

Multi-agency Guidance for Attendees at Child Protection Conferences



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1 Introduction

This **Multi-agency Guidance** is for attendees at Child Protection Conferences and is aimed at helping participants understand the process of how Child Protection Conferences are planned, arranged, and managed.

The responsibilities for Child Protection Conferences rest with Children and Families Social Work Services and the effectiveness and successful fulfilment of the purposes of Child Protection Conferences rest with all the services, and the children and families at the centre of them, working collaboratively together *in partnership* to achieve their purposes.

The overall purpose is to ensure that children and young people are kept safe and well within their families wherever possible. Where this is not possible, to plan for and arrange for them to be provided with alternative accommodation, usually through the Looked After Child Review system.

Child Protection Conferences make an important contribution to childcare planning flowing from a Child Protection Investigation and in some instances, from a Team Around the Child meeting (Getting it Right for Every Child) or Looked After Child Review.

It is essential that people attending Child Protection Conferences receive and familiarise themselves with this Multi-agency Guidance for Attendees at Child Protection Conferences.

2 Initial Child Protection Conferences

There are 4 types of Child Protection Conferences:

- Initial;
- Pre-birth;
- Review; and
- Transfer.

There is provision for Child Protection Planning Meetings to help plan a Child Protection Investigation, in particular circumstances, where holding a Conference before important additional information is gathered, might increase the risk to the child.

2.1 Decision for a Child Protection Conference

Day 10-15: Setting the date for Initial Child Protection Conference.

The Children and Families Child Protection Procedures set out the requirements for the planning, timing, and arrangements for holding Child Protection Conferences to which the staff of the agency must adhere as a procedural requirement.

The Social Work Child Protection Administrator in consultation with the Social Work Services Manager will arrange a date, time, and venue for the Conference within **21 days** of the notification of concern.

If the Social Work Service Manager decides to convene an Initial Child Protection Conference out with this timescale, they must record the reasons in the child's file. Where possible the timing of the Conference should take account of the availability of other agencies and family members. The number of people involved in a Child Protection Conference should be limited to those with a need to know or those who have a relevant contribution to make.

It is important to note that Child Protection Investigations are time consuming, complicated, and dynamic. Agencies attending should work as flexibly as possible and assist, wherever they can, to the smooth planning and arranging of all Conferences, by staying in touch with the allocated Social Worker, Team Manager, Service Manager or Social Work Services Child Protection Admin Manager.

Day 12- 15: Invitation List

The allocated Social Worker will confirm with Social Work Services Child Protection admin who should attend the Initial Child Protection Conference and provide secure email addresses for attendees to receive invitations and minutes. It is important, therefore, that all participants provide their secure email addresses as quickly as possible and keep the Social Worker advised of any changes.

2.2 Core Members

Members of staff from agencies with a duty to attend:

- Health Services.
- Education Services.
- Police Scotland.
- Local Authority Staff.

should send a substitute if they are unavoidably unable to do so. If a substitute cannot be arranged, they must send a full report to the Social Worker and Chair (the Social Work Service Manager) which will be shared at the meeting (**Appendix 1** provides examples of roles in Conferences and the types of information which would be helpful to share).

2.3 Invited Members

- ✓ Members who are invited as and when required, or where indicated, e.g. Criminal Justice Social Workers working with the family or a Community Paediatrician when a child has undergone a medical examination;
- ✓ The child and if applicable, their advocate or representative; and
- ✓ Parents, carers, and family members, including all those with parental responsibility and their advocate or representative.

2.4 Support & Preparation for the Child and Family in the Conference

Participants, particularly those who are working directly with the child and family, should think about how they can contribute to helping the child and family prepare for the Conference.

The allocated Social Worker has a key role in this, and participants are encouraged to speak with the Social Worker to help plan and assist generally in this process wherever possible. The following Box provides examples of the types of questions and considerations in planning for the attendance, or recommending not to have the child involved, in a Child Protection Conference:

How can we prepare a child for a Child Protection Conference?

