



Child Protection Conferences Guide for Parents and Carers



CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES

Child Protection Conferences: Guide for parents and carers

A Child Protection Conference is a meeting that brings together your family members (and children where appropriate), supporters, advocates, and those professionals most involved with your child(ren) and family to make decisions about your child's future safety, health, and development. They are held when there are worries that your child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed.

Social workers, health workers, teachers and others who know your child(ren) and family will usually attend. We all parents and carers to participate too, as you have a really important role to play in helping us understand what is happening for your family and how we can help make things better.

The Conference will agree a plan with all attendees, which will help meet your child(ren)'s needs, keep them safe and reduce the risk of harm. The Child Protection Conference does not make decisions about legal or court action, or about where your child(ren) should live. However, if the plan is not being successful in reducing the risk of harm, then it may be recommended that this is considered.

You can watch [a short video which explains the Child Protection Conference](#) process.

Before the Conference

You will be sent an invitation either by post or email depending on your preference, outlining when and how the Conference will take place. If you have any questions or special requirements, please speak with your social worker about this.

All attendees are asked to write a report and should share this with you before the meeting. You can ask workers for their reports if you have not seen these before the meeting. You will see all reports on the day of the meeting and be sent copies afterwards with the minutes of the meeting. You should not be surprised or hear new information during the Conference, and you will have the opportunity to question any information shared.

Who else will be at the Conference?

The Conference will be chaired by an Independent Chair. You will have an opportunity to talk to the Chair alone before the Conference meeting. The views of your child(ren) will also be shared in the Conference either by them attending (if suitable) or a social worker or independent advocate sharing their views.

You can have someone to support you at the Conference such as a family member, friend, or advocate. As personal information is often discussed at these meetings, it is important that you trust the person who attends with you to hear this information and keep it private.

Professionals who work with your child and your family will be invited. If there are professionals, you feel it is important to invite please tell you social worker. Your child(ren)'s social worker will always be at the Child Protection Conference. Usually, a teacher, a school nurse or health visitor will attend. A police representative will always attend the Initial Child Protection Conference, and information will be requested from your GP.

What happens on the day of the Child Protection Conference?

The Independent Chair will meet with you before the main meeting to get to know you, explain how the Conference will run, and to talk about how you wish to contribute to the discussion and how sensitive issues can be best handled.

At the start of the Conference all the attendees will introduce themselves, and the Chair will ask professionals to summarise the most important parts of their reports. You will be invited to contribute to this discussion.

During the meeting four key questions are considered and everyone is asked to contribute:

- What is working well in your family?
- What are we worried about in relation to your child(ren) and your family?
- What needs to happen to make sure your child(ren) are safe and well cared for in the future?
- What information is not agreed upon and needs to be clarified?

A plan will be made with you and others present, after which a decision will be made about whether the risk of harm to your child(ren) is high enough that the plan should have the status of a Child Protection Plan. Each person present, including you is asked to give a view on this.

What is a Child Protection Plan?

The purpose of a Child Protection Plan is to provide support to your child(ren) and yourself to make sure that your child(ren) are kept safe from harm and that any risks are reduced. Our aim is to involve you and your child(ren) in the decision making around the plan.

If it is decided that the plan will be a Child Protection Plan, a Core Group of people will be identified who will meet regularly. This will include you and any supportive family and friends, as well as professionals. The role of this Core Group is to work out in detail how the plan will work and measure progress.

It may be agreed that your child does not need a Child Protection Plan, but the discussion has identified that there is support which may benefit your family. If this is the case, then a Child in Need Plan may be developed.

What happens after the Conference?

After the Conference you will be sent a written record of the meeting and the Plan. If a Child Protection Plan is made, you will be asked to attend regular meetings with other members of the Core Group. At these meetings, you will look at the Plan and discuss what progress has been made in relation to the actions identified. The core group will meet within ten working days of the Initial Conference and then at regular intervals (usually about six weeks) until the next Conference meeting.

A Review Conference will be held after three months and then at least every six months until the risks have reduced and all feel that the Child Protection Plan can end. At each Conference a decision is made about whether the Child Protection Plan is still needed to keep your child(ren) safe.

What can you expect from us?

We want to work in partnership with you and your family recognising your strengths and what is going well. As a parent or carer, you should expect to:

- be listened to

- be treated with respect
- be involved in decisions
- get any help that has been offered to you within the agreed time scales
- receive copies of all reports before Conferences (two working days before an Initial Conference and five working days before a Review Conference)
- get a copy of the Conference minutes within 15 working days of the Conference

What do we expect from you?

We ask that you:

- attend the conference on time to ensure there is enough time for you meet with the Chair
- make sure that you have made childcare arrangements before the meeting unless it has been agreed that your child(ren) will attend the Conference and contribute their views. We can offer some support with childcare if needed, please speak with your social worker about this
- inform us beforehand of any special assistance you may require such as hearing loop access, translators, or wheelchair access
- do not take any substances such as alcohol or drugs prior to or at the meeting
- listen to the views of others
- act in a respectful manner. We will not tolerate aggression and the Chair can make the decision to the end the meeting or ask you to leave

Your rights

You are entitled to receive advice from a solicitor. Your solicitor can attend the meeting but cannot contribute to the discussion or decision making.

You can get advice on legal matters from City Advice. Call **020 7392 2919** (Monday - Friday 10am-1pm and 2-4pm) or:

- Text **07432 658 083**
- [Email City Advice](#)

If you would like independent advocacy support, below are some agencies you can consider contacting or please discuss with your social worker who can offer support in finding an advocate for you.

- [City Of London | Home | POhWER](#)
- [Advocacy, Help and Advice - Parent, Family and Allies Network \(pfan.uk\)](#)
- [Legal Action for Women](#)
- [How to find an advocate - Mind](#)
- [VoiceAbility | Advocacy and involvement](#)
- [Advocacy | Mencap](#)
- [Advocates for parents - Family Rights Group \(frg.org.uk\)](#)
- [Someone to speak up for you \(advocate\) - Social care and support guide - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Contact

Please do not hesitate to contact your social worker or the Independent Child Protection Chair by emailing Children.Duty@cityoflondon.gov.uk should you wish to discuss a Child Protection Conference or any part of the process.

Anti-Racist Practice, Equality and Diversity

The City of London is committed to addressing all forms of racism, discrimination, and inequality. We understand that racial and cultural stereotypes and prejudices – conscious and unconscious – underpin structural racism within our society and organisations, and we are all susceptible to these. Therefore, all Conference attendees are expected to actively consider implications of racism and prejudice within their work with your child(ren) and family, and within the wider actions and procedures of their agencies.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of any professional within a Conference, or more widely please raise this with your social worker or the Independent Chair.

If you require this information in a different format, such as audio tape, or in another language please contact your social worker.

Complaints

Should you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of a Child Protection Conference please contact: The Complaints Officer on **020 7332 3498** or email CYPScomplaints@cityoflondon.gov.uk