

5.4 Quorate Child Protection Conferences



See also [South West Child protection Procedures guidance on Conferences](#).

AMENDMENT

This chapter was updated in November 2018 to include discussion of situations where a conference may be held despite being inquorate if this is in the best interests of the child.

The primary principle for determining quoracy is that there should be sufficient multi-agency professionals contributing to the information sharing and analysis to enable safe decisions to be made about children where there are concerns that they may be at risk of significant harm.

The minimum representation is children's social work and at least two other professional groups or other agencies who have had direct involvement with the family who is subject of the conference. In this context, a school, a school nurse or a health visitor is a separate agency from the rest of Swindon's children's services. The local authority should provide a representative each for children's social work, community child health and the school.

Where a conference is inquorate it should not ordinarily proceed, and in such circumstances the Child Protection Chair must ensure that either:

- An interim protection plan is produced; or
- The existing plan is reviewed with the professionals and the family members that do attend, so as to safeguard the welfare of the child/ren;
- Another early conference date must be set immediately within 10 working.

In exceptional circumstances, the Chair may decide to proceed with the conference despite lack of agency representation. This would be relevant where:

- A child has not had relevant contact with three agencies (e.g. pre-birth conferences);
- Sufficient information is available; and
- A delay will be detrimental to the child;
- The child while subject to a child protection plan becomes looked after;
- In these circumstances if the child/young person becomes looked after (Please refer to the Dual Plans procedure implemented in December 2018) In exceptional circumstances of a combined meeting the requirement for conference quoracy can be waived based upon the change in legal status from living at home to living in care. Children and young people should only remain subject to both care planning regulations and child protection processes in exceptional circumstances. It would be unusual for a combined meeting to decide that any child or young person living in care continued to be at risk of significant harm;

- The priority should be the review of the Care plan within 20 working days of the child/young person becoming looked after. This Child Looked After Review must ensure that any outstanding actions from the child protection plan are integrated into the care plan. The recommendations from the Child Looked After review must evidence this process;

Where an inquorate conference is held and the child remains subject to a plan, an early review conference should be arranged. Two consecutive inquorate conferences should not be held unless it is pre-birth. The Child Protection Chair must ensure that the reasons for proceeding with the conference and any arrangements to safeguard the child in the meantime are noted in the conference records.

Where an inquorate conference makes the recommendation that the child will be removed from a protection plan, the core group and those who were invited to the Initial Child Protection Conference will be informed in writing of the decision and its rationale. They will be asked to contact the conference chair within 10 working days of the date of the letter if they disagree with the view that the child/young person is no longer at risk of significant harm. The child will remain subject to a protection plan until this timescale has elapsed.

End