

Child Protection Conferences

Information for children and young people



What is a Child Protection Conference?

It is a meeting that takes place when a social worker, your parents/carers and people working with your family, like your school or doctor, are concerned about your safety or care. Everyone comes together to talk about those worries, and the things that are going well in your life, and to make a plan to help you be as safe and healthy as possible. In the meeting you can talk about what is happening in your life, what is going well and what is worrying you.

Who will be going to the meeting?

- You – if you want to attend
- Your parents/carer(s)
- Your social worker
- Someone from your school
- A person called the independent chairperson will lead the meeting
- Other people working with you or your family, like your doctor or a health worker

What will happen at the meeting?

The meeting will start with you, your family, and the person running the meeting, the chairperson, talking together about the people who is important to you. The chairperson will also explain how the meeting is going to be held. Then everyone else will join you in the room to start the meeting. The people taking part will be introduced to you, you might know some of them already such as your Head Teacher and your Social Worker.

The chairperson will ask people to share what they are worried about for you and your family. They will also talk about what they think is going well in your life and how people may be able to help you. The chairperson leading the meeting will write some notes on a board or screen that can be seen to help everyone remember what is discussed.

As part of the discussion you, your family, and everyone taking part, will also talk about the plan of support that is needed to help you be as safe and well as possible. Workers will then say whether the plan of support should be a Child Protection Plan or a Child in Need Plan.

You and your family members can ask questions about the information discussed, and the detail of the plan of support, and share your views about this.

Can I go to the meeting?

You have a right to be heard, to have your views and feelings listened to and to be taken seriously. You may be invited to be part of the meeting if your family and your social worker think this will be okay for you; but no, you don't have to go to the meeting.

To help with decisions made at this meeting you can let people know about what is worrying you or what is going well for you. You can do this in different ways:

- Attend part of the meeting yourself either independently or with an Independent Advocate. An advocate comes from a separate organisation and can support you and help you to share your thoughts and feelings at the Child Protection Conference
- Don't attend the meeting but instead ask an adult, such as your advocate, social worker, or other trusted adult, to attend the meeting on your behalf and share your views.
- Speak to the Child Protection Conference chairperson and they will share help you share your views or share them on your behalf.

Scaling and decision making

Towards the end of the meeting the chairperson will ask everyone, family members and all the workers, to 'scale' how safe or not safe you are in your life at the time of the meeting. The scale is **0 to 10**, with **0 = not safe at all**, and **10 = very safe**. People in the room may have different views about how they scale your safety. You will be able to take part in the scaling discussion and share your views about how safe you feel you are, or not.

The law says that workers taking part in a child protection conference must decide whether the children involved should, or should not, have a plan of support called a Child Protection Plan – children must have this special plan if they have experienced significant harm (very serious harm such as physical or emotional abuse or neglect) and are at risk of the harm continuing if things in their life don't change. The information sharing and scaling exercise in the meeting helps you, your family members, and workers to understand the risks and safety in your life and to make that decision.

What is the difference between a Child Protection Plan and a Child in Need Plan?

Both plans say what needs to change to help you be safe, healthy, and happy and who will work with you and your family to help make this happen, how they will do this and when – this could be your parent/carer, another member of your family or a worker.

A **Child Protection Plan** is put in place when there are concerns about the risk of significant harm for children and it is important for children's safety that everyone, family members and workers, are clear about how they are going to work together to prevent children from experiencing further harm.

A **Child in Need Plan** is put in place when children and their family need extra support or maybe a special service to help them, but the children are not at risk of significant harm at that time.

After the meeting the chairperson will make sure you are given your own copy of your plan of support. This will be laid out in a way that helps you to know who is going to work with you and your parent/carers to help make the changes needed, and when and how that support will happen.

Can the Conference decide I will be taken away from my parents or carers?

No. The Conference decides what plan is needed to keep you safe and how everyone will work together to make sure that happens. Only a Court can order that children no longer live with their parents/carers. Most children who have a Child Protection Plan stay at living at home with their parents/carers.

What will my social worker do after the Child Protection Conference?

Your social worker will visit you in your home and will spend time with you alone to get to know you and to make sure they understand your life and how best to help you to be safe and well. How often these visits will happen will be one of the things we talk about at the conference. Your social

worker will also work with your parent/carer(s) to help them care for everyone in the family safely. The social worker will let you know if they are going to share anything you have said with your family.

When will I stop having a Child Protection Plan?

If it is agreed that you need a Child Protection Plan to help you be safe and well the Child Protection Conference will take place again in three months' time and then at least every six months after that until everyone is sure you are no longer at risk of significant harm, and you and your family no longer need this special support.

Sharing feedback about your child protection conference:

If you want to let us know anything at all about your child protection conference, you can write it on the feedback form, which will be given to you at the conference, or you can call the CP Conference Service Manager on 01603 222288.

Where can I get more information?

If you have questions about the child protection conference, or the plan of support that was agreed in the meeting, that are not answered by this leaflet, please speak to your social worker.

Independent Advocacy

If you would like to know more about the role of the Independent Advocate, or if you would like to have this support and it hasn't been offered to you, please speak to your social worker. You can also speak to your teacher or pastoral support worker about advocacy and they can contact your social worker on your behalf to help that happen.

You can also speak to the independent chairperson about advocacy when they contact you before the meeting.



If it would be helpful to have this document in a different format such as large print, audio, Braille, or in a different language, let your social worker know and we will do our best to help you.

