

Child Protection Case Conference

5 Minute Facts

What is it?

A Child Protection Case Conference is a meeting held between family members (and the child whenever appropriate), supporters or advocates and those professionals who have a role with the child and family.

A section 47 (s47) investigation is undertaken involving parents, carers, the child and other practitioners. This investigation will decide whether a child is at risk of significant harm and whether there is a need for a Child Protection Conference.

After a s47 investigation, if required, the Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) takes place within 15 working days. During this Conference, a multi-agency decision is made as to whether the child/ren has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. Following an ICPC a Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC) is undertaken within three months and six monthly thereafter.

Working Together 2015; gives guidance on how Child Protection Conferences are to be conducted and it highlights that all practitioners should work together to safeguard the child from harm and develop an effective plan.

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working Together to Safeguard Children.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf)

Who attends a Child Protection Conference?

If it is appropriate, the Social Worker will discuss with the child or young person, and their parents and carers, whether they want to attend and participate in the conference. In Bolton, there is an independent child advocacy service.

The child protection advocate can support the child at Case Conferences, to ensure they understand the process and why he/she is subject of a Case Conference and enable them to share their views, wishes and feelings.

All children in Bolton, who are part of the ICPC process, have the opportunity to express their wishes and feelings by completing a Child Protection Conference Booklet.

Whenever possible, it is essential parents are invited, attend and participate in Conferences to discuss information and contribute towards the development of their child's plan and to support them to meet their child's needs and to keep them safe. Parents may ask another adult to attend, to support them; this may be a solicitor, advocate or friend. The supporting person will not be allowed to take part in the discussions, but may listen and observe.

On some occasions, parents may not be allowed to attend all or part of the Conference, if this happens, the reasons will be explained to the parents' and their views will be reported at the meeting by the Social Worker. If appropriate, the chair of the Conference will offer to meet with the parents who have not attended.

It is essential at the ICPC and RCPC to have representatives from multi-disciplinary agencies, this enable's effective discussion and transparent decision making. As good practice, a representative from Bolton's Children's Social Care Services, Health and the Police are always invited to attend Conferences, other professionals who are identified as, currently or needing to be involved will also be invited. If an invited agency is unable to attend, they must submit a report setting out their

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views and offer a recommendation as to whether the child/ren should be made subject or remain on a Child Protection Plan; this will be outlined at the Conference.

What happens at a Child Protection Conference?

Prior to the Conference, the Social Worker prepares a report highlighting any concerns and strengths within the family; this will whenever possible include the views of the child. The Social Worker will share the report with the parents and carers at least 24 hours prior to the Conference, so that they are able to add their own views to the report.

Just prior to the start of the Child Protection Conference, the Chair meets with the parents to explain what will happen, checking that they have had the chance to read the reports that agencies have written. This is an opportunity for them to discuss any specific issues that they would like to raise.

The Conference Chair starts by clearly highlighting why the Conference has been arranged. They lead discussions and ensure that the reasons why the child is at risk of significant harm are identified. Where required, those at the Conference agree a clear plan of the things that need to happen to make the child safe and decide what sort of plan will best address the issues that have been raised (for example, a Child Protection Plan or a Child Action plan).

For more information...

www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk

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Should the child become subject to a Child Protection Plan, a Social Worker is appointed and a Core Group of family members and practitioners (the people who are mainly involved) will be identified. This group, including the child if age appropriate, will work closely to achieve the actions outlined in the plan. The first core group takes place within 10 working days of the conference with a view to identifying timescales, actions and recommendations so that everyone is clear about their role. This will be formatted into a Child Protection Plan, which is distributed to family and those involved in the core group. Following this, a copy of the conference notes (a summary of the main points discussed) is normally shared within twenty working days.

What is expected of practitioners?

In accordance with the Working Together (2015) guidance, it is expected that you will attend the Conference(s) and Core Groups. However, if this is not feasible within your role, you will need to submit a report for consideration at the Conference, to include relevant information relating to your involvement with the family. You will have been invited because you have a valuable contribution to make to develop appropriate safeguarding arrangements for the child/ren.

All practitioners are required to contribute to child protection arrangements, to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. Without access to all the information available about a family, this prohibits and prevents a full informed and appropriate decision, regarding the risks involved to the child and to ensure they are safeguarded appropriately.