- Does the child know the purpose of the meeting and what may be discussed?
- Would the child like to see the room?
- Does the child know who will be attending and why they will be there?
- If the child will not know some of those attending the meeting can they see a photograph of the person before the meeting so that they can easily identify people?
- Consider letting the child do a seating plan for the meeting, who would the child like to sit next to them, who will sit directly across from them?
- Do they want to attend all or part, or just provide their views to the meeting?
- Who would they like to support them in the meeting and help them share their views; social worker, teacher?
- Does the child want to use a hand signal to show how they are feeling?

Day 12 - 15: Notification of Initial Child Protection Conference to be sent.

The Children and Families Child Protection Procedures set out the requirements for notifications of Child Protection Conferences. Where there are secure mail systems in place this can be done electronically. The CP1 Report will be sent to attendees at this point or at least **3 working days** prior to the meeting. The Procedures require that the Social Worker must go through the CP1 with the child, where appropriate, and parents or carers prior to the Initial Child Protection Conference.

Where participants have information, for example, that there are important health appointments for the child or family, particularly during the days preceding the Conference, they should advise the Social Worker accordingly.

2.5 Child's and Parent's Views

Prior to **Day 21**.

The Social Worker or another appropriate support person should assist the child, parents, or carers to give their views in the most appropriate way. The child's, parent's or carer's views must be considered in reaching decisions. As a participant in the Conference, if you

are aware of views expressed by the child or family which may not have been shared already, you should advise the Social Worker accordingly.

The family should be given Child Protection leaflets by the Social Worker and have these explained so they know what will happen at the Initial Child Protection Conference and possible outcomes.

The Social Worker will consider different ways of helping the child and family express their views during the Conference, including an advocate or representative to support them through this process if required.

Specific support may be required, for example, an interpreter if the family's first language is not English. If as a participant in the Conference, you have a specialist knowledge or specific support role which can contribute to this, you should speak to the Social Worker.

The Social Worker will advise the Chair of support requirements before the Conference, for example:

- Sign or language communicators;
- Separate attendance by family members; or
- Staggered attendance, for example, separated or feuding parents.

The following Box provides examples of the types of questions and considerations for the Social Worker in planning for gathering the child's views. If as a participant in the Conference, you have a specialist knowledge or specific support role which can contribute to this, you should speak to the Social Worker:

Child's Views

What is in your gaining children's views tool bag?

- Standard forms?
- Child drawing a picture?
- Child writing a letter or piece for the Conference. See: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/getting-help/asking-adult-help/#Writesomeonealetter>
- Video podcast?
- 3 houses tool? See: <http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/the-three-houses-template/>
- Games?

Day 21: or Prior to Initial Child Protection Conference:

The Social Work Service Manager will meet the child and parents or carers in advance of the meeting, whenever possible, to ensure they understand who will be there, what will happen, how they can contribute to the meeting, check they have understood the reports and know the recommendation. This is in addition to the requirement for the Social Worker to prepare the parents and child for attendance. If as a participant in the Conference, you have a planned meeting with the child or family prior to the Conference, you may wish to

Speak with the Social Worker to ensure you are delivering the same key messages in any discussion the family may initiate with you about the Conference. Where for any reasons this has not been possible, you should refer to the content of this Guidance to help answer any specific questions and speak to the Social Worker after outlining what support you provided to the child and family about the Conference.

2.6 Purposes

The purposes of the Initial Child Protection Conference are to:

- ✓ Objectively analyse with partners the information from the investigation; the strengths; risk factors; previous knowledge of the family; and assessment;
- ✓ Make decisions on the likelihood of a child or any other connected children experiencing significant harm in the future i.e. the level of continuing risk;
- ✓ Decide what future actions are needed to safeguard the child and promote their welfare;
- ✓ Decide if the child's name should be placed on the Child Protection Register or if a Family Support Plan is required;
- ✓ Decide the category of Registration to focus the actions required to reduce risk;
- ✓ Outline the multi-agency Child Protection Plan (the Outline Plan) if placing the child's name on the Child Protection Register; and
- ✓ Identify Core Group membership (the Conference Chair will do this) and date of first meeting, if placing the child's name on the Register.

