

PRE BIRTH CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

It can be apparent at times that there are concerns for the welfare of a child before birth. This may be because of the mother's self neglect, failure to access ante natal care or because of substance abuse. It may also be because of case history where a previous child has been harmed or removed from the care of either of the parents.

In such cases section 47 (Children Act 1989) enquiries are conducted and the situation taken to a Child Protection Conference to address identified risks and necessary actions. It is current practice to make the unborn baby subject to a Child Protection Plan at that stage but there have been occasions when that unborn child is miscarried or a still birth occurs.

The Safeguarding Children Board therefore agrees a local policy, whereby at the Conference prior to birth, the child will be made subject to a Pre Birth Protection Plan. The input from the Midwifery Service is vital in all such cases. At birth the pre-birth plan will become a Child Protection Plan. An early Conference will then be convened to ensure that all necessary protection measures have been identified and introduced.

The usual Child Protection Review Conference process within the standard identified timescales will continue to apply.