



Information for Young People Attending Child Protection Conference

What is a child protection conference?

A child protection conference is a meeting arranged by professional people when a child or young person has been seriously harmed, or people think they might be harmed.

The child protection conference is being held to help you and your family, and it is important for you to remember that you are not in trouble.

Who is going to be there?

It is important that some of the people who know you attend the meeting. Usually we will ask your teacher and your doctor to attend so that they can give background information about you and your family.

You might not know all the people at the meeting but they will be there to talk about your welfare and to help with making plans for the future. One of these people is a chairperson who leads the meeting and makes sure that all the important information is discussed.

Everybody is given the opportunity to share information and the chairperson will ensure the right decisions are made concerning the future.

Can I go to the meeting?

If you would like to go to the meeting you can talk to your social worker. If you cannot or do not want to go to the meeting you can still have your views heard by:

- Asking your social worker to speak for you
- or
- Writing a letter to the meeting
- or
- Giving a tape with your comments on it to your social worker

If you do not want to go to the meeting you will have a chance to talk to the chairperson before the meeting. Arrangements can also be made for you to attend part of the meeting.

In some cases you will not be allowed to attend all or part of the meeting. If this happens a full explanation will be given to you.

Will any of my family be there?

Your parents will be invited and it is also important that they should be there.

What will be talked about in the meeting?

The people at the meeting will talk about what has happened to cause the meeting to be called. Before the meeting the social worker will talk to you and your parents or carer and will write a report which will also be discussed at the meeting. You will be able to see a copy of this report.

Can I say something in the meeting?

Yes, it is very important that you tell the people at the meeting what you think.

The meeting is about you and your family. In the meeting the chairperson will ask if you want to say something or ask any questions.

If you do not feel able to say anything you may want to write something down so that the chairperson or the social worker can read it out.

What if I want to say something that I don't want my Mum and Dad to hear?

You can tell the social worker about it and special arrangements can be made with the chairperson.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, you can choose an adult to come with you.

What if I am worried about something before the meeting?

You can talk to your social worker about the meeting or any other worries you might have. Usually your teacher or doctor will be invited to the meeting and you could talk to them instead. The chairperson will also meet you before you go into the meeting to explain what will happen.

What will happen in the meeting?

At the meeting all the important information about you is shared.

If people at the meeting feel you have suffered any harm or are not being looked after properly they will discuss whether you need a Child Protection Plan.

If you have any questions during the meeting you can ask the chairperson or, if you prefer you can talk to your social worker or the chairperson afterwards.

What is a Child Protection Plan?

A Child Protection Plan is a list of the work that needs to be done to make sure that you are safe. Some of the people at the Child Protection Conference might visit you and work with you and your family. A key worker who is a social worker will visit your home regularly and talk to you, your parents or carers and people you know.

How long will I have a Child Protection Plan?

You will have a Child Protection Plan for as long as people think you need protection.

A review conference is held at least every six months to decide whether there are still concerns or whether you no longer need a Child Protection Plan.

What if I want to complain about something that was said or done that I did not like?

You can ask your social worker about something called a 'Complaints Procedure' or you could arrange to see the chairperson. You might prefer to talk to someone you know about your concerns.

Remember

Abusing children or young people is wrong. The conference is being held to help you and your family - you are not in trouble. Just because you have a Child Protection Plan does not mean that you will be taken away from home. This only happens when social workers believe that you cannot stay at home and remain safe.

Please contact your social worker if you want to ask any further questions about the conference.