2.7 Agenda

The Initial Child Protection Conference will ensure:

- ✓ Participants are invited to read the laminated cards setting out the purposes of the meeting.
- ✓ The purposes of the Conference are achieved;
- ✓ Introductions, apologies, confidentiality, agency roles with the family;
- ✓ Circulation of reports (if unavoidably not sent prior to the meeting);
- ✓ Sharing of details of events leading to the Conference;
- ✓ Sharing of information from the investigation and any assessments to date including, strengths and risk factors;
- ✓ Concise information from all agencies, including the nature of past and present involvement with the family;
- ✓ Summary by Chair of main information;
- ✓ Encouragement of views from the child and family (at regular points throughout the meeting);
- ✓ Consideration of risks to any other children in the household;
- ✓ Consideration of the need for a comprehensive health assessment or examination;
- ✓ Consideration of the risks of harm if the child remains at home, and explicit consideration of whether emergency measures are required to protect the child;
- ✓ Plans for risk management;

- ✓ A decision on the need for a referral to the Children's Reporter and the reasons;
- ✓ If a claim for Criminal Injuries Compensation should be made;
- ✓ Consideration of the need for legal advice;
- ✓ A decision on whether to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register and the category of Registration; and
- ✓ Core Group membership and date of first meeting, if placing the child's name on the Register.

2.8 Responsibilities of the Chair

Child Protection Conferences are Chaired by the Social Work Services Service Manager who will set the agenda and ensure:

2.9 Co-ordination of Report

Reports should be produced and co-ordinated to ensure relevant information is effectively shared with Conference participants and supports effective decision making. Where possible, composite reports should be produced (within the CP1 compiled by the Social Worker), in advance of the Conference with the Social Worker collating information and all relevant participants, particularly the child and family, contributing.

2.10 Process of Meetings

The Social Worker will be asked to present the circumstances leading to the Child Protection Investigation including the risk of significant harm, and the needs of the child.

The Chair will ensure each participant provides a summary of involvement with the child and family. The Chair or Social Worker will update the meeting with any other information provided from people not present.

At the end of the Child Protection Conference the Chair will ask each agency for their recommendation and reason for it in relation to Child Protection Registration including the category of Registration. Consensus will be sought and a decision will be taken by the Chair as to whether the child's name will be placed on the Child Protection Register and the Category of Registration.

2.11 Guidance on Purposes and Registration

The Chair will briefly remind the Conference of the purposes of the meeting including decisions on Child Protection Registration and the Registration categories.

2.12 Participation and Views

The child is supported to make a positive contribution; and the child, parents or carers are involved.

The child's, parent's or carer's views are properly represented and considered.

2.13 Quorate Conferences

To be quorate there should be a minimum of three agencies or professional groupings present before a Conference can proceed. However, exceptional circumstances may arise where only two agencies or professional groupings are present.

In these circumstances, the Chair has discretion to proceed if satisfied all essential information is available, particularly from key agencies. There should never be a single agency Child Protection Conference.

All professionals and agencies invited should submit **a written report**, if unavoidably unable to attend.

Where a Conference does not have the minimum of three agencies it should not ordinarily take place. Whether or not it does take place the Chair must ensure:

- ✓ An interim single agency Child Protection Plan is produced; and
- ✓ Another Conference date is set immediately.

2.14 Exclusions

Parents or carers should be invited to attend, in part or in whole, to the Initial Child Protection Conference. There must be specific reasons for children and their parent or carer not to be invited and the reasons why must be recorded.

It is the responsibility of the Conference Chair to ensure that when children or parents are not invited they should be informed and given reasons.

The Social Worker should discuss the exclusion of parents or carers with the Chair at the invitation stage or as soon as the requirement is known and confirm at least 24 hours before the Conference.

The Social Worker should discuss any initial concerns regarding potential exclusions with their Team Manager who shall provide professional reflection and overview.

The decision to exclude someone from all or part of the Conference rests with the Chair.

