

What is a Child Protection Conference?

A **Child Protection Conference** is a meeting between a child's family and professionals, such as social workers. A child protection conference will be arranged when there are concerns about the safety of children.

You have been asked to come to a child protection conference about your child. The conference will give us the chance to:

- share information
- identify any family problems, and
- decide what will happen next to deal with any concerns.

Who will be at the child protection conference?

- **Both** parents are always invited, even if they are no longer living together.
- Your child's social worker.
- The **independent chairperson**, who is there to lead the meeting and make sure that everyone can have their say and be heard.
- Your child will be invited if they are aged 11 years and older.
- If your child does not attend the conference it will be important that their views are brought to the meeting.

Other important people in your child's life may be invited to the conference, including:

- teachers
- your health visitor
- the school health nurse
- your child's GP, and/or
- the police.
- other family members

Can I bring someone with me to the conference?

You may bring a friend or relative to the conference in order to provide you with support. Your solicitor is also able to attend but as a support rather than as a legal advocate.

Everyone who attends a child protection conference is expected to treat all information **confidentially**. They must not share any information discussed at the conference with people who are not involved.

What happens at the conference?

Written reports will be provided by people involved with your family and you should be given a copy of these reports at least **2 days** before the Initial Child Protection Conference and **5 days** before a Review Child Protection Conference. These reports will identify both the areas of concern and the strengths within your family which will help to make your child safe.

There will be an **agenda** which will outline what the conference will discuss. We will take **minutes** to record what has been said. We will send copies of the minutes to everyone who attended the conference within 28 days.

The conference will identify what actions need to happen to make your child's life better. It will decide who is going to carry out those actions. A final decision will be made at the conference about whether these actions should be carried out under a **child protection plan**.

Will people listen to me?

Yes, your views about your child's safety and what needs to happen next are very important. The conference will listen carefully to what you have to say.

If you cannot attend the conference you should speak to your child's social worker or to the independent chairperson, who will make sure that your views are heard.

What will the child protection conference do?

The people at the conference will carefully consider the safety and wellbeing of your child. They will also talk about the help and support that can be given to you.

The conference will decide whether your child will become subject of a **child protection plan**. If this happens, this will be explained to you by:

- the independent chairperson **at** the meeting, or
- your social worker **after** the meeting.

If your child is made subject of the child protection plan, the conference will decide who will be the child's **key worker**. This person, who will be a social worker, has to make sure that the decisions and recommendations of the child protection conference are carried out. A multi-agency **child protection plan** will also be agreed to help your child and your family.

What is a child protection plan?

A **child protection plan** is a formal plan to keep your child safe. If the conference puts a child protection plan in place it means there are significant concerns that your child is at risk from harm.

The child protection plan sets out what you and other people need to do to keep your child safe and well. Once the plan is in place there will be regular meetings called **core groups** to make sure the plan is working properly. Everyone, including you, will be expected to take the actions agreed in the plan to make your child safe, happy, well and developing satisfactorily.

What is a core group?

The core group is a smaller group of people from the conference that meet with yourselves in-between conferences to make sure that the plan is progressing.

How long will my child have a child protection plan?

Once a child protection plan is in place we will review it after three months to see if things are getting better and again at six months. When everyone has agreed that your child is safe and well your child will come off a protection plan.

What if I do not agree with the conference's decision?

There is a **complaints procedure** that you can follow if you want to complain about the conference process. However, your complaint will not automatically lead to a reversal of the decisions made at the conference.

How to complain about a child protection conference

If you are unhappy or have a concern about the child protection conference you have a right to make a complaint. If this is the case please use the enclosed concerns and complaints factsheet to detail your concerns.

Contact us

You can contact the First Contact and Support Hub by letter, telephone or email. If you want to speak to someone in person, visit reception at Civic Centre and ask to see a social worker. If English is not your first language we can provide a translation service.

Our opening times

We open at 8:30am every weekday we close at 5:00pm from Monday to Thursday. On Fridays we close at 4:30pm



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About this factsheet

This factsheet gives more information about child protection case conferences. We issued this factsheet in August 2012 and updated it in November 2014. We will check the information is up to date in November 2016.

Other useful factsheets



You can download all of our factsheets and booklets from our website,
www.hartlepool.gov.uk/childrensfactsheets