



Child Protection Conferences

A guide for parents and carers



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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 are worries about the safety of a child.

Even if the worries are mainly about one child, all the children in your household will be considered at the meeting.

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 attend in person, or if this is not a good idea for safety reasons. This would need to be agreed in advance with the chair.

2. Who will be there

You – the parent or carer

Parents and carers are always invited to child protection conferences. You may be the person living with the child, who does most or all of the caring. You may be a parent living outside the household, and may not see them very often. If you have parental responsibility, and see your child, we would expect to invite you. There may very occasionally be reasons why a parent is not invited, if this might be very unsafe.

You can bring someone to support you if you want to. This could be a family member, friend or someone important in your community. The conference chair will need to agree in advance that this is an appropriate person to bring to the

meeting. Please remember that this person will hear all your family information.

Parents sometimes ask if they can bring a solicitor. You can bring a solicitor to listen, so they can give you advice before and after the meeting. They should not take part.

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

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 - this will depend on their age and understanding.

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, as assessing social workers stop working with families soon after an Initial child protection conference.

Which other professionals might come

Education: If your child is at nursery, school or college, 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 asked to share relevant health information about you and your child. This is usually in a written report but the GP may come as well.

Police: A police representative comes to the Initial and some Review conferences. 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 your mental health, about domestic abuse or with substance misuse. If a probation officer is supervising a parent, they should come.

Professionals will be asked 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 for 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 and contribution forms

You and your children will be asked if you would like to fill in a contribution form before the meeting. 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. They share 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 sharing their own report 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. A written police report is not shared.

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 share the reasons for holding a child protection conference, or (if this is a review meeting) why there is a child protection plan.

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 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 be asked to 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 make the final decision, taking into account all the views shared. They will record 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

Making a record of the meeting

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

Core group meetings

If a child protection plan is made there will then be regular core group meetings, when family and professionals will meet together to look at the plan. You will all review the

progress of the plan and if it is helping to reduce the concerns. The plan can be updated at core groups.

Visits

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.

Review conferences

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 children have additional needs they should know about. This will help them to support you in the best way possible, and make the chair aware of this for the meeting.

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

It would be very helpful if you could complete the parent/carer 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.

To make a complaint using a secure form, 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>

If you can't access this link or form, call 020 8489 3424. You can ask the chair to send the link to you.

If you want to complain about the process, outcome or decision about whether there is a CP plan, you should do that in writing within 10 days of the conference. Please use the link to the secure form, and put in the subject box **Complaint about a Child Protection Conference**. It will be forwarded to the CPC Service Manager, to respond to you.

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.

Freephone: 0800 085 8287

Telephone: 020 8768 5058

Email: advocacy2@barnardos.org.uk

*Cover pictures provided by Haringey Children's Safeguarding Partnership
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