



Child Protection Conferences

A guide for children and young people



Contents

1. What is a child protection conference	3
2. Who will be there	3
3. What happens at the meeting	6
4. What happens after the meeting	7
5. How to prepare for the meeting	8
6. Your right to complain	9

1. What is a child protection conference

This is a meeting which is being held because of worries that you may not be safe. This could be because you have been hurt. Or you may be upset or unhappy because of things you have seen or heard at home. Your parent or carer might not be managing to look after you as well as they need to.

The meeting will think about all the children in your home.

Where the conference will be held

The meeting will be held in a conference room. This has plenty of space to bring everyone together. We are able to bring people in on screen if they can't come in person or if it is not a good idea for safety reasons.

2. Who will be there

Parents and carers

The adults in your family who look after you are asked to come.

Can you come?

If you are 10 or older the social worker will talk to you and see if you want to come. If so you might come to part of the meeting, or to all of it. If you want to come the social worker will talk to your parents and to the chair, who is in charge of the meeting. Some of the meeting might not be about you and you would not normally be there to hear about other children in your family.

Your advocate

The social worker will put you in touch with an **advocate** from Barnardo's. An advocate is independent and will be working for you. They can come with you and support you at the meeting. You can ask to bring someone else with you if you want to. But the chair will need to agree before the meeting whether they can come, as this person will hear all your family information.

Conference chair

The **chair** is a manager who was once a social worker, but is not part of your social work team. Their job is to run the meeting.

Social worker and social work manager

You have already met your social worker as this is the person who made 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 you and your family.

Sometimes the social worker's manager attends the conference.

You may meet a new social worker in the conference, who will work with you in future.

Who else might come to the meeting

School, college, nursery: If you are at school or college, or someone in the family goes to nursery, these will be invited.

Health: The school nurse will be invited, and if someone in

the family is under 5 years old, a health visitor will be asked too. Your doctor will be asked. They often send a written report rather than coming to the meeting.

Police: Someone from the police will come. They send the chair information for every conference, and this is shared in the meeting.

Other people working with you and your family would be invited.

They will be asked to share how they know you, and what are the things that it is important for the meeting to know. They will be asked how they can help. They will take part in making decisions and making a plan.

Reports and contribution forms

Before the meeting, you and your parents or carers will be asked if you would like to say what you think, by filling in a contribution form. You can share what is working well, what you are worried about and what changes or help you think it would be good to see.

All the professionals invited to the conference write a report as well. They share how they support you and your family, what they think is working well, what they are worried about and what changes or support they think would be helpful. The social worker writes an assessment.

Each professional is responsible for sharing their own report with your parents, and some reports may be shared with you too. The police only share their report 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.

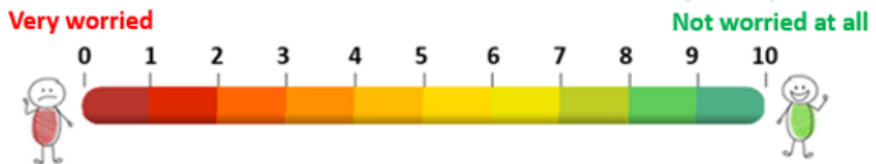
The chair asks everyone to introduce themselves at the start of the meeting.

You may be coming to just part of the meeting, and the chair will make sure they organize it so you can take part and share what you want to.

During the meeting, they will ask the social worker to say why they are worried and explain why the conference is needed.

They will ask everyone what they think, what works well in the family, what are the worries and what support might be helpful. The chair will ask what would help to keep you safe and well.

Using a *scale*



Everyone in the conference will be asked to use this scale to think about how safe you are.

The plan

The plan is extremely important. In the meeting, a plan is made about what needs to happen next. This will be a list of things which need to be done to help the adults who care for you keep you safe, and to look after you. 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 the adults who are there will be asked to give their views about whether you need a child protection plan to keep you safe and well. The chair will confirm the decision and note it on the conference summary.

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

4. What happens after the meeting

The chair will finish their summary and the plan after the meeting. These will be sent out to adults who were invited, with the reports and contribution forms. The social worker will share the decision with you, as well as the parts of the plan you should know about.

If a child protection plan is made there will then be **core group** meetings every month. Family and professionals will meet together to look at the plan. If you are old enough and would like to, you can be invited. The meeting will look at whether the plan is working, and helping to keep you safe and well cared for.

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

If you have a child protection plan, another review conference will be held about three months after the first one. Any conferences after that must be held at least every six months.

5. How to prepare for the meeting

The social worker will talk about the meeting with you and answer any questions. Please do ask your social worker about anything you are not sure about.

The social worker will put you in touch with an advocate from Barnardo's. They can answer questions and help you think about how you want to be involved in the conference.

Please tell the social worker if you have additional needs they should know about, so they can support you in the best way possible. For example you may find it difficult to concentrate for too long, and you might want to ask for the meeting to have breaks.

Please do think before the meeting about anything you want people there to know. It would be very helpful if you fill in the contribution form (although you don't have to). The advocate can help, or your social worker, or they can ask someone at school to help. You can also share what you want to say in other ways, for example you might want to write a letter or draw a picture. The chair will talk to you before the meeting if you are happy with them getting in touch.

6. Your right to complain

The chair will try to deal with any concerns you have about the conference. You can ask to speak to them, or write to them after the meeting. You can also ask the social worker to request Barnardo's advocacy service to get in touch with you - or you can contact them yourself (see below). They are independent and can help you make a complaint.

Barnardo's:

Freephone: 0800 085 8287

Telephone: 020 8768 5058

Email: advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk

Or if you want to make a complaint yourself directly, you can use the Haringey complaints service's online feedback form, at

<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/contact/council-feedback/childrens-social-care-complaints-procedure>

or call 020 8489 3424.

You can also ask the chair to send the link to you.

*Cover pictures provided by Haringey Children's Safeguarding Partnership
This guide has been updated 2024*