

# Useful telephone numbers

Customer Care Team

Tel: 0161 474 3938 Fax: 0161 474 3896 Textphone: 0161 474 4619

Children's Social Care 0845 644 4313

Early Intervention & Family Support Team, Baker Street 0161 476 6700

Looked After Children Team, Dialstone Centre 0161 474 2100

Children's Legal Centre 20 Crompton Terrace, London W12 UJN 01206 873 820

A free interpreting service is available if you need help with this booklet / leaflet.  
Please telephone Stockport Interpreting Unit on 0161 477 9000.

E-mail: eds.admin@stockport.gov.uk

যদি এই পুস্তিকা/প্রচার পত্রটি সম্পর্কে আপনার কোন সাহায্য দরকার হয় তবে বিনা খরচে আপনার জন্য দোতখীর ব্যবস্থা করা  
হতে পারে। মেহেয়বানী করে স্টকপোর্ট ইন্টারপ্রিটিং ইউনিটে কোন কলন নম্বর, 0161 477 9000

اگر آپ کو اس کتابچے/پمچے کے بارے میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو مفت ترجمانی کی سروس دستیاب ہے۔ براہ مہربانی انٹر پرائٹنگ یونٹ  
کو 0161 477 9000 پر فون کریں۔

如你需要他人為你解釋這小冊子/單張的內容，我們可提供免費的傳譯服務，  
請致電 0161 477 9000 史托波特傳譯部。

تتوفر خدمة ترجمة شفوية مجانية إذا تطلبت مساعدة في فهم هذا الكتيب/النشرة. نرجو الاتصال  
بإنتربريتنج يونت على رقم الهاتف: 0161 477 9000

خدمات ترجمه رایگان این نشریه/کتابچه در صورت نیاز موجود میباشد. لطفاً با شماره تلفن 0161 477  
9000 با واحد ترجمه (اینترپرائٹنگ یونیت) ما تماس بگیرید.

This leaflet explains why Children's Social Care, are involved with your family and how they carry out their responsibilities to safeguard your children. If you would like it in large print, on audio tape, in Braille or on disk please contact 0161 474 4813 (textphone 0161 474 4619)



# Child Protection Conferences and Child Protection Plans

## Information for Parents and Carers

# Child Protection Conferences and Child Protection Plans

## Information for Parents and Carers

As a result of the recent child protection enquiries there are concerns about the welfare of your child and it has been decided to hold an initial child protection conference. As parents / carers you know your child better than anybody else does, so you need to be involved in deciding the best way to help your child.

## What is a Child Protection Conference?

A child protection conference is a meeting called when child protection enquiries suggest that a child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed in the future. At the conference discussion takes place about how best to keep the child safe and well and how to support the child's family.

## Who goes to the conference?

You will be invited and it is very important that you are there. You will have the chance to talk about how your child is doing, put across your point of view and correct any mistakes.

Depending upon the age of the child the following people will usually attend:

Social Worker  
Social Worker's Manager  
Police  
Health Visitor or School Nurse  
Family or Hospital Doctor  
Teacher or Headteacher  
Nursery Worker  
Education Welfare Officer  
Local Authority Solicitor

Other agencies can also be invited if they know your family or have information about your family.

A child protection officer who has not been involved in the work with your family chairs the conference. Before the meeting begins you will meet the chairperson who will explain how the meeting will be run and how to put forward your views.

You may bring someone to the meeting to be with you. This can be a trusted friend, relative or perhaps a solicitor. Your supporter is there to help you and to observe. They cannot take part in the decision making.

## What happens before the conference?

The social worker will write a report about his / her enquiries which they should show you before the conference. It will include some background information about your family, the concerns about your child and make recommendations for further action. The social worker should show you the report before the conference. Other professionals may also provide written reports for the conference.

## What happens at the conference?

All the written reports are shared with everyone who attends. The meeting will be quite formal and will follow an agreed agenda. The chair person will make sure that everybody has the opportunity to speak without being interrupted and that the conference considers all of the issues about the care of your child. The police will give any information they believe is helpful or relevant. You will be asked to give your opinion about your current situation and the events that have caused concern. You will have every opportunity to say what you wish and raise any questions you may have. If English is not your first language an interpreter can be present and if you have any disability you should discuss your particular needs with the social worker well before the conference.

Everything that is said in the meeting is confidential. It will only be passed on to other professionals who need to know this information.

