**What happens before a Child Protection Conference?**

A consultation should take place between the Social Worker, Team Manager and a duty CPC (Child Protection Conference Chair) when it is considered that an ICPC is required. This should be requested by the Social Worker completing the ‘ICPC booking and consultation form’. The consultation will take place within 2 working days of this being requested. The CPC will make a recommendation as to whether they consider that an ICPC should take place. The Social Work Team Manager will make the final decision whether to proceed to ICPC or not.

Once a decision to progress to ICPC has been confirmed, arrangements for the Child Protection Conference should be made with the Safeguarding Unit. A letter will be sent by the Safeguarding Unit, however the allocated Social Worker should ensure that family members are aware of the plan to present to ICPC as soon as possible and discussions should take place in regards to ensuring they understand the purpose of the CPC, and around arrangements for attending and any child care issues. The same discussions should take place by the Social Worker in advance of any RCPC. The Social Worker must give consideration to the attendance and participation of any non-resident parents and a decision to not to include any non-resident parents must be clearly articulated within the case file and ICPC report.

A Section 47 enquiry will have been carried out to determine if it is necessary to hold an ICPC and whether a Child Protection Plan is required. The investigation requires the allocated Social Worker to talk to the parents/carers (including non-resident parents) and other practitioners. During a S47 enquiry any children over the age of 4 should be seen alone. This enquiry should be shared with the child (where appropriate) and family members prior to the ICPC.

 **What is a Child Protection Conference?**

A Child Protection Conference is held when a child is considered at risk of significant harm.

The purpose of a Child Protection Conference is to develop a multi-agency plan to safeguard the child from harm.

A Child Protection Conference is attended by all professionals working with the family including a health professional, educational professional and a Social Worker.

An Initial/ Review Child Protection Conference report should be completed by the Social Worker prior to an ICPC/ RCPC. This should be completed with a physical copy being shared with the child (where appropriate) and family members a minimum of two working days prior to the ICPC/ RCPC. The report should make a recommendation in regards to whether a CP plan is required and should also detail the proposed plan.

The Social Worker should liaise with the CPC to manage any circumstances where consideration may need to be given to excluding an individual from the conference process and/or receiving the conference minutes. The CPC will also consider any split conference requests for families where it is not possible for family members to be part of the same meeting and the requirement for interpreters for families where English is not their first language.

Any children over the age of 8 should be offered the opportunity for their views to be represented via an independent advocate within the Banardo’s Advocacy service. Once a decision has been made to proceed to ICPC, the Social Worker will speak to the parents to obtain consent for a referral to Banardo’s Advocacy. A referral will then take place (via the booking form submitted to the Safeguarding Unit) and arrangements will be made. Consent does not need to be obtained for RCPC’s if obtained for an ICPC, however if consent of not obtained for an ICPC, attempts should be made to obtain this in advance of the RCPC.

**What happens during and after a Child Protection Conference?**

The Conference will be attended by the family (child where appropriate) health, the Police, Social Care education and any other professionals who are supporting the family. The allocated Social Worker will attend to discuss their report and the circumstances that have initiated the ICPC. If the family are allocated in the Assessment Service, a representative from the Child and Young Persons Team will attend.

If the child has been made the subject to a Child Protection Plan, prior to the end of the meeting, the Chair will ensure that arrangements are made for the next Core Group meeting (within 10 working days of the ICPC and within 28 days of an RCPC) the Child Protection Visit (within 48 hours of the ICPC) and the RCPC which is within 3 months of the ICPC and within 6 monthly thereafter.

The CPC will provide to the family members a written copy of the immediate actions that were agreed at Conference. The minutes will be completed within 11 working days of the Conference and Shared by the Social Worker within 20 working days of the Conference.

The CPC is responsible for escalating to the Service Manager any children whereby the overall grading is between 0-2. This should be done within 24 hours of the ICPC/ RCPC.

The CPC will hold a ‘mid-way meeting’ between each Child Protection Conference and the allocated Social Worker will be invited to attend. The purpose of this meeting is to consider the progress of the plan and any barriers. Between reviews if the CPC identifies evidence of drift/ delay/ statutory requirements not being met or the child living in unsafe circumstances the CPC will request a meeting with the Social Worker and Team Manager or will escalate matters using the escalation policy.

**Expectations of the Social Worker:**

Where the family are allocated within the Assessment Service, the family will be allocated to the appropriate team immediately after the ICPC.

The initial Child Protection Visit should take place within 2 working days of the ICPC. Child Protection Visits are every 10 working days thereafter.

Child Protection visits should take place within the child’s home environment, children over 4 should be seen alone every visit and babies should be seen awake. Children’s sleeping arrangements and bedrooms should also be observed every visit and discussions during Child Protection Visits should relate to the Child Protection Plan. Direct work should take place on a regular basis, outside of the family home.

Core Group meetings take place within 10 working days of the ICPC and every 28 days thereafter. Core Group meetings should include the family and child (where appropriate) and should ensure that the plan is reviewed and developed. The Social Worker must ensure that the Child Protection Plan is shared with the family and child at or before the first Core Group meeting. Core Group minutes should be shared within 5 working days of the Core Group. Prior to any RCPC, there is a discussion at Core Group meeting regarding recommendations for the RCPC.

Between Child Protection Conference’s, the Social Worker should ensure that the CPC is notified of any significant events within 1 working day. This could include (but is not exclusive to); a S47 being initiated in respect of concerns that were not considered at the ICPC/ RCPC, a child being made subject to S20 accommodation, initiation of Care Proceedings, family moving out of area, a decision to present to Legal Gateway Panel, where the CPC’s views should be obtained before paperwork is submitted.