

INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE HELD UNDER STAFFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ARRANGEMENTS

Held on	23 October 2017
Held at	10.15am

Office address details

Families First
Newcastle Area Service Office
Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire ST5 2AG

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This document is a summary of the discussion at conference and not a detailed account of what was said by whom. If you wish to make any additions or alterations to the minutes, the Independent Conference Chair will be pleased to consider for circulation written amendments received within 14 days.

The Social Worker's report is attached. Other reports may be attached with the permission of the author.

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Details of child(ren)/young person(s)

Full name	DOB/EDD	Address
Unborn Lowton	25.12.2017	12 High Street, Newcastle Under Lyme



Those present

Independent Conference Chair	Paula Conyon
Minute taker	Sue Wyatt

Name	Role
Judy Thomas	Social Worker
Toni Colclough	EWO
Jackie Dennis	Child Protection Police
Claire Cartwright	Breathing Space
Tracey Johnson	Aspire – Support Worker
Melissa Hill	Health Visitor
Mandy Stenson	Midwife
Laura Lowton	Mother
Gary Prince	Father

Apologies

Name	Role
David Maher	Team Manager
Dolores Burnham	Senior Probation Officer
Kim Grocott/Vicki Baxendale/Dot Thomas	Named Nurse for Safeguarding
Karen Perks	Breathing Space

Also invited

Name	Role
Joan Prince	Paternal Grandmother
GP Surgery	GP

Welcome and Introductions

Ms Conyon welcomed members to the conference and completed introductions. Conference members were reminded on the anti-discriminatory policy and of the confidential nature of the meeting. Everyone present read the social work report and confirmed it was an accurate reflection of the facts. Reports were also received from Probation and the Police.

Details of the model used for conference which is derived from the Three Houses Model was shared by Ms Conyon. This is an information gathering tool which supports risk assessment.

Purpose of the Conference

An initial child protection conference has been convened due to the Local Authority's previous involvement with Ms Lowton's two other children who were removed from her care to due neglect. They are both now subject to Special Guardianship Orders to their maternal grandmother and reside in Northampton.

Judy Thomas, Social Worker summarised the following:

- Referral received from Mandy Stenson, Midwife given background history and current concerns regarding Ms Lowton's mental health
- Mr Prince is the father of the unborn child; however is not the father to Ms Lowton's two other children
- Both parents current misuse of cannabis
- Ms Lowton's poor mental health which includes previous diagnosis of possible schizophrenia
- Both parents do not have their own accommodation and reside with, Paternal Grandmother Mrs Prince and her 14 year old son Martin Smith. There are concerns about the living arrangements and poor home conditions
- Missed antenatal appointments in addition to missed appointments with Breathing Space

Important People and Pen Picture of the Child

Ms Lowton , Mother and Mr Prince, Father, confirmed the following:

- Unborn Lowton is a baby girl
- Ms Lowton is 31 weeks and the baby is due on 25.12.2017
- They are currently living with paternal grandmother, whom they regard as being supportive. Laura also said her two children Claire and Scarlet would be significant to the baby along with her parents.

What are people worried about?

Mr Prince said:

- He tidies most of the time and would like Ms Lowton to help.
- Housing applications have been submitted. They have been offered a house with Sanctuary Housing. Parents need to complete and return paperwork.
- He sometimes finds it hard and is unable to wake Ms Lowton some days.

- He does not swear at his mother; however he does have 'attitude'.
- Ms Lowton is 'in bed a lot'.

Ms Lowton said:

- She lacks motivation; she suffers with tiredness and suffers with mental health issues.
- She has now been referred for a mental health assessment.
- She "cannot be bothered" and would rather sleep.

Claire Cartwright, Breathing Space said:

- Involved for 5 weeks, 3 visits per week. Parents did not attend first appointment.
- Focus is on practical issues of parenting i.e. feeding, bathing etc.
- Ms Lowton has shown she is capable of practical tasks however needs prompting and mainly does this when Mr Prince is there.
- Ms Lowton lacks motivation; is often tired and struggles to get up for appointments.
- Mr Prince is supportive; however Ms Lowton needs to make every effort to work with breathing space
- Ms Lowton said she had had "4 bad days out of 7".
- The previous concerns for Ms Lowton's other children are resurfacing.

Mandy Stenson , Midwife said:

- Met Ms Lowton 4 times; at 12 weeks pregnant and again at 16 weeks. Ms Lowton was feeling well. The last 2 appointments Ms Lowton has felt unwell, vomiting / poor diet
- At 23 weeks referred to PEACH, Consultant appointment due to previous birthing problems. Appointment has not been attended.
- Home visit undertaken in February given last appointment not attended. Advice given: looking after herself and sleep deprivation.
- Appointment also not attended for parent and baby unit.

Melissa Hill, Health Visitor said:

- Never met parents until today.
- Worries relate to missed appointments, Ms Lowton's poor mental health. A joint visit with Breathing Space to be arranged.

Jackie Dennis, Police Said:

- Minimal information to report.
- Incident with Ms Lowton in 2014 – altercation with 2/3 other females, no further action. Ms Lowton admitted she intervened to help.
- The safeguarding officer who attended the strategy discussion confirmed the concerns were in relation to: Ms Lowton's mental health, cannabis misuse