



Children and Young People's Services
Safeguarding and Family Support Service

Safeguarding and Review Unit

Child Protection Conference Procedures, Standards and Dispute Resolution Process

Please note this document does not replace West Yorkshire Safeguarding Procedures.

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In Wakefield the Child Protection Conference Chairs (CP Chairs) have a key role and responsibility in managing the Child Protection Conference process in a manner that engages families, promotes the participation of children and young people and contributes to the development of high standards of multi-agency safeguarding practice. The purpose is to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded and receive high quality safeguarding services in line with national legislation, policy and procedures.

Child Protection Conference Chairs will provide support to children and young people, parents, carers and practitioners preparing for and contributing to conferences and bring challenge to enable practice issues to be addressed with the aim of improving the standard of conferences, the multi-agency intervention with the children and family and ensure that the decisions and recommendations of the conference contribute to safeguarding the child or young person..

The Child Protection Conference Chair will not have any operational responsibility for the case.

The role of the Child Protection Conference Chairperson is to ensure that the meeting is quorate, (attended by a minimum of three different agency representatives); ensure that the Child's Voice is clear for all, that family members are able to participate effectively and to ensure that all attendees are given the opportunity to participate and engage in consideration of strengths and risks.

The Conference will decide whether or not a Child Protection Plan is required to protect the child or young person. It will also agree the outline Child Protection Plan. In addition it will make recommendations that the members of the conference feel will contribute to the Safeguarding of the child and young person.

Pro-forma Conference Report

Reports to conference are produced using the multi-agency report form (click below to access) or the social work report to conference. These reports follow a Signs of Safety format as the Practice Model.

<https://www.wakefieldscb.org.uk/professionals-and-practitioners/signs-of-safety/>

Booking a Conference

In accordance with West Yorkshire Safeguarding Procedures an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) should take place within 15 working days of a Strategy Discussion/Meeting. This is the Strategy Discussion at which Section 47 enquiries are initiated. See procedures below.

http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_init_cp_conf.html

Following this decision the allocated social worker is required to gather **all** the appropriate information to **fully complete** the booking form so that a Child Protection Conference Chair can be allocated, a date, time and venue can be agreed and invite letters sent to those indicated on the booking form.

The outcome of the Strategy Discussion will result in a multi-agency safety plan which is implemented In the interim period prior to the conference to ensure safety of the children until the development of the multi-agency child protection plan or child in need plan resulting from the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).

Reports to Initial Child Protection Conference

Social workers and all invited professionals will provide a report to the Initial Child Protection Conference which has been shared 2 days in advance with the family to enable any amendments to be made. **All reports** will be provided to the CP Chair at least 1 working day prior to the ICPC.

Reports to Child Protection Review Conference

In preparation for a Child Protection Review Conference (CPRC) the social worker and all invited professionals must produce a report in accordance with the procedures as below:

http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_cp_rev_conf.html#reports

This report should have been shared with the children and family and provided to the CP Chair at least 2 working days in advance of the CPRC.

Quality Assurance

In advance of an ICPC or a CPRC the Safeguarding Unit will complete a monitoring form which will provide quality assurance (QA) information to highlight any areas for improvement, development or training or provide an assurance that standards are being met. This QA process will be part of the CP Chair's preparation and will indicate if appropriate assessments have been completed and recorded on the system and in advance of CPRC if statutory visits and core groups have been undertaken and if the core group minutes are demonstrating development of and progress made against the child protection plan. It is important that if practitioners are aware of any concerns or practice difficulties that they contact the chair for a discussion well in advance of the conference.

Record of Conference and Child Protection Safety Plan Standards

If the decision of the conference is the child should be subject to a Child Protection Plan, the plan should be circulated to all those invited to attend within 2 working days. Care Director will be updated within one working day to alert that a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The record of the Conference will be circulated to all those invited within 15 working days of the conference.

