



# Child Protection Conference Professional Guidance

Devon County Council's Strengths-based Model for Child Protection Planning and Reviewing is intended to improve family involvement and understanding of the concerns and risks that professionals have for their children. It is important that professionals and families are well prepared for the meeting and understand what is expected of them.

This model should be understood and recognised within the statutory framework of Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015.

## **1. WHAT YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE THE CONFERENCE.**

When you are invited or requested to attend a Child Protection Conference, please provide a report to the local authority 48 hours before an initial conference and five working days before a review conference.

Your report should be completed on the multi-agency template or social work template, which can either be completed electronically and submitted via the website or a word version can be downloaded from the DSCB website, and once completed should be securely emailed to:

[independentreviewingreport@devon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:independentreviewingreport@devon.gcsx.gov.uk)

**You are also required to share your report with the family at least three days prior to the conference taking place.\***

You will be invited to attend the conference 30 mins before the meeting start time to ensure your report has been shared with parents, children and professionals and to allow you to read the reports from parents and professionals. You therefore need to bring 6 paper copies of your report to the meeting. \*

The Chair will meet with the parents and, if appropriate, children and young people, in order to ensure they have had full access to all information being shared about them prior to the meeting.

**As far as possible all information relevant to the child's safety should be openly shared, however, you should advise the Chair in advance if there is information that should not be shared with certain members at conference. There is a section for you to complete in the report if this is the case.**

*\*Police are exempt from this aspect of the guidance.*

## **2. WHAT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE IN YOUR REPORT.**

Professionals are expected to write the report based on their professional knowledge and understanding of the child and family and consider the following points;

### **Details of your agency's involvement with the child/young person and family**

- ✓ Who you have consulted with in preparation for this meeting?
- ✓ How long you have been involved including a significant event chronology of your agencies involvement.
- ✓ How frequently you see the child/young person and family

### **What are you worried about?**

- ✓ What are the past and current dangers and risks for the child?
- ✓ What is placing the child at risk of immediate and significant harm?
- ✓ What has the child experienced?
- ✓ What evidence is there that means the child is being ill-treated or their health and development is being impaired?

### **What is going well?**

- ✓ Things that are currently in place and that have been shown, over time, to directly address areas of the risk and reduce danger for the child.
- ✓ Positive attributes and resources within the family that, over time, could be built on to provide a safer environment, eg a family member looking after children or a parent ceasing certain behaviour.

### **What information can you share about the views, wishes and feelings of the child/young person?**

- ✓ The child or young person's views obtained within your setting and also in relation to the current issues of concern, if known.

- ✓ This should also make reference to any observations of other children or any direct consultation with them

**What specific support do you think that your agency can provide to the child/young person or the family?**

- ✓ Be as specific as possible

**What do you think needs to happen for the things you are worried about to change?**

- ✓ Be as specific as possible
- ✓ Family Plan and how they are going to address the worries
- ✓ Next Steps to Improve the Safety for the Child/Children

**It is important that all information is presented in everyday language that avoids professional jargon.**

**INFORMATION SHARING AND DATA PROTECTION**

The matters raised in your report are confidential to members of the conference and the agencies that they represent, and should only be shared where relevant and necessary for the purpose of promoting the safeguarding and welfare of the children concerned. All reports provided to Conference will be distributed on the strict understanding that they will be kept confidential and in a secure place.

If information needs to be shared with third parties then advice should be sought from the Conference Chair in the first instance.

Further guidance on information sharing is available to Devon County Council staff via the [Knowing When to Share](#) pages. Professionals are required to consider the [Golden Rules](#) for information sharing at all times.

**3. THE CONFERENCE**

As part of your invitation, you will be notified of the when and where the conference will be taking place.

All agencies will assemble before the conference starts to read all the available reports so please arrive around 30 minutes before the scheduled start time. We request that you please do not talk about the family during this reading time, as it is important that that family is present during any discussion. Also prior to the

conference the Chairperson will meet with the family members to talk about the meeting and how they will be asked to participate.

There will be an agenda and quick guides available at the conference to help you contribute positively throughout the meeting.

Professionals will no longer be expected to read information from their prepared reports; instead, each will be asked to succinctly provide key information focused on:

- ✓ What they are worried about (dangers/risks – both current, past and future – for the child);
- ✓ What is Going Well
- ✓ What is the Planned Outcome, How will this be achieved, By Whom and When.

Family members will also be given the opportunity to share their views and ask questions about the information shared. The Chair will also ask family members additional relevant questions or seek clarity on certain issues as needed.

When all the necessary information has been shared and analysed, the Chairperson will ask all agencies and family members to make a judgment about the safety of the child in their family home and the potential risk of future harm using a scale.

Using scaling is a way to help people break down their perception of their situation into 'grades' and motivate hope and engagement (refer to quick guides).

Based on the information shared during conference as well as the safety plan put forward; family members and professionals will be expected to scale the level of safety for the child (or children) between 0-10, where 0 = 'no concerns' and 10 = 'highest risk possible'.

Professionals will be expected to provide a reason for their scaling.



0. NO CONCERNS

10. HIGHEST POSSIBLE RISK

A Safety Plan will be discussed and considered throughout the meeting and any agreed outcomes and actions will be recorded at the time they are discussed. As part of the conference the Chair will ensure that both professionals and the family have the opportunity to make additions and changes to the Safety Plan through discussion and agreement during the meeting.

Professionals are then required to decide whether the criteria is met for a child to be made subject to a Child Protection Plan having heard all information.

#### **4. Criteria for making a child subject to a child protection plan.**

The conference is required to determine the risk and the likelihood of *significant harm* for the child/children in question. The Chair will explain the threshold for a child protection plan and will ask each agency for their view about whether the outline Safety Plan developed in the conference should constitute a Child Protection Plan or if the needs of the child/children can be met through another approach.

The test should be that either:

1. the child can be shown to have suffered ill-treatment or impairment of health or development as result of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect and professional judgement is that further ill-treatment or impairment are likely; or
2. professional judgment, substantiated by the findings of enquiries in this individual case or by research evidence, is that the child is likely to suffer ill treatment or the impairment of health or development as result of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect.

Any areas of disagreement will be recorded.

The Chair will consider the views of all agencies and will then determine the final status of the plan. If the plan is confirmed as a Child Protection Plan the Chair will ask agencies which category the child protection plan should be: Sexual, Emotional, Physical or Neglect. Devon has also adopted a further sub-category of domestic abuse in order to ensure that this is properly recognised within our plans for children and families.

Membership of the core group and a date for an initial core group meeting will be agreed before the meeting finishes.

#### **5. After the meeting**

During the meeting a Conferencing Officer will be transferring the Chair's record of discussions and the Safety Plan on the Page to an electronic document that will be circulated or posted to you within 1 working day.

You will be clear about your role within the agreed plan and it is expected that you will continue to work with the family in a strength-based approach, supporting the multi-agency and family team and completing all tasks you have agreed to.

The social worker or other nominated professional must convey the outcome of the meeting and the agreed plan to children and young people in an age-appropriate format and in partnership with parents/carers, within one working day of the conference.

[To complete a Professional Report click here](#)