

A guide to...

Child Protection Conferences

Information for Parents and Carers



Find out more online:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk



worcestershire
county council

1 What is an Initial Child Protection Conference (meeting)

Families and professional people meet to discuss concerns about your children and young people; this may be because of concerns about harm or abuse. The meeting will discuss whether your child is suffering or likely to be suffering from significant harm. It is a serious step for this meeting to be held about your child.

At the Conference (meeting) people will talk about

- What they are worried about
- What is going well
- What needs to change

Any 'follow-up' meetings are known as Review Conferences.

2 Who will be at a Child Protection Conference?

- The child or young person, if this is a good idea and if they are able to understand and take part.
- Parents and/or those who have parental responsibility or care of the child.
- A supporter, could be a family member, friend or legal representative
- An advocate - is someone who puts forward the child's point of view.
- Professional people who are responsible for providing services for your child. This could be Health Visitor, School Nurse, Doctor, Teacher, Police or Probation Officer.
- You will be sent a letter which will ask you to attend the meeting.

3 Can I go to the Conference (meeting)?

Yes. Parents and carers should attend the meeting because their views and feelings are very important. You will be given the opportunity to comment on the information shared by those at the meeting.

There may be some circumstances where you may have to leave the meeting for a short period of time.

This could be because:

- When Police enquiries are incomplete;
- Someone behaving in a way which is threatening other people at the meeting.

4 Can my child/ren go to the Conference (meeting)?

Yes. There are lots of ways for children to be involved in their meetings. There is a leaflet about this with your invite letter or ask the Social Worker for our leaflet for children about Child Protection Conferences.

5 What can I do to get ready for the Conference

- Your social worker will discuss everything with you before the meeting and will share their report with you.
- The Chairperson will meet you before the meeting, so that you can ask questions and tell them about anything which is worrying you.

6 What will happen at the Conference?

- The Chairperson will ask everyone at the Conference to say who they are and why they are at the meeting. They will take it in turn to share their information.
- They will talk about what we are worried about, what is working well and what needs to change. They will also talk about what it is like to be a child in your family. They may also review safety plans.
- The Chairperson will help you to take part in the meeting and to say what you think, knowing that this is a difficult time.
- The professionals will be asked to decide whether your child needs a Child Protection Plan. The child protection plan makes sure that all those concerned work together to do what's best for the child to keep them safe. You may be asked what you think about the need for a child protection plan. But the professionals decide if a child protection plan is needed.
- A record of the meeting will be taken focusing on key information, actions and outcomes.

7 What happens if my child needs a child protection plan?

During the meeting a small group of people called the core group will be identified as having an important role to play with you and your family. You will play an important role within this.

- The plans will clearly state what each person has agreed to do to help to make sure that your child is safe
- You will play an important role within this working to this plan is your opportunity as a parent to show you can care for and protect your child.
- The core groups meet every 4-6 weeks to talk about whether the plan is working to keep your child safe.

8 Child Protection Review Conference

The first review will happen no later than 3 months after the initial conference. After the first review and while your child has a child protection plan there will be review meeting every 6 months. This is the only meeting which can decide that your child doesn't need a child protection plan anymore.

9

What happens if my child does not need a child protection plan?

If it's decided that your child does not need a child protection plan you can still ask for help and support for your family. Your social worker will talk to you about what will be help and put a plan together.

10

What if I don't agree with what the meeting decides?

If you do not agree with the decision made at the Conference you can ask for your views to be noted.

11

Further helpful information

Please let us know before the Conference if we need to arrange for an interpreter or special equipment so that you can fully take part in the meeting. You can also speak to your Social Worker about how to make a complaint.

Information is available from:

- A Solicitor work works with children
- Your Local Citizen Advice Bureau
- Family Rights Group (Advice Line) Tel: 0808 801 0366
- Children's Legal Centre (Child Law) Tel: 0808 802 000

