

What happens if my child does not need a child protection plan?

- If the decision is made that your child does not need a child protection plan you are still entitled to help and support for your family. Your social worker will discuss with you an appropriate service plan which will help to sort out some of the difficulties you have been having at this time.

What if I do not agree with the Conference?

- As we have previously explained, on hearing the information that is shared, the Conference will decide whether or not your child needs a child protection plan. You may be asked your views about the need for a child protection plan but the decision cannot be challenged.
- If you do not agree with the decision made at the Conference you can have your views recorded.
- If you are not happy with the way you were prepared for the Conference or the way that the Conference was conducted please contact your social worker who can provide you with a complaints leaflet.

Complaints

If you have a complaint this should be made in writing within 28 days of the Conference to:

Complaints Manager
Staffordshire County Council
Social Care and Health Directorate
The Walton Building
Martin Street
Stafford
ST16 2LH

www.staffordshire.gov.uk

Published February 2008
Review Date February 2009

Designed and Printed by Staffordshire County Council Central Print & Design. Telephone: 01785 276051

Remember

- You are the most important person in your child's life.
- Your views and feelings will be heard and respected.
- There is a commitment from all Child Welfare Agencies to help and support you at this difficult time.
- If you are able to work with people who are committed to help you, it is likely that your child will remain safe.

Further helpful information is available from:

- A Solicitor who is a member of the Law Society's Children's Panel.
- Your local Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Family Rights Group (advice line) Tel: 0800 7311 696
- Children's Legal Centre (child law) – Tel: 0845 120 2948

The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board is a partnership between:

Staffordshire County Council – Children and Lifelong Learning

Adult Social Care

District Councils

The Police

Probation

Youth Offending Services
Health

Connexions

CAFCASS

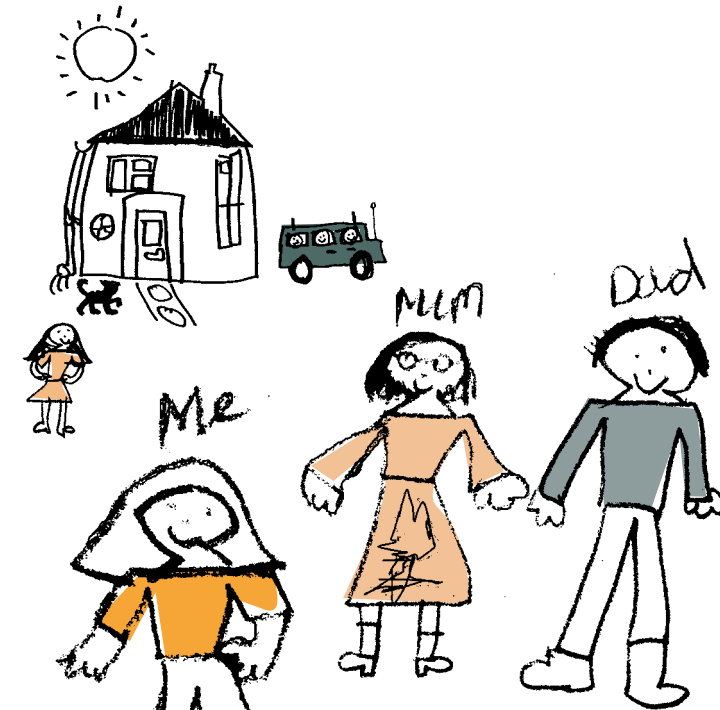
Young Offenders Institutes

The Voluntary Sector

If you would like this document in another language or format, e.g. large text, please contact the Communications Team (Children and Lifelong Learning) on 01785 278666.

Child Protection Conferences

Information for parents and carers



What is an Initial Child Protection Conference?

- A meeting where families and professional people meet to discuss concerns about children and young people. This may be because of something that has happened or because a lot of concern has been expressed.
- Any 'follow-on' Conferences are known as Child Protection Reviews.
- At the Conference people will talk about the concerns raised and share information about the investigation. They will then decide if your child is at risk of further harm.
- Child Protection Conferences are meetings organised by Local Authority Children's Social Care on behalf of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board is made up of senior officers from a range of agencies and is responsible for co-ordinating work to ensure local children are kept safe.

Who attends a Child Protection Conference?

- Parents and/or those who have parental responsibility or care of the child.
- The child or young person, if it is appropriate and if they are able to understand.
- A supporter – you may wish to bring a family member, friend or legal representative with you.
- Professional people who are responsible for providing services for your child. This may include Health Visitor, School Nurse, General Practitioner, School Teacher, Police and Probation Officer.
- You will receive an invitation to the Conference along with a list of all the people who will be attending.
- It is likely that anyone who is professionally involved with you and your family will be spoken to before the Conference. This will help the social worker to write their report.

Can I attend?

Yes. Parents and carers are encouraged to take part in the meeting because their views and feelings are very important. However, there may be some circumstances where you may have to leave the meeting for a short time. The reasons are as follows:

- Where there are, or is likely to be, legal proceedings and Conference members need to receive legal advice and information.
- When Police enquiries are incomplete.
- Where a member of the Conference has informed the chairperson that they are unable to share all of their information in the presence of a family member.
- Where there is a concern that the Conference may be disrupted through violence or unacceptable behaviour.

What happens if English is not my first language?

- Your child's social worker will arrange with you for an interpreter to be present. This will ensure that the people who are present know what you are saying and explain to you what is being said.

What happens if I have speech or hearing difficulties?

- Please let us know before the Conference so that we can arrange for help/special equipment so that you can fully take part in the meeting.

What can I do to prepare for the Conference?

Remember this meeting is confidential.

- Your child's social worker will discuss everything with you before the Conference and will share their report with you. Your views should be included within this report.
- The chairperson will meet with you before the Conference to hear any concerns that you may have and to answer any questions.
- The chair person and the people who attend will help to enable you to take part in the meeting and make you feel comfortable.

- Do not be afraid of expressing your own views and opinions about what has happened and also let other people who attend have their say.
- All of the people who attend the Conference will understand that this may be a very difficult time for you.

What can I expect from the Conference?

- The chairperson will ask everyone at the Conference to introduce themselves.
- A copy of the social worker's report will be handed out and all of the people present will talk about their involvement with your family.
- Someone called a minute taker will take notes of the meeting and you will receive a copy a few days later.
- A decision will be made about whether your child needs a child protection plan. The child protection plan ensures that all those concerned work together to ensure a child's welfare.

What happens if my child needs a child protection plan?

- A small group of people will be identified at the Conference as having an important role to play with you and your family. You will play an active part in this.
- This group of people is called a Core Group and will meet shortly after the Conference in order to write the child protection plan for your child.
- The plan will clearly state what each person has agreed to do to help to make sure that your child is safe. This group of people will meet regularly and offer you help and support.
- This plan will be reviewed at regular intervals, the first time within 3 months of the initial Conference and thereafter every 6 months while your child has a child protection plan.
- The decision that your child no longer needs a child protection plan can only be made at a Child Protection Review Conference.