

The professionals present make judgements about the likelihood of the child/children suffering significant harm in the future and decide whether the child is at continuing risk of significant harm. A decision is then made as to what future action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child ie whether a child protection plan is needed or whether a child in need plan will suffice to meet the intended outcomes.

What are the responsibilities of a key worker?

If the professionals present at the conference conclude that a child is in need of a child protection plan a designated key worker, who should be a qualified social worker will oversee the child protection plan. The plan includes maintaining a minimum standard of visits to

the child, convening Core Group Meetings (CGM's) and chairing second and subsequent CGM's. These meetings involve family members and professionals involved, and look to work through the Child Protection Plan recommendation by recommendation to help move the plan forward. There is a complaints' procedure in the council, please ask the Chair Person or your social worker to give you a form. A key worker must understand that child protection is a collaborative process and should be conducted with key agencies and families wherever possible. Similar procedures apply if a child is deemed to be in need of a Child in Need plan.

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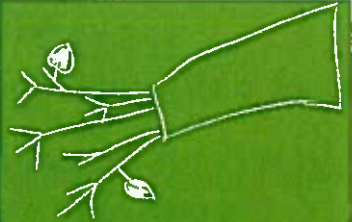
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Bus:

266, H91, 391, 27, 190, 267

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Child protection conferences

A guide for parents, social workers and child care professionals

What is a child protection conference (CPC)?

A Child Protection Conference (CPC) is a multi-agency meeting which brings together family members, the child/young person (where appropriate) and professionals.

- The meeting provides a formal opportunity to share essential information about the child and family in an objective way
- Shares the facts of any allegations that have been made
- Considers and assesses risks to the child/ren
- Establishes a Child Protection Plan, or
- Establishes a Child in Need Plan

Who decides to call a child protection conference?

The law says an initial CPC must be convened when professionals think a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm. This is called the threshold. The social worker must arrange a date with the safeguarding and quality assurance unit.

What is the timing and schedule for a child protection conference?

There are three types of CPC:

- Initial pre-birth
- Initial
- Review

The law states all initial conferences must be held within 15 working days of notification and the first review must be convened within three months. After the first review, a CPC must be held every six months. A review 'pre-birth' CPC must be held no

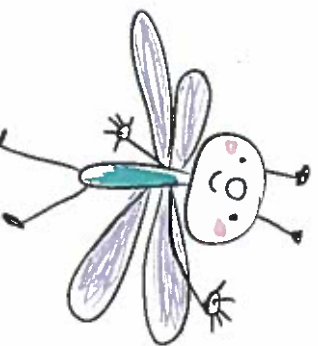
more than one month after the baby's birth. In some circumstances the CPC chair may consider it necessary to bring forward a review conference.

Who should attend a child protection conference?

A CPC should include:

- Parents or those with parental responsibility.
- The child/young person (when aged 12 and over)
- Social worker
- Carers e.g. foster carer
- Advocates
- Police representatives
- Relevant health representatives such as health visitor, school health representatives, GP's
- Relevant education professionals, such as teachers or pre-school workers

Where individuals are unable to attend, the agency should provide a written report for a CPC. Parents may send written comments.



Children/young people attending child protection conferences

In most circumstances children/young people over the age of 12 years should attend. There is a leaflet explaining the CPC especially for children/young people. They may wish to attend with a children's advocate. Children/young people can communicate directly with the chair if they prefer. If children/young people do not wish to attend they should be given the opportunity to send in their written comments. In any event the child's social worker should seek the child's views and make sure they are communicated to the conference.

Where are child protection conferences held?

CPC's are usually held in the conference rooms at Barclay House, Fulham or Cambridge House in Hammersmith. In some circumstances a CPC can be held at a different venue where appropriate facilities are available, for example, a school or health centre. All venues must be accessible, comfortable for participants and offer a welcoming environment.



What do I need to provide for a child protection conference?

It is the social worker's responsibility to provide an invitation list and addresses of these requested to attend the initial CPC to the review and quality assurance unit 15 days before the CPC. For review CPC's the social worker is responsible for updating the CPC list and inviting any professionals and individuals who have become relevant to the CPC plan.

The social worker should provide a (translated) written report to the family two days in advance of an Initial Conference and five working days in advance of a Review Conference, and the same report should be provided to the chair of the conference two days in advance of an Initial Conference and five working days in advance of a review conference.

All other professionals are to provide a written (translated) report to the family and the chair, two days in advance of Initial Conferences and five days before Review Conferences. Parents will have the opportunity to meet the chair of the conference prior to the meeting. They may also wish to put their views in writing.

Confidentiality

Child protection is a sensitive issue and all agencies must make arrangements to ensure that all information, both electronic and in hard copy, is kept securely and confidentially and that appropriate permissions are sought before disclosure.

Who chairs the child protection conference?

The chair of the conference is an experienced social worker who has a detailed understanding of child protection procedures and practice. The office manager in the safeguarding and quality assurance unit will allocate a chair as soon as the CPC is requested.

The chair of the conference will manage the conference and ensure that those attending are aware of the local authority's conference procedures and agenda. This must include reference to the London Child Protection Procedures, the local authority's equal opportunities policy and complaints process.

What happens at a child protection conference?

Information about the child/children's needs is shared between the family members and professionals present. The parents' capacity to meet those needs and ensure their safety is discussed in the context of their wider family and environment.