A Core Group meeting must take place within 10 working days of the Initial Child Protection Conference. Subsequent core groups must take place every four weeks.

The CP plan will be updated by the social worker within 2 working days of the Core Group and circulated to every member of the core group.

The CP plan must be quality assured by the CP Conference Chair within 10 working days.

Practice Feedback

A summary of good practice or areas for development will be completed and feedback provided accordingly.

CP Chair Concern/Dispute Resolution Process

If throughout the pre-conference monitoring process or during the conference the Child Protection Conference Chair identifies any practice issues that need attention, they will enter into dialogue with the practitioner to seek resolution and share the outcome with relevant line management.

If the matter cannot be resolved satisfactorily then the Child Protection Chair will complete the CP Chair Concern and this will be sent to the specific professional or professionals and their line management where applicable and will request action to be taken. It is expected that the chair will receive a response from the agency within 3 working days outlining the action to be taken and the timescales. Once this is completed it will be added to the child's social care file on CareDirector.

If there is no satisfactory conclusion or if there are serious concerns emerging or repeat concerns, the CP Chair will escalate to the Service lead for Safeguarding and Review Unit who will escalate to the appropriate senior manager or WDSCB representative e.g. Service Manager, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding etc.

If agencies concerns remain or patterns of practice issues emerge the matter will be discussed with the Service Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Standards and dialogue will take place with the relevant senior management or agency safeguarding lead as appropriate.

Any professional who has concerns about the conduct of the Child Protection Chairperson they should be raised with the Service Lead CPRU. If this does not satisfactorily address the concern they should be raised with the Service Manager Safeguarding and Quality Standards.

Dissent for the Conference Decision

Where there is a disagreement regarding the threshold for significant harm being met or not being met the Conference Chair will attempt to facilitate the conference reaching a consensus by drawing conference members attention to the threshold and considering this in light of the information which has been shared and the child's assessed needs.

Where there is no consensus, the decision will normally be made by a simple majority.

Where a majority decision cannot be reached, the Conference Chair will make the decision.

Where the Conference Chair considers the majority decision to be either:

- An unsatisfactory decision that the child should have a Child Protection Plan where, in the Chairs opinion, the criteria have not been met and/or such a plan is not necessary; or
- An unsatisfactory decision that the child does not require a Child Protection Plan where, in the Chairs opinion, the child would be at continuing risk of significant harm if a Child Protection Plan was not in place each Local Safeguarding Children Board may authorise the Conference Chair to have final decision-making powers.

The Conference Chair must ensure that all members of the Conference are clear about the conclusions reached, the decision taken and recommendations made, and that the Conference minutes accurately reflect the discussions, the decision and, where relevant, the reasons for the Conference Chair exercising his or her decision-making powers.

Where a decision about whether or not a child becomes subject to a Child Protection Plan has been made and an agency representative does not agree with the decision made at conference the dissent will be recorded in the minutes of the conference.

A professional can request that the decision of the conference be escalated to a multi-agency group chaired by the Principal Social Worker/Service Manager for Safeguarding and Quality standards for Review. This request for escalation should be recorded in the minutes and the minutes and reports will be forwarded for consideration by the multi-agency group. The multi-agency group will consider the information and make a recommendation about reconvening the conference where it feels it is appropriate.

In addition if a professional concludes that a Conference decision places a child at risk, s/he must seek advice from her/his Designated Professional or **Named Professional** or manager.

Where the issue is not resolved, the agency may consider taking action under the **Resolving Professional Disagreements and Escalation Procedure**.

If parents/carers disagree with the Conference decision, the Conference Chair must further discuss their concerns and explain their rights to challenge under the **Complaints and Appeals Procedure** http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_res_profdisag.html

Examples of Good Practice

The Child Protection Conference Chairs will identify examples of good practice. This will be fed back via email. Examples of such practice will be collated by the CP Chairs and used as training examples in the multi-agency training or briefing sessions provided by the SGRU.