

Practice Guidance Child Protection Reports - Timeliness

There is an expectation that Child Protection Chairs (CPA's) are in receipt of the social worker's report a clear 3 working days before an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) and 5 working days for Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC).

The management position is that in the best interest of the child, child protection case conferences should where possible take place on the agreed date. In the absence of a report, the chair is not able to thoroughly prepare for the conference and be 'parent ready' as the late timescales also impacts on the parent's ability to read the social workers report.

Proceeding with conferences when reports are not shared within timescales is a breach of the statutory requirements of Working Together 2018. Late reports also give a clear message to partner agencies that timescales for their own reports are not important either.

Equally importance is the parents right to read the concerns held about them and to challenge the content and accuracy so that the final version shared is as far as possible a version that is accurate, even if not agreed with. Having the report in advance allows time for the parents to consider their response and be prepared for conference.

- *24 hours is not sufficient time for parents to read their report and have time to contribute or question the content, not complying with timescales breaches, the parents' rights as defined by Working Together and WSCC policies.*

The following is a best practice proposal to improve the timeliness of social workers reports in order that the conference is productive, and the chair has time to properly consider the needs of the child/ren.

- If a conference report is not received within the agreed timescale the chair has the discretion to reschedule the conference.

If the report is not received within the agreed timescale outlined above, the Child Protection Chair will contact the PM (*not the SW*) to establish when they will receive the report. It is the Practice Managers' (PM) responsibility (regarding management accountability) to ensure that there is a conference report prepared in line with timescales. If the PM is not able to reassure the Child Protection Chair that the report will be ready in time:

The Child Protection Chairs should follow the escalation process.

The practice standards are to be complied with is 3 days ICPC and 5 days RCPC

- If ICPC report is not completed by 3 working days - Service Leads to be notified
- If RCPC report is not completed by 5 working days - Service leads to be notified
- Service Leads will establish whether the social worker is going to be prepared with sufficient time to share the report with the parents
- If no report within 2 days, the ICPC will be adjourned
- If no report within 3 days, the RCPC will be adjourned

- If either the ICPC or RCPC is cancelled a formal dispute to be raised to ensure that a report will be ready for the next conference date.
- *When adjourning the conference, the Child Protection Chair is required to alert their line manager.*

Data reporting –Highlight Reports

Quality Assurance Service

- The Quality Assurance service will provide monthly performance data in respect of conference timescales and availability of the report.

Operational Teams

- The Service Leads will include an explanation as to why reports were not provided to conference (if applicable).

Preparation for Conferences parents/ main carers – when a report is provided in timescale

Process

- Best practice is to ensure that the social worker takes the time to go through the report with the parents / carers. If all opportunities is exhausted to go through the report with parents, and agreed with the parents/ carers, a report can be left at the family home.
- The Child Protection Chair will proceed with the conference if the social worker has made all reasonable attempts to share the report with all parents.
- In the instance where the report has not been shared with the parents due to the parents not making themselves available or parents request that the social worker reschedules the reading of the report, Child Protection Chairs will offer the parents some time to read reports and proceed.
- If parents cannot read, or have additional needs, the Child Protection Chair may assess that they need significant time to read and respond and, in these circumstances, may adjourn .

All families should be made fully aware of procedures, their rights within conference, and their right to challenge the outcome of conference if they think that they have been treated unfairly.

Intended Outcomes

- To ensure compliance with the statutory requirements of Working Together 2018
- Reports are comprehensive and written with parents' contribution and views included with accuracy.

- Child Protection Chairs are given time to ensure based on report content the meeting is managed safely, and any errors or omissions have time to be rectified ahead of the event.

Review / Contacts / References	
Document title:	Practice Guidance Child Protection Reports
Date approved:	21 August 2020
Approving body:	Policy & Practice Steering Group
Next review date:	August 2022
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	
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