

CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

Introduction

The Child Protection Conference is central to child protection procedures. It brings together the family and the professionals to exchange information and plan together. The conference symbolises the inter-agency nature of assessment, treatment and management of safeguarding and protecting children. The Conference is the prime forum for: sharing information and concerns; analysing risk; and, recommending responsibility for action. It draws together the staff from all the agencies with specific responsibilities in the child protection process (Health, Children and Young People Service, Police, Schools, Probation) and other staff who can offer relevant specialist advice.

Types of Case Conference

There are two kinds of Child Protection Conference:

1. Initial Child Protection Conference.
2. Child Protection Review Conference

Grounds for calling a case conference

The grounds for arranging such conferences are that significant harm has been caused to the child by abuse or neglect

Frequency and Timescales Of Conferences

The timing of an Initial Child Protection Conference will depend on the urgency of the case and on the time needed to obtain information about the child and family. However, cases where children are at risk of significant harm should not be allowed to drift. Consequently, all initial Child Protection Conferences must take place within 15 working days of the initial assessment.

The first Child Protection Review Conference should be held within three months of the Initial Child Protection Conference, and further reviews should be held not more than six months for as long as there is a child protection plan,

How to Convene a Child Protection Conference

A Child Protection Conference will normally be arranged at the request of a Social Worker. However, any agency represented on the Telford & Wrekin

Safeguarding Children Board may request that a Conference is convened or a that Review Conference is brought forward to address evident concerns. Any such requests should be made to the Social Worker in the first instance but referred to the Principal Officer (Child Protection) – Tel 01952 385678 if there is disagreement.

In order to be in quorum, the Conference should be attended by a member of the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Service and at least two other professional groups or agencies who have had direct contact with the child. All such agencies or groups will be invited. In addition, invites may be given to those with professional expertise or responsibility for relevant services. In exceptional cases, where a child has not had relevant contact with three agencies, this minimum quorum may be breached. Professionals and agencies who are invited but are unable to attend should submit a written report to the Conference.

Structure of Reports

1. Social Worker's Report

The Social Worker's report (on Agency headed paper) must be in the following format:

- ❖ Family structure, dates of birth and addresses
- ❖ Reason for Conference (as per invitation)
- ❖ Ethnicity, Religious, communication and disability issues
- ❖ Background history in chronological order.
- ❖ Current situation (including placement & legal status)
- ❖ Dates Individual children on Register seen by Key social worker (Review Conference)
- ❖ Medical and Health Information (where appropriate)
- ❖ Child's views
- ❖ Views of Parents & significant others
- ❖ Risk Analysis and conclusions
- ❖ Proposed recommendation regarding Registration.
- ❖ Proposed plan for future work, including suggestions for actions to be included in the outline Protection Plan should the child be registered.

2. Other Agency Reports

Staff are asked to provide a report in the following format :

- ❖ Name & address of Child.
- ❖ Agency Address & Telephone Number.
- ❖ Name & position of Agency representative.

- ❖ Details of your Agency's involvement with child and family.
- ❖ Supply relevant factual information on background.
- ❖ Current areas of concern.
- ❖ If you have sufficient knowledge, state what recommendations you would feel need to be considered by the Conference.
- ❖ What involvement might you or your agency proposes to have in respect of any child Protection Plan and have the resource implications been considered and approved.

Reports to Review Conferences

The Social Worker as the lead worker in a Core Group, should compile a report on behalf of its members and submit this report according to their own agency procedures. The view of the Core Group as a whole, having given due consideration to the matter, should be reflected in any recommendation about the continuing need for a child protection plan and so for continued registration.

Disclosure of Reports to Parents

Parents or other carers, and if appropriate young people, must have an opportunity to read and discuss reports prior to the day of the conference. This will allow them to absorb and respond to what are frequently lengthy and detailed documents which may contain distressing facts and opinion about them. This requirement has been dictated by the intervention of the Local Government Commissioner (Ombudsman)