

Child Protection Conference (CP) Explained

What is a Child Protection (CP) conference?

A Child Protection Conference is a meeting between professionals involved with the family, family members and the child/children (where appropriate) to discuss the child's future safety, health and development.

The CP conference is designed to look at the family circumstances and relevant information to determine the best way to safeguard the child/children and promote their welfare. The CP can be held after an investigation under Section 47 of the Children Act (1989) called a Child Protection investigation.

The CP conference will listen to information about the family and any concerns that have been raised. They will discuss whether the child/children are at risk of significant harm and may need to be placed on a '**Child Protection Plan**'. If it is decided that the child/children are in need of a child protection plan, they will be placed on the child protection register – also known as the 'at risk' register.

Working Together to Safeguard Children contains guidance on Child Protection Conferences, it was published by the Department of Education to ensure that there is a coordinated and child-centred approach to safeguarding.

Ref: <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/child-protection-case-conference-and-child-protection-plans/>



What can you do if you are not happy with what happened at the CP Conference?

If a parent is not happy about the outcome of a child protection conference or about how the conference has been conducted, they may have a right to appeal dependent upon the policy of the relevant local authority. We would advise the parent to check whether this is available in such circumstances.

If a parent is not happy about how children's services have acted, they are entitled to make a complaint. A parent should put their concerns in writing to the chair of the Child Protection Committee.

Can I bring a relative or friend for support?

A parent can ask for another person to attend the conference if it will help them to express their views. However, this must be a trustworthy person as the information regarding your family must remain confidential.

It is very important that a parent is able to express his or her views and are given a voice at the conference.

A parent is entitled to take their solicitor with them, but the solicitor cannot speak on the parent's behalf.

The parent should inform the social worker if they have learning difficulties or an issue which affects their ability to communicate effectively. An interpreter can be arranged to attend the conference if English is not the parent's first language.

What happens if you cannot attend the CP conference?

If you are unable to attend the CP Conference or choose not to, you can write to the CP co-ordinator, explaining the situation and ask for your views to be shared at the CP Conference.

What is a Child Protection Plan?

A Child Protection Plan Should:

- assess the likelihood of the child suffering harm and look at ways that the child can be protected;
- decide upon short and long term aims to reduce the likelihood of harm to the child and to protect the child's welfare;
 - clarify people's responsibilities and actions to be taken; and
 - outline ways of monitoring and evaluating progress

If your child is made the subject of a child protection plan, it means that the network of agencies considers your child to be at risk of significant harm in one or more of the following four categories:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
 - neglect.

If a child is the subject of a child protection plan, a social worker can make announced and unannounced visits to check on the home circumstances.

How long will the child/children have a CP Plan for?

A child will no longer be under a Plan:

- when it is judged that the child is no longer continuing to or believed to be suffering significant harm;
- where the child and family have moved permanently to another Local Authority area – the new Local Authority should arrange a Child Protection Conference within 15 days of being notified of the move;
- when the child has reached 18 years old – the LA should conduct a review around the time of the child's 18th birthday when the plan can be ended;
 - if the child has died; or
 - if the child has permanently left the UK.

Usually a child will require a child protection plan for no longer than two years. By that stage the work undertaken with the family usually means that the child is no longer at risk. In a small number of cases where there is no improvement, it may be necessary for the court to become involved.



Safeguarding Our Children