

# CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

Information for Parents, Carers and Families

Newcastle Children's Social Care



# WHAT IS A CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE?

## THE INITIAL CONFERENCE



The conference is a formal meeting where parents, the social worker and other professionals who know the family get together to discuss the concerns and decide what can be done to keep the child/ren safe from harm.

## WHO WILL BE AT THE CONFERENCE?

The conference is arranged by Children's Social Care (CSC) and is chaired by an independent reviewing officer (IRO).

Your social worker will be there, and so will other professionals who know your family, such as your health visitor or a school nurse, and your child's teacher.

The police attend all initial conferences if they have been involved in the child protection enquiry, and any professionals who are working with parents or carers will also be invited.



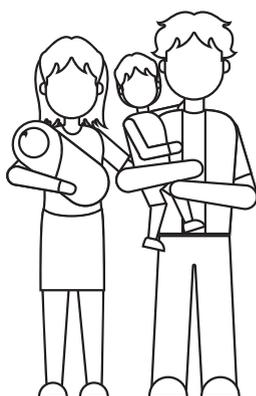
# ARE PARENTS/ CARERS INVITED?

Parents and carers are always invited to conferences and we strongly recommend that you attend so you can have your say and be involved in making plans to keep your child safe.

You can bring a friend, family member or your solicitor to support you and help you put your views across if you want. If English is not your first language, we will arrange for an interpreter to be present to help you take part in the discussion.

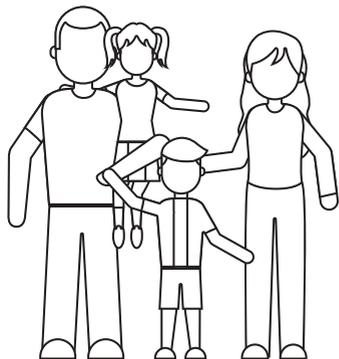
If you prefer not to attend, you can talk to your social worker about other ways of making your views known, for example, writing a statement for the conference that your social worker can read out.

If you want to attend the conference, but find it difficult because of the time it will be held, because you have children to look after or collect from school, you can ask your social worker about rearranging the meeting or getting help with childcare.



Very occasionally, a parent may not be allowed to attend the conference if it is thought that their presence may prevent the child's needs from being discussed, or if their behaviour may be a risk to the safety of family members or professionals.

# ARE CHILDREN INVITED?



CSC try to ensure that children are invited to attend and be a part of conferences and meetings which are about them and affect their lives.

However, sometimes because of their age, level of understanding or the nature of the information being discussed - this is not in their best interests. All children's views can be presented to the conference by their social worker if they are not able to attend.

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CONFERENCE?

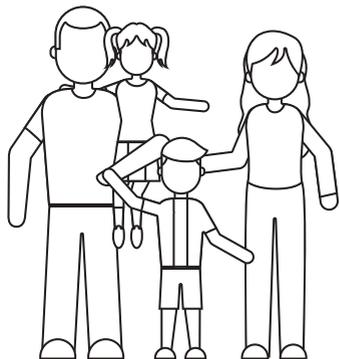
Your social worker will write a report for the conference that explains what has happened and what changes need to be made to make sure your child is safe. You should get a chance to read this at least two days before the conference.

Before the conference starts, the IRO will meet with you to talk about what will happen, how the conference will proceed and how parents can be involved in the discussions. At the start of the conference, the chair will ask everyone to introduce themselves.

Everyone will have an opportunity to comment on the report and share information. The conference will talk about whether your child is at risk of harm and what can be done to make them safe.

Any information shared at the conference will remain confidential, and will only be passed on to other professionals if it is necessary to protect your child from harm.

# WHAT THE CONFERENCE CAN DO:



The conference can decide whether or not your child is at risk of harm and make a plan called a child protection plan that helps to keep your child safe.

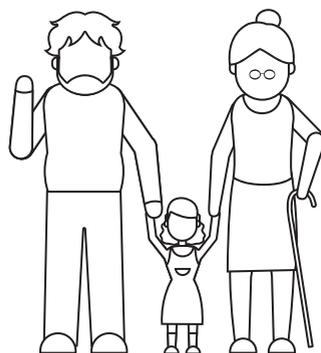
The conference will also look at whether other children in the family need to be protected from harm.

Even if your child doesn't need a child protection plan, the conference may recommend that you get extra support to care for your child from CSC or Early Help Services.

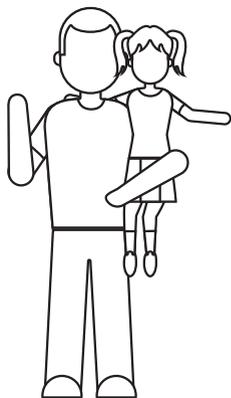
# WHAT IS A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN?

If the conference decides that your child is at risk of harm, they will make a child protection plan, which contains all the things that have to happen to make sure your child is kept safe.

The conference will decide which professionals should work closely with you to make sure the plan is carried out. Normally, your social worker, and any professionals who work closely with your child and your family would be in this group, which is called the core group.



# WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CONFERENCE?



At least 10 days after the initial conference, the core group will meet with you for the first time, and will continue to meet with you regularly to support you and help you to keep your child safe.

The core group will plan what work needs to be carried out to make the changes needed to make sure your child is safe and work towards ending the child protection plan.

To do this, the core group will draw up an agreement with you that sets out exactly what everyone needs to do to bring about the changes needed. It is important that you attend the core group meeting and get involved in work to keep your child safe.

## THE REVIEW CONFERENCE PROCESS

Any decision that was made at the initial conference has to be reviewed after three months and then six months after that. The review conference is the same as the initial conference; you will be invited to attend and the social worker will prepare a report for everyone to discuss.

During the review conference, everyone will look at:

- what progress has been made
- whether the child protection plan is working and if not, the reasons for this
- whether your child is still at risk of harm.

The conference may decide that your child is no longer at risk and that a child protection plan is not needed, but CSC and Early Help Services can still offer services to support you and your family if you need them. If the conference thinks that your child is still at risk, they will look at the child protection plan to see if it needs to be changed to help you and your child and set a date for the plan to be reviewed

# WHERE WILL MY INFORMATION BE KEPT?

When your child/ren are open to CSC, information that is collected about you and your family will be recorded onto the recording system. This will be saved in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

CSC are allowed to share this information with other services such as the Police but ONLY for very specific reasons, such as to protect a child from significant harm or to prevent a crime.

You can request to see the information we hold about you and your children at any time.

Your Social Worker:

How to contact them:

Useful contact numbers

Initial Response Service (IRS) - 0191 277 2500

Long Term Service - 0191 211 5485

Children in Care & Care Leavers - 0191 278 2700

Children with Disabilities - 0191 277 4700

Children's Safeguarding and Care Standards (IRO Office) - 0191 277 4636

