

Child Protection Conferences

Repeat Child Protection Plans

It is critical that good practice is evidenced when there are requests for Child Protection (CP) conferences when there has been a previous Child Protection Plan. It is imperative that the decisions regarding all the risks around the child's safety and wellbeing have been carefully considered and that the right planning is in place.

Where a subsequent period of CP planning is being considered the social work team need to critically analyse the following points to ensure that a Child Protection Plan will identify that service provision will effect positive change for the family before initiating an Initial Child Protection Conference.

- **The length of time since the previous CP plan ended**

It is essential to consider the length of time between Child Protections Plans as it can be indicative of whether change has been sustained. The social worker needs to evaluate why the threshold of significant harm has presented itself again and how long it has been since the last CP plan. If it is less than one year then there needs to be analysis around why a second period of CP planning will benefit the child/young person as opposed to considering the Public Law Outline process or more robust Child in Need planning depending on the analysis of risk presented.

- **How long the previous CP plan was in place**

It is important to consider the length of time a child/young person was subject to a CP plan as this will inform whether or not the previous plan was long enough to embed the necessary changes to reduce the risk of significant harm and sustain change. If the previous CP plan was for 3 months, then it is possible that the plan was stepped down too early to embed the necessary changes but if the plan was for 18 months or 2 years this would reduce the likelihood of a further plan sustaining the required change.

- **Whether the risks are the same or whether there are new risks for the child**

If the risks are the same as the previous plan then there should be analysis as to why there has not been sustained change; there may be issues of disguised compliance or traits of behaviour which have been repeated i.e. domestic abuse within different or the same relationship, concealed drug and alcohol use. This will inform whether or not a further period of CP planning is likely to change the behaviour.

If the risks are different then there should be analysis as to whether these new risks have surfaced as other risks have reduced. There should be overview on the collated risks and what this means for the child/young person lived experience.

- **What work was completed with the family under the first CP plan and what different services / action / support will be available that wasn't offered within the previous plan**

Getting the right services for the family and child/young person is essential to an effective CP plan. A CP plan will not be successful if there is a repeat of services that have clearly not worked for a family or requesting services that are clearly not going to work for an individual i.e. group work for an individual who suffers with anxiety, domestic abuse services for someone who does not acknowledge the domestic abuse.

It is important to understand what services the family, child or young person are willing to work with and which services they are not and why. This information needs to be critically analysed as it informs a parent's commitment to change.

For any service to be successful parents, children and young people need to be on board with why they are accessing the service and they understand why it is beneficial and what change will happen. Whilst it is important to identify services for parents, children and young people it is essential that they are well prepared and engaged before a service is implemented.

If there are gaps in service provision that have not been addressed in previous CP plans it is essential that these are resolved early on in the case planning and that there is no drift and delay identifying a service after a CP plan is initiated.

If there are gaps in service provision because of partner agencies, then these should be escalated.

Second Child Protection Plan

The rationale for requesting a second period of CP planning should be clearly recorded on the child's file by the Service Manager.

When the request is being made for the Child Protection Conference, the screening discussion between the Child Protection Co-Ordinator (CPC) and social worker should be clear regarding the difference the proposed plan will make to safeguard the child as opposed to other alternative actions (i.e. legal advice). The CPC and the Social Worker will need to discuss the timescales within which they expect the CP Plan to reduce the identified risk of harm to the child.

If there are plans to repeat services, actions or support within the CP plan, a clear rationale needs to be recorded by the social worker as to why and what impact this will have on sustaining change and reducing the risk of harm.

Third Child Protection Plan

Where considering the third period (or higher) of CP planning, the decision for a further CP Plan needs to be agreed by the Head of Service and should only happen if the risks are significantly different or the child's circumstances have substantially changed since the last period of CP planning.

Challenge and Resolution

In instances where it has been identified that a repeat CP plan is being considered because previous services and actions were not implemented satisfactorily by the core group, where plans were stepped down too early and/or the case was closed with outstanding actions being completed then the CPC will issue the challenge and resolution process.