Physical or verbal aggression will not be tolerated nor will offensive remarks such as racist or sexist comments. If a member of the conference refuses to follow these rules the chairperson may insist that they leave the meeting, or end the meeting all together.

## Do parents always attend?

You are expected to attend but it is not compulsory. Every effort will be made to help you feel at ease so that you can give your views. You can expect to be treated with courtesy, honesty (all the concerns will be shared with you), respect and understanding of your difficult situation. If you need help with transport or child care, talk to the social worker beforehand. The meeting will last about 1½ to 2 hours. If you decide not to attend you may send a report or a letter or ask the social worker to present your views. Parents are not expected to attend if this would place unreasonable pressure on their mental health or emotional well being.

In some very rare situations if there is a risk of violent behaviour which would threaten the safety of conference members, one or both parents can be excluded by the chairperson. If you are worried about someone else attending (e.g. a violent partner) tell your social worker.

## Do children attend?

The conference has to consider the wishes and feelings of the child. Children may attend if they wish to and are old enough to understand what is being discussed. Some children may prefer to fill in a consultation form or make a tape rather than attend in person. They can ask the social worker or someone else they trust to give their views.

## What does the conference decide?

The main aim of the conference is to work with you so that your child remains in your home and is protected from harm. If the members of the conference feel that your child is at risk of harm they will recommend what action is needed to protect your child. This is called the outline Child Protection Plan.

## What is the Child Protection Plan?

The child protection plan is a written plan to help you keep your child safe and well. It says which workers will be involved and what they each need to do to support you in looking after your child. It also states clearly what is expected of you and what needs to change to remove the risk to your child. The plan is regularly checked to make sure that everyone is doing what they agreed to do and to make sure that the risk to your child has been reduced.

## Who is responsible for the Child Protection Plan?

A small group of professional workers will work closely with parents / carers and the child. A social worker called the keyworker will be given the responsibility for keeping the focus of the work on the needs of the child concerned. This group of people is called the Core Group.

## Can a conference put my child in care?

NO. The conference does not have the power to remove a child from home BUT sometimes a conference will recommend that a child should not remain with his / her parents or carers because there is a possibility of serious harm. On those occasions the local authority would seek legal advice and possibly apply for a court order and notify you of their intention to do so.

Sometimes parents enter into an agreement for the local authority or a friend or relative to look after their child for a short time while the risk in their home is still present.

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

If the conference decides your child is not at risk of harm it may recommend continued work with you and your child and the provision of support services.

## For how long will my child have a Child Protection Plan?

A plan will be needed for as long as your child continues to be at risk of serious harm. A Child Protection Review Conference will be held within three months and then every five months after this. Each review conference will look at how the Child Protection Plan is working for your child, what changes have been made to protect your child and whether or not the plan is still needed. You will be invited to each Review Conference to give your views.

## What if my family move out of Stockport?

If your child has a Child Protection Plan and you move, then the Safeguarding Children Unit at the place you move to will be notified. They will arrange to hold a Child Protection Conference to consider the risks to your child.

## Can I appeal against a decision made at a Child Protection Conference?

Yes, there is an appeals system which gives parents a way of complaining about the decision.

## When can I appeal?

- If the process of the conference did not allow all relevant information to be shared.
- If the grounds for making your child the subject of a child protection plan were not met (these will have been discussed at the conference).
- If there is new information that the conference members did not have when they decided your child needed a child protection plan.
- If information shared at the conference which informed the decision making is now found to be incorrect.

## How do I appeal?

As a first step you should write to the chairperson of the conference explaining the reason for your appeal. This should be done within 20 working days from the meeting date.

The chairperson will respond to you within 10 working days. If you are not satisfied with this response you should write to the Service Manager of the Safeguarding Children Unit within 20 days of the date of the chairperson's letter.

The Service Manager will arrange a meeting of the Conference Complaints Panel who will look at all the reports seen at the conference, the conference minutes and any further information provided and decide whether or not your child needs a Child Protection Plan. You will then be told of the decision – which is final. The decision will be made in the best interests of the child.

## Independent Help & Advice

The Family Rights Group can provide free, confidential advice and they publish a much fuller guide to child protection procedures.

The telephone advice services are available:

Monday – Friday 10am – 12pm & 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Freephone 0800 731 1696

Email: [advice@frg.org.uk](mailto:advice@frg.org.uk)