



WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE

Information for Parents/Carers & Families about

Child Protection Conferences

What is the purpose of a Child Protection Conference?

A Child Protection Conference is a meeting, which includes family and services, to decide whether or not there is a risk to your child(ren)'s safety. If the conference decides there is a serious risk to your child(ren)'s safety, agencies will work with you to develop a Child Protection Plan.

You will be invited to the meeting and can bring someone to support you. This can be a family member, friend, an advocate or a solicitor.

Professionals at the child protection conference will talk with you about the things that are working well in your family and the things that have caused worry about your child(ren). You should receive a report from the Social Worker before the Conference outlining their assessment of the situation.

You may hear the words **Family Safeguarding Model** mentioned; this is a method we use to ensure everyone works together with you to think clearly and openly about the strengths you have in your family as well as the worries that have led to the concerns about the safety of your child(ren). **The Family Safeguarding Model** will also help the group to create a plan with **clear outcomes** about what needs to be different to make sure your child(ren) is/are safe from harm and that their needs are met consistently.

As a parent/carer or family member, it is so important that you attend the conference so that you can take full part in the conversation and understand what decision is made and why.

Who else will be at the meeting?

- An independent chairperson, who will lead the conference
- A note taker
- Other people from services that have involvement with your family e.g. social worker, health workers, police, teachers, nursery staff or other important people in your family's life.
- Sometimes individuals from other services (who you may not have met before) are invited because of their particular expertise or background in supporting families and keeping children safe.
- Your child(ren) may attend for some of the conference if we think they are old enough.
- Before the Conference the chairperson will talk with you to explain how it is run and about the best way for you to take part in the discussions.

What will happen at the Conference?

- A chairperson will lead the Conference to ensure everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
- All important matters about your child(ren)'s safety will be discussed.
- All professionals will give reports which will have been shared with you before the meeting.
- A diagram of your family tree may be presented to help professionals know who is in your support network.
- The chairperson will lead a discussion with the conference members, including you, to think about:
 - The concerns you and professionals have about your child(ren)
 - What support may have been provided historically and whether this had a positive impact for the child and the family unit as a whole.
 - The strengths that you have as a parent, including any support/strengths that your extended family provide.
 - Your child(ren)'s individual needs and how best these can be consistently met.
 - Support that you may require as a parent/individual and consideration of your motivation and ability to make changes in your life (if required) to safeguard you're child.
 - Who needs to do what to keep your child(ren) safe and well?
- Consideration will be also be given to what your child(ren) feel about their lives and their wishes and feelings will be discussed.

You will be an important part of these discussions and throughout the meeting the Chairperson will write the important points on charts on the wall so everyone is able to see and remember what is said; these charts and the discussions will be summarised in the minutes of Conference which will be shared with you after the conference.

Decision Making

- When everyone's views have been shared there will be a discussion as to what plan is required which will identify any support needed by your family and identify who might be able to provide this, including family members, friends and professional services. This may be a Child Protection Plan or a Child in Need plan
- The plan will also identify changes you may need to make to ensure the safety of your child
- You should leave the conference clear about what needs to happen and why things need to change.

What is a Child Protection plan?

- It is a formal plan which says what changes need to happen to make your child(ren) safe.
- It says what you, your family and services will do to ensure your child(ren) is/are safe and we are no longer worried about them.
- A plan does not affect your legal status as a parent or your responsibility towards your child(ren)

What happens after the conference?

- You will be sent a copy of the notes. If a **Child Protection Plan** is made, you will be asked to attend regular meetings called **Core Groups**. At these meetings, you will look at the plan and discuss what progress has been made and what else still needs to be done.
- You may also want to think about a family meeting. If you think this would be helpful ask your social worker about the Family Group Conferencing Service.
- A review Child Protection Conference will be held after three months and then at six-monthly intervals for as long as your child needs a Child Protection Plan.
- If a Child Protection Plan is not made then alternative plans will be looked at to support you and your family.

If you would like to offer feedback on the Child Protection Conference, please complete the feedback form provided at the conference.

Things to think about when invited to a Child Protection Conference:

- Everyone involved will try and do the best for your child(ren).
- You might want to talk to someone you trust and think about whether they could support you in the meeting.
- You may find it helpful to get young children cared for so they do not have to come with you. It will be easier for you to listen and be part of the conference.
- You will be treated with respect, asked your views, and expected to contribute to the plan for your child(ren).
- Information about you and your family will be kept confidential and will not be passed on to others, unless it is essential for the protection of a child.
- It is expected that you will attend all meetings regarding your child(ren).

Where can I get more information and what can I do if I am unhappy about the Conference or Child Protection Plan?

- You can raise your concerns with the conference chairperson or with the service co-ordinator in writing to:
SCU, Surrey County Council, PO Box 470, Reigate RH2 2HG
- More information can be found on Surrey Safeguarding Children Board website:
www.surreyscb.org.uk
- Compliments, comments and complaints:
www.surreycc.gov.uk/complaintsandcomments
Surrey CC Customer Relations Team, Dakota, 11 De Havilland Drive, Brooklands Industrial Park, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0YP
county.complaints@surreycc.gov.uk
03456 009 009

If you would like the above information in large print or in another language please contact us on 01372 833330