2.15 Reasons for Exclusion

Reasons for excluding someone from all or part of a Conference include (this list is not exhaustive):

- There is a strong risk of violence or intimidation at or following the Conference;
- The Police, Procurator Fiscal (if criminal proceedings have begun) are concerned by an alleged perpetrator's attendance;
- Confidential information regarding another person needs to be discussed;
- The Police need to provide information which is sub judice;
- There are serious concerns about the wellbeing of the family member should they attend;

- Someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol to the extent their participation in the Conference would be disruptive;
- A parent or adult has a bail legal restriction order which cannot temporarily be suspended; or
- It is not in the child's best interest for them to attend i.e. alleged perpetrator.

2.16 Managing Exclusions

Where someone has been excluded, the Chair will record their reasons in the child's file and the exclusion should only be for as long as necessary. Other means of getting the views of the excluded family member, and reporting the outcome of the Conference to them, should be offered. This responsibility rests with Social Work Services.

Any professional can request the exclusion of a parent from the Conference. The request must be made to the Conference chair at the earliest opportunity with the rationale. The Chair should discuss the request with the relevant agency manager before coming to a decision about whether to exclude.

Where a parent has been excluded from the Initial Child Protection Conference the Chair must make arrangements for someone to meet with them to ensure the decisions of the Conference are explained to them, preferably within **24 hours** of the decisions being made.

After the Conference, the Chair should offer to meet with the child to explain the decisions of the Conference. If a child is unhappy about Conference decisions, they should be given support and advised how they can make a complaint, if they wish. This responsibility rests with Social Work Services.

If as a participant in the Conference, you become aware a child or family is unhappy with any of the decisions from Conference, which may not have been communicated to the Chair or Social Worker, you should speak with the Social Worker accordingly.

2.17 Responsibilities of Attendees

Successful Conferences depend on skilful Chairs, and a membership which is well prepared and understands its roles and responsibilities. The role of the Chair can be challenging at times and the membership should ensure they are supportive, open, honest, and participatory. As a participant in the Conference, your contribution to the process of effective management to achieving the purposes of the conference is very important.

Conferences have very specific purposes and are not for prolonged debate and argument; settling historic issues; or philosophical debate. Attendees must understand the important role they have in achieving the Conference purposes and take personal responsibility for their attendance and contribution.

As a members of the Conference you should ensure you share all relevant information with the Social Worker or Chair in advance of the Conference. Information received late or close

to the Conference date should be passed on as soon as possible for the attention of the Chair.

Where “professional challenge” is required, this should be undertaken appropriately in a polite and reflective manner. Attendees should refer to [Orkney’s Self-evaluation and Continual Improvement Approach](#).

As a member of the Conference you should prepare in advance by:

- ✓ Prioritising your attendance including cover arrangements where attendance is not possible, for example, attendance at Court or Jury Duty;
- ✓ Familiarising yourself with the facts as you know them;
- ✓ Reflecting on your knowledge of the child and family;
- ✓ Checking your agency’s record of involvement;
- ✓ Checking the Chronology of Significant events;
- ✓ Having clear focus on the needs and safety of the child;
- ✓ Anticipating what support and actions are required to minimise future harm and risk;
- ✓ Familiarising yourself with the purposes of Registration and its Categories; and
- ✓ Thinking about your recommendation to the Chair on the questions of Child Protection Registration and the Categories of Registration.

As a member of the Conference you should ensure your verbal and written contributions to Conferences are:

- ✓ Child centred;
- ✓ Clear and unambiguous;
- ✓ Evidence based;
- ✓ Respectful and accurate; and
- ✓ In plain English.

As a member of the Conference you should differentiate “fact” from “professional opinion” and ensure your focus is on the health, safety and wellbeing of the “child at the centre” of the process.

Child Protection Registration can only be undertaken where there is evidence of significant harm or risk of significant harm and strong parental responsibility. Child Protection Registration is *not a punishment* and should not be viewed as a *negative* process.

Registration is aimed at identifying and reducing risks for children and young people at the most significant risk of harm, in a familial context, within the community. They are deemed to be the most “at risk” given they are remaining in the community (children who have been accommodated have been removed from their families and as such are no longer at risk).

Child Protection Registration aims to ensure Registered children and young people:

- Are known well by all relevant helping agencies;

- Are accorded the “*highest priority*” status by all helping agencies;
- Have their needs robustly reviewed, evaluated and met;
- Access all resources needed within the multi-agency Child Protection Plan; and
- Have a multi-agency process in place to reduce risks.

2.18 Power Imbalance

Children and families attending Conferences are at significant disadvantage to other attendees; there is a power imbalance and they can often feel they are “being judged”. Many are not familiar with the workings of multi-agency meetings, protocols and business processes and every step should be taken by all members of the Conference to ensure they are helped to feel comfortable, welcome, and respected.

Parents, like all of us, have different life experiences, skills, abilities, characteristics, capabilities, and personalities. Members attending Conferences must have empathy, understanding, humanity, warmth and professionalism in their interactions and in placing the needs of the child “at the centre” of the Child Protection process.

Research informs that adverse childhood experiences can impact on a person’s whole life and parents of children subject of the Child Protection process may have experienced trauma in their lives. The aim is to protect the child not to punish the parent.

As a member of the Conference you should note the power imbalance and reflect on the most effective means with which you can personally help minimise it through the ways in which you contribute to the meeting, present your information and views.

As a member of the Conference you must try to see yourself in the position of being the child or family subject of the Child Protection process, and ask yourself what is the best way of protecting the child.

2.19 Minutes of Child Protection Meetings

All Child Protection Conferences, Initial and Review, should have a trained Social Work Services administrator to take notes and produce minutes of the meetings. The minute taker will have no other role in the Conference, no involvement in the case and should have undergone training in taking Child Protection minutes;

- ✓ The Child Protection register will be updated and emailed to the contact list immediately after the Child Protection Conference;
- ✓ Decisions from all meetings will be emailed within **24 Hours**; and
- ✓ Full minutes will be distributed within **15 working days** of the Conference.

Minutes will be marked ‘Confidential’, ‘For the attention of’ and watermarked to distinguish exactly who they are for, such as Professional Copy, Carer Copy, Parent Copy. Minutes will include:

- Who was invited, attendees, start and end times, and those receiving copies of the minutes;
- Review of actions from the previous meeting (if a Review) shown as “met” or “carried forward” (with explanation of why) to the updated Child Protection Plan;
- The essential facts of the child’s circumstances;
- A summary of the discussions which accurately reflects contributions made and distinguishes between fact and opinion;
- Views of children, parents or carers;
- Analysis of risk to the child;
- All decisions with rationales and recommendations, including responsibilities and timescales, and the decision on Child Protection Registration;
- Reasons for decision to refer or not refer to the Children’s Reporter;
- Identification of people responsible for the Child Protection Plan;
- Identification of Social Worker and Social Work Team Manager;
- The Outline or revised Child Protection Plan enabling everyone to be clear about their tasks;
- Unresolved dissent from the conclusions, decision or recommendations of the Conference;
- Appeals on Registration or complaints;
- Core Group membership and date of first meeting; and
- Date of Review Child Protection Conference.

The Chair will manage the Conference to ensure its purposes are met, seeking to minimise disruptions and interference with the process wherever necessary.

2.20 Consensus

The Chair should seek consensus for decisions and recommendations, particularly the decision on Registration, but in the end, the decision rests with the Chair.

The membership is asked to give their *recommendation* and rationale on Registration and the category of Registration. The Chair should;

- Take all views into account;
- Make the decision; and
- Explain the rationale.

As a member of the Conference **you are expected** to support all decisions.

2.21 Dissent

Individuals may seek clarification on the Registration decision from the Chair and brief discussion may ensue. If, after discussion, an individual believes the decision may not reduce the risks for the child, or the decision is unwarranted, they should record their dissent and rationale.

The Chair may seek to have the dissent discussed further, after the Conference, to see if agreement can be reached. If this is not possible, the dissent will be formally recorded in the minute.

Equally an individual expressing dissent may seek opportunity to have a fuller discussion with the Chair to explore their concerns further.

2.22 Complaints

Individuals who have concern about any part of the Child Protection process, including the nature of Conferences, should seek to have this addressed at the earliest point of identification. If this is about the process of the Conference the Chair should seek to address it at the time.

Where the matter cannot be resolved at the time and requires a formal complaint, the Social Work Complaints Procedure should be evoked, and the person should be advised of the process.

2.23 Appeals of Registration Decisions

If the child, parents, or carers do not agree with the decision of Child Protection Registration they may appeal in writing to the Head of Children and Families Services within **21 days** of the Conference. The Head of Children and Families Services will ensure the decision is reviewed and will advise the family of the outcome within **28 days** from receipt of appeal.

The Registration decision from Conference will remain in place throughout the appeal process until a conclusion is reached. There is no appeal beyond that to the Head of Children and Families Services.

- ✓ Accuracy of Minutes.

The minute of the Conference is intended to be an accurate reflection and record of the overall discussion, recommendations, decisions, and dissent, if unresolved. It should record:

- ✓ What happened to the child;
- ✓ Identified risks and strengths;
- ✓ The views of the child and family;
- ✓ The evidence presented to support contributions provided; and
- ✓ The rationale for recommendations and decisions.

Minutes of Conferences are not intended to be verbatim, word for word, accounts of Conferences and are not designed to record statements by individuals, although there may be exceptions as judged by the Chair. As a member of the Conference you should be aware that minutes may be relied upon in future court proceedings, to provide background information or the context for making decisions.

The minutes should be of professional standard of presentation, format, accessibility and in plain English. They should be reflective of the ethos of the Care Based Language paper entitled “[Telling the Child’s Story](#)”, July 2020 and any similarly updated reference papers.

Minutes should be accessible and easily understood by attendees including children and families.

The Chair and Minute Taker will jointly sign the minute as an accurate record of the Conference before distribution. The overall responsibility for the accuracy of the minute rests with the Chair.

2.24 Amendments to Minutes

On receipt of the minute, as a member of the Conference you should review content. If something is inaccurate, incomplete or the meaning is unclear or ambiguous, and all or any of which could significantly be open to misinterpretation or inaccuracy, you should send your comments to the Chair within **10 working days** of receiving the minute. The process should be confined to the specific matter and is not an invitation to correct grammar or typing errors.

Any agreed changes should be recorded by the Chair as an addendum to the minute.

This process should be in exceptional circumstances and is not intended to create a “membership led” minute, which is impractical and time consuming.

2.25 Actions from Minutes

Members who receive the minute but had not attended the Conference, should ensure any actions for them or their agency are carried out to the full unless there are good reasons for not doing so which should be brought to the attention of the Chair immediately. If as a member of the Conference you have moved jobs before receiving the minute you should undertake the above duty where practicable and ensure your previous agency or office is fully advised of requirements.

2.26 Sharing Minutes

Minutes are confidential and should not be passed by professionals to third parties without the consent of the Chair except where transfer is made to another office of the same agency. Minutes and other records associated with the Child Protection Registration process should be retained by the agencies receiving them in accordance with their record retention policies.

- ✓ Minutes in Criminal Procedures.

Where Child Protection cases proceed to criminal proceedings, the Police may reveal the minutes to the Sheriff in accordance with current criminal procedures.

- ✓ Minutes for Children and Parents.

Parents who attend or were invited will receive a copy of the minute but no information from the protected period (exclusions and specifically managed periods within the Conference) may be shared. Where parents do not attend an outline of the decisions and action points will be shared with them at the earliest opportunity.

If language translation is required a revised copy of both the decisions and minute can be provided on request or as identified.

The decision to send minutes or not will be made by the Chair of the Conference after consultation with the relevant Social Work Manager and the Police. Reasons for a decision not to send minutes to relevant family members will be recorded in the minute. The child will be supported to understand the minute (unless they are too young) by the Social Worker and will be given a copy of the minute.

Families receiving minutes should be reminded by the Social Worker of the need to keep them in a safe place, given the details of the family and the sensitivity of content. If as a member of the Conference, you have information which suggests the family is having difficulty in managing the confidentiality of the information contained in the minute you should speak with the Social Worker.

2.27 Information held on the Register

If the family is receiving the minute of the Initial Child Protection Conference, then this covers the requirement to inform them in writing that their child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register. If they are not to receive the minute of the Initial Child Protection Conference then they must be informed in writing by the Conference Chair of the decisions, what information will be held on the Child Protection Register and who can have access to this information. If as a member of the Conference, the child or family asks you about this you can refer to this **Multi-agency Guidance** for Attendees at Child Protection Conferences and speak to the Social Worker.

2.28 Multi-agency Training on Child Protection Conferences

Training and reflective discussion within a multi-agency context, will be provided to help you as a participant in Child Protection Conferences, with annual refreshers to take account of developments and staff turnover. If for any reason and at any time, you are unsure about any aspect of Child Protection work or the content of this Multi-agency Guidance for Attendees at Child Protection Conferences, speak to the Social Worker or Team Manager.

2.29 Feedback on Child Protection Conferences

As a member of Child Protection Conferences and a valued partner in our collective efforts to keep children and young people safe, your feedback is important. If you have specific or general feedback to provide pass this on to the Social Worker, Team Manager or Conference Chair.

Appendix 1: Attendance at Child Protection Conferences

Core Members

- ✓ Members of staff from all agencies who have a duty to attend Pre-birth, Initial and or Review Conferences, and if not in attendance, have a responsibility to have a substitute attend on their behalf: or if not possible to do so, to send a full report to the Social Worker and Chair which will be shared at the meeting.

Invited Members

- ✓ Members who are invited as and when required, or where indicated, e.g. a Criminal Justice Worker where they are working with either or both parents, or a Community Paediatrician when a child has undergone a medical examination.

Participants attending are representing their service and share information to ensure that risks can be identified and addressed. They have a responsibility to share information and clarify other information shared as necessary. Participants need to be actively involved in the discussion and decision making of the Conference, including offering a view as to whether the child’s name should be placed on the child protection register.

The table below summarises the roles of participants in Child Protection Conferences. It is not an exhaustive list and includes examples of the range and scope of tasks to be undertaken by Social Work Staff.

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
Service Manager (Chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair Conferences; • Set the Agenda; • Meet with parents or carers and child to explain the nature of the meeting and possible outcomes; • Facilitate information-sharing and analysis; • Ensure information from those not present is shared; • Identify the risks and protective factors; • Ensure the parents or carers and child’s views are taken into account; • Facilitate the identification of risks, needs and protective factors; • Facilitate decision making; • Make the decision on Registration where there is disagreement; 	Pre-birth Initial Review Conferences

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach decisions that will help keep the child safe; <p>Objectively analyse with partners the information from the investigation and the Conference.</p> <p>Where the child is Registered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an Outline Child Protection Plan (to be developed at the first core group meeting) is produced; • Identify the Lead Professional; • Advise parents or carers about local dispute resolution processes; • Identify Core Group and date of first meeting; • Agree review dates; • Challenge any delays in action being taken by staff or agencies; • Manage and record exclusions; • Ensure the accuracy of the minute. 	
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have their views heard (Chair and all); • Consider if it is appropriate for the child to attend (Chair); and • If child not attending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reason to be recorded; ○ What means will be used for the Conference to hear the views of the child; ○ Consider need for an advocate for the child. 	
Parent or carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in the Child Protection discussion; • Give views on the assessment of risks and needs; • Highlight the key strengths and support for their child; • Views on engagement in the Child Protection process; 	

