

What happens at the conference?

Everyone at the conference will share information and discuss any difficulties or risks to your child. They will also discuss the strengths within your family which will help to make your child safe and improve their life.

The conference will identify what actions need to happen to make your child's life better and decide who is going to carry out these actions. The professionals at the conference will make a final decision on whether these actions can be carried out under a family support plan or a child protection plan.

What if I do not agree with the conference's decision?

There is a complaints procedure that you can follow if you want to complain about the conference process. However, your complaint will not automatically lead to a reversal of the decisions made at the conference.

How to complain about a child protection conference.

You have the right to complain if you are unhappy about how the conference was run, or about the information provided, and you feel that this led to the wrong decision being made.

If you want to complain please contact the conference chair in writing, within three working days of the conference. Write to the conference chair at:

**Children's services
Integrated safeguarding unit
7th floor east
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds
LS2 8QB**

If your complaint is about the conference chair, write to:

**The team manager
Child protection
conference chairs
Integrated safeguarding unit
7th floor east
Merrion House
110 Merrion Centre
Leeds
LS2 8QB**

Child protection conferences

This leaflet is available in different formats for people with visual impairments and learning difficulties. We can also provide an interpreter to help you understand this leaflet if English is not your first language. Phone: **0113 395 0247**

What is a child protection conference?

A child protection conference is a meeting to discuss concerns about your child and decide how to make them safer. The conference may decide that a family support plan or a child protection plan is the best way to do this.

What is a family support plan?

A family support plan means you are agreeing to work voluntarily with professionals to meet the needs of your child and everyone has confidence that you will do this.

The plan sets out what actions you and your family will take, and what services professionals will provide, to help your child develop and be safe and healthy. Once the plan is in place there will be regular meetings to make sure the plan is working properly. Everyone, including you, will be expected to take the actions agreed in the plan to improve things for your child.

What is a child protection plan?

A child protection plan is a formal plan to keep your child safe. If the conference puts a child protection plan in place it means there are significant concerns that your child is at risk from harm.

The child protection plan sets out what you and other people need to do to keep your child safe and well. Once the plan is in place there will be regular meetings, called 'core groups', to make sure the plan is working properly. Everyone, including you, will be expected to take the actions agreed in the plan to make your child safe.

How long will my child have a child protection plan?

Once a child protection plan is in place it will be reviewed after three months to check if it is still needed. If the plan is still needed it will be reviewed again after six months, and then every six months after that until everyone has agreed that your child is safe and well. The social worker will update your child's plan to include the recommendations from the review.

Can the child protection conference decide to take my child away from me?

No. The conference cannot decide to take your child away from you, that decision can only be made by a court. The child protection conference will work to help parents and carers keep their child safe at home with them.

Will you tell me about the conference?

Yes, you will be invited to come to the conference. It is your choice whether you attend or not. Many parents and carers see the conference as an important opportunity to share their views and concerns and listen to what other people are concerned about.

Will people listen to what I have to say?

Yes, your views about your child's safety and what needs to happen next are very important. The conference will listen carefully to what you have to say.

If you can't attend you should speak to your child's social worker, or to the independent conference chairperson, who will make sure your views are heard.

Can I bring someone to support me?

Yes, you can bring a friend, relative, advocate or solicitor with you to the conference. They will be able to support you, and give the conference information. However, they will not be involved in making the final decision about whether to put a plan in place or not.

Who else will be at the conference?

If your child is old enough they will be invited to the conference.

There will also be a range of professionals there, this might include:

- your child's social worker;
- your child's teachers;
- health workers; and
- the police.

A note taker and an independent chairperson will also be there.

The note taker will write down what is discussed at the conference and what is decided there. After the conference you will receive a copy of these conference notes.

The independent chairperson will lead the conference. They will also meet with you before the conference to make sure you understand what will happen there. If you have any questions about the conference you can ask the independent chairperson.