



Practice standards
**The Role of the Conference Chair in Decision Making:
 Directing the Outcome of Conference**

When might a Conference Chair direct the outcome of the Conference?

- One of the roles of the Conference Chair is to ensure evidence based decision making for children. During conference they offer support and advice around thresholds for the making or ending of Child Protection Plans based on risk and impact of this risk on the child.
- Conference members may not always reach a consensus when considering risk and thresholds for the making or ending of a Child Protection Plan; when this happens it is the Conference Chair's decision that will determine the outcome of conference.
- The Conference Chair may also direct the outcome of conference even when this contradicts a unanimous view from conference members. This would include circumstances where there is insufficient evidence to support the proposed outcome and/or it is the view of the chair that the proposed outcome may place the child at increased risk or is oppressive. When this happens the Conference Chair will provide a detailed rationale to conference members and each individual will then be asked if they agree with the chair's decision. If a conference member does not agree, their professional dissent will be recorded within the notes of the conference.
- Only children or those with Parental Responsibility can appeal a conference decision, however the [Pan Cheshire Multi Agency Challenge and Escalation Policy](#) may be used by conference members if they have concern about the management of a conference.

What happens if a Conference Chair directs the outcome of Conference?

- The Conference Chair will instigate a reflective discussion with the Lead Conference and Reviewing Manager following any conference where they have had to direct the outcome and this has contradicted a majority or unanimous view from conference members. The purpose of this discussion is for reflection and support and will be recorded in the individuals supervision notes.
- When a Conference Chair directs that a Child Protection Plan will not be developed at an Initial Child Protection Conference due to a lack of evidence/gaps in assessment a Child in Need Plan will be created; this plan will include timescales in which the Child in Need group must address the gaps in assessment and where appropriate reconvene a strategy meeting.
- When a Conference Chair directs that a Child Protection Plan will be developed as there is sufficient evidence that threshold is met; the usual child protection process will be followed and the plan will be agreed in conference.
- When a Conference Chair directs in a Review Child Protection Conference that the plan for the child will continue due to a lack of evidence around reduced risk, actions

and timescales to address gaps in assessment will be agreed and included in the Child Protection Plan and the child protection process will continue. The Child Protection Chair will indicate if an early review date can be requested by core group members.

- When a Conference Chair directs in a Review Child Protection Conference that the Child Protection Plan will end as there is good quality assessment and insufficient evidence of ongoing risk/impact they will support the development of a Child in Need Plan that addresses any outstanding worries for the child.