

Child Protection Conferences: Guidance for Professionals

February 2018



The Child Protection Conference (CPC)

Children's Social Care will convene a CPC once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm.

The purpose of the CPC is to enable professionals with particular expertise, those most involved with the child(ren) and the family and the family themselves, to assess all relevant information and plan how to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

Child Protection Conferences are chaired by an independent chair, who is employed by Children's Services.

There are two different types of conference:

The Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

The purpose of the Initial Child Protection Conference is:

- To collate and analyse, in an inter-agency setting, the information which has been obtained about the child's health, development and functioning;
- To consider the capacity of the parent(s) to ensure the child's safety and promote his/her health and development;
- To consider the evidence presented to the conference and make judgements about the likelihood of a child suffering significant harm;
- To decide what future action is required in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child, how that action will be taken forward and with what intended outcomes.
- To decide whether the criteria are met for making the child subject of a Child Protection Plan.

If the child is or the children are made the subject of a Child Protection Plan, the conference will:

- Identify a named key worker (from the Children's Services Department)
- Identify a core group
- Formulate the outline child protection plan

The Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC)

This takes place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan. The first review must be within three months of the ICPC and thereafter at intervals not exceeding six-months.

The purpose of the RCPC is to:

- Review the safety, health and development of the child against intended outcomes identified in the child protection plan;
- Ensure that the child continues to be adequately safeguarded;
- Review the current child protection plan;
- Consider whether the child continues to be at risk of significant harm, and if not, to decide on the discontinuation of the Child Protection Plan;
- Consider what services and support the family may still require after the Child Protection Plan has been discontinued.

All Child Protection Conferences must take account of the child's wishes and feelings.

Contribution to Child Protection Conferences

Attendance

It is part of the role of professionals working with children, families and/or parents to attend CPCs and where appropriate be part of the core group. If you are invited to a child protection conference your contribution is vital and in light of this you are required to provide a written report and attend the meeting.

You should respond to invitations in writing indicating whether or not you are able to attend.

You should make every effort to attend, but if unable to, you must still submit a written report and, wherever possible send a well-briefed colleague to speak to the report.

Completing a Report for Conference

Please read this guidance carefully before completing your report.



Multi-agency Child
Protection Conferen

Please see the link to the template above. It is expected that the written report is submitted to the Chair 2 working days in advance of an ICPC and 5 working days for an RCPC. You are also expected to arrive at the conference 30 minutes in advance and take 12 copies of the report with you to the conference to share with others attending.

All reports to conference, or information shared with the conference must be written or expressed in clear and plain language in order for it to be understood by all attendees.

Your report should follow the pro-forma provided with this guidance. The report should give details of your involvement with the child and family, and all relevant information you have concerning knowledge of the child's developmental needs, capacity of the parents to meet the needs of their child within their family and environmental context. This information should include careful consideration of the impact that the current and past family functioning and family history are having on the parents' capacities to meet the child's needs and specifically their educational progress.

If you are working with the child you should also consult with them as appropriately as possible in order to ascertain their wishes and feelings.

You should also include details of any other support or services you are offering the child or their parent.

It is important to include positive information regarding the child and family's strengths as well as being clear about risks and concerns that you have about the child. When providing information you should take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. When information is provided from another source, i.e. it is second or third hand, this should be made clear. Opinions should be substantiated by factual information wherever possible.

Sharing Information with the Child and their Parents

A copy of the report should be shared with the child(ren), as appropriate to their age and understanding, and their parents before the day of the conference. If you anticipate difficulties in sharing information with the family, such as managing third party information, prior to or at the conference you must consult the Chair as soon as possible. The Chair will ensure that all relevant information is shared and will seek to identify an appropriate method for achieving this.

Checklist – How can I effectively contribute to Child Protection Conferences?

You are expected to:

- Respond to any child protection conference invitations in writing;
- Make every effort to attend the conference or ensure a colleague attends on your behalf;
- Send a report to the conference whether or not you can attend;
- Send a copy of the report to the Chair at least 2 days in advance of the ICPC and 5 days for an RCPC;
- Arrive 30 minutes in advance of the conference and take 12 copies of the report with you.

You should use the pro-forma and guidance included in this document to produce a report that:

- Uses plain language and avoids jargon;
- Outlines your involvement with the child and their family;
- Considers the wishes and feelings of the child;
- Comments upon and analyses the risks and child and family's needs and the possible impact on them;
- Includes positive information but is clear about your concerns and the risks to the child.

You must:

- Share the information included in the report with the child and their parents/carers before the day of the conference unless it is inappropriate to do so;
- Contact the Chair immediately if you anticipate any difficulties in sharing information with the parents;
- Treat the information in the strictest confidence and only share the contents with others on the basis of 'need to know in the child's best interest.

