to read out the danger statement from their assessment and explain why the conference is needed.

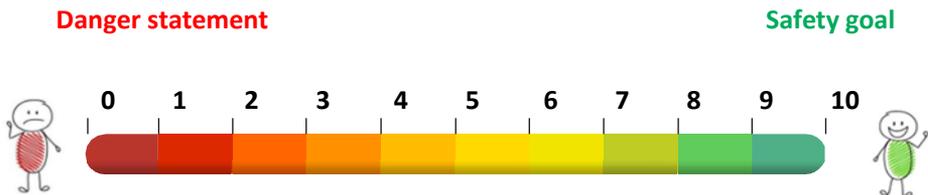
They will ask you what you think, what works well in your family, what you are worried about and what additional support you need.

The professionals will share their views.

The chair will ask what would help to keep your child safe and well.

## Using a scale

Everyone in the conference including you and your family will be asked to use the scale below to think about how safe your child is.



## The plan

In the meeting, you and everyone there will agree a plan of what needs to happen next to support you to keep your child safe. Everyone will think about what things may help. It is important the plan is right for you and your family.

## Decision making

At the end of the conference everyone who is there will be asked to give their views, and a decision will be made whether your child needs a child protection plan to keep them safe

and well.

The chair will confirm the decision of the meeting and note it on the conference summary.

If the decision is that your child is at risk of significant harm, then the plan is called a child protection plan.

## **4. What happens after the meeting**

The record of the meeting with your child's plan, and the reports and contribution forms to the meeting, will be sent out to you on the next working day.

If a child protection plan is made there will be regular core group meetings, when family and professionals will meet to look at the plan. You will all review the progress of the plan and if it is helping to reduce the concerns.

The social worker will visit your child at least every 2 weeks, usually at home. They will need to see your child on their own.

A review child protection conference is held within three months of the first (initial) conference. Further review conferences are held within six months of each other.

## **5. How to prepare for the meeting**

Please make sure you have read all the reports you have been given. Please let your social worker know if you need help to do this.

Please tell the social worker if you or your child have additional needs they should know about, so they can support you in the best way possible.

Please do think before the meeting about the strengths of your family, as well as what you are worried about, and what might be helpful for you and your family.

It would be very helpful if you could complete the parent contribution form for the meeting, although you do not have to. Please do this 2 working days before the meeting so it can be shared in good time with the chair and others who are invited. The chair will look at this form with you when they contact you before the conference.

## 6. Your right to complain

The chair will try to resolve any concerns you have about the conference. Please speak to them or write to them as soon as possible after the meeting if you wish to raise something.

To make a complaint about the conference, you can also email [cpcentraladmin@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:cpcentraladmin@haringey.gov.uk) or write to:

Head of Service, ESQA, 3rd Floor, River Park House, 225 High Road, Wood Green London N22 8HQ

Another way to make a complaint is to contact Haringey's complaints service.

You can use the online feedback form at <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/contact/council-feedback/childrens-social-care-complaints-procedure>

or if you can't access this link or form, call 020 8489 3424.

Barnardo's is funded by Haringey to provide a free independent advocacy service to help young people who wish to complain about social care services.

**Barnardo's:**

*Freephone: 0800 085 8287*

*Telephone: 020 8768 5058*

*Email: [advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk)*

*Cover pictures provided by Haringey Children's Safeguarding Partnership*