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on outcomes to be achieved; Roles in the development of a plan for their child. 	
Extended family members, friends who plays key role in family support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in the Child Protection discussion; Give views on the assessment of risks and needs; Highlight the key strengths and support for the child; Views on engagement in the Child Protection process; Views on outcomes to be achieved; and Roles in developing a plan for the child. 	
Social Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk to key points of Child Protection Investigation and initial assessment of risks and needs; Highlight from the initial assessment the risk, vulnerability, resilience, and protective factors; Reason, if child is not invited or present at the Conference; Summary of work completed to date and areas of support required; and Level of further assessment needed. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
Team Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide professional judgement in decision making; If Registration decided, Chair Core Group meetings; Oversee and drive the key tasks to be developed into the Child Protection Plan; and Manage and oversee Child Protection Procedures and practice. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
Family Support Worker or Family Support Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak to their role and reason for involvement; 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
(specific worker who is working with the mother and child)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight positive developments in their work; • Contribute to risk identification; • Highlight any concerning factors such as lack of access or unwillingness to engage in agreed tasks. 	Review Conferences
Allocated named Midwife (e.g., hospital or community midwife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to their role and involvement; • Share levels of family engagement; • Outline progress of pregnancy; • Nature of support and work planned. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
Named Nurse (Health Visitor) if child under 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to their role, past and present involvement; • Share levels of family engagement; • Child's development; • Assessed parenting skills and areas requiring support; and • Work completed, level of support and work planned. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
School Nurse, if school aged children in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to their role, past and present involvement; • Child's development and educational attainment or progress; • Share levels of family engagement; • Individual work completed or planned with the child. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
GP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share involvement with the family; • Provide relevant health information; and • Interpret the significance and the potential impact of the health issues on the child. 	Pre-birth Initial Review Conferences
Police Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share Police Scotland information in relation to previous domestic incidents, offending behaviour, and any relevant intelligence in relation to the child, parents, or carers. 	Pre-birth Initial Review Conferences

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
Early Years Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share extent of involvement; • Brief description of the child, their level of attendance, development, and progress in the establishment; • Engagement with parents; and • The plans in place for the child. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
Primary School Head Teacher, or Secondary School Depute Head Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief description of child, their level of attendance; • Educational and social development, and progress in the establishment; and • Level of engagement with parents. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
Social Work Addiction Worker Core Member if addiction issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of reasons for involvement; • Role in assessment and initial findings; • Level of engagement with their service; and • Contribute to risk assessment for child. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
NHS Addiction Worker (where parental substance misuse is indicated) Core Member if addiction issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the addictions support the parent is receiving, frequency of support and individual work being undertaken as part of this support; • Information on drug tests undertaken, if so, for what purpose, findings; • Prescriptions they are receiving; • Impact this is likely to have on the adult, and their ability to parent; • The relapse plan; and • The indicators to which multi-agency staff should be alert to identify relapse. 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences
Specialist support service for parents where involved in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mental health ✓ Learning disability ✓ Criminal Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and reason for involvement; • Level of support provided to the individual; • Impact that this has, or is likely to have on their ability to parent and protect their child; and 	Pre-birth Initial Core Groups Review Conferences

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
Core Member if addiction issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerations as to how the care plan can be developed to provide appropriate supports to the child. 	
Other invited People		
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice, such as when a Child Protection Order may be considered. 	Pre-birth Initial Review Conferences
Reporter to the Children’s Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be an observer, cannot be involved in decision making; and • Gathers information for a child who has been or may be referred to the Reporter. 	Pre-birth Initial
Consultant Paediatrician (Child Protection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a specialist health assessment or medical examination has been undertaken then an invitation should be sent to the Consultant who undertook the examination who can speak to the findings of the assessment; and • When a medical opinion would be beneficial. 	Initial & Review
Community Paediatrician/ specialist medical service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to reason for involvement, level of contact and engagement with service; • Impact on child; and • Supports required because of the medical concern. 	Initial & Review
Fostering, Kinship and Adoption team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When child is being considered for accommodation; and • To gather information and provide advice and guidance in planning. 	Initial & Review
Intensive Support team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where intensive support is being considered; • Advice regarding support which could be offered; and 	Initial & Review

Role	Purpose	Meeting Type
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If actively involved with the child, the Support Worker would be core member.	
Housing	Information in relation to tenancy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occupancy;• Condition;• Complaints;• People known to attend the house; and• Arrears.	Initial & Review

3 Version history

Document status				
Version	Status	Date	Amended by	Reason / overview
0.0.A	Draft	18 March 2021	JL	Initial draft
1.0	Live	19 April 2021	JL	Issued for Use

Related documents	
P0318-PROC-001	Social Work Child Protection Procedures