

Child Protection Conferences

Information for Families



Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

Torbay Council Children's Services ■ Police ■ Health ■ Careers South West
Youth Offending Team ■ Probation ■ CAFCASS ■ Safer Communities
Fire Service ■ Schools ■ Community & Voluntary Sector

What is a Child Protection Conference?

This is a meeting to discuss concerns that have been raised about the care of your child. The conference will decide whether your child is at continued risk of significant harm and what support and services are needed.

They are planned to last no more than two hours but can sometimes take longer.

Who will be at the conference?

Parents and children who are able to understand what is going on will be invited to attend and other family members may also be invited. Sometimes members of the family may be excluded from the conference if it is considered that it may not be in the best interests of the child. If you have concerns about any family member attending you should speak to the social worker.

There will be a chairperson, minute taker, social worker, police officer, health and education representatives and anyone else who may be working with you or your family.

Before the conference

Before the conference you will get a letter confirming the date, time and place of the meeting. If you have any problems attending or need child care support please speak to the social worker.

The social worker will write a report about the concerns and their assessment, including information about your family and any previous incidents or concerns. Their report will also make recommendations about what will happen. The social worker should meet with you at least two days before the conference to go through their report.

Your views and your child's views are important and you should attend the conference if you can. You can write down your own views for the conference. If you need help with this please ask the social worker. The social worker will discuss with your child how their views will be presented. There is a separate leaflet for children about Child Protection Conferences to support them to participate.

What if I need help to take part in the conference?

You can bring a friend, legal representative, advocate or supporter to the conference. Their only role in the conference will be to support you. They cannot give their own views or ask questions unless you want them to.

If your first language is not English, the social worker can arrange for an Interpreter to come to the meeting.

If you have any speech or hearing difficulties, or any other additional needs, the social worker will make sure you get the support you need to participate in the meeting.

At the conference

The conference will have a chairperson who is responsible for making sure that the meeting is run correctly and that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. The Safeguarding and Reviewing Service of the council employs independent people whose job it is to chair Child Protection Conferences.

On the day of the conference you will be invited to meet with the chairperson 15 minutes before the conference. They will explain to you how the meeting will be run.

At the beginning of the conference the chairperson will introduce everyone and check with the family that the details such as names, addresses and dates of birth are correct.

The chairperson reminds everyone that the meeting is confidential and then asks for reports. You have the right to have your say at the conference and to explain to people what has been happening within your family and how your child is getting on. You can give your views verbally at the conference and/or write them in your report, which you can read out. If a professional is unable to attend then their report may be read out.

After the information is presented, the Chairperson will ask everyone's opinion about whether your child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and needs a Child Protection Plan. They will also identify the main area of concern which may be:

- neglect
- physical abuse
- emotional abuse

or

- sexual abuse

The Child Protection Plan

The aim of the Child Protection Plan is to ensure that your child is safe from harm and to promote their health and development. In most circumstances this will be done by supporting you as a family to care for your child.

The Child Protection Plan will be discussed at the Child Protection Conference and afterwards at regular core group meetings.

A date for a review Child Protection Conference will be made within three months of the first conference to review the plan and check what progress is being

made. After that, conferences will be held every six months while there is a Child Protection Plan in place.

What to do if you are not happy with the decision made at the conference?

You can make a complaint to the conference chairperson. You can make this complaint yourself or ask someone to make it on your behalf. A complaint must be lodged within 28 days of the Child Protection Conference, or 14 days after receiving the decision and child protection plan (written record) of the conference, whichever is the later.

You can complain about the following:

- The way in which the conference is run.
- The outcome, in terms of what the main concern was at the time a Child Protection Plan was developed for the child.
- A decision that a child has or does not have a Child Protection Plan or ceases to have a Child Protection Plan.

Making a complaint

To make a complaint after the conference you need to contact:

**The Service Manager,
Safeguarding and Reviewing Service,
c/o Town Hall, Castle Circus,
Torquay, TQ1 3DR**

You can call **01803 208559** or
email **reviewing&safeguardingunit@torbay.gov.uk**

Any further questions

We hope this leaflet has explained how professionals and families can work together to ensure that children are safe and that their health and development are promoted.

If you have any other questions, please speak to your social worker.

This leaflet can be made available in other formats and languages. Contact 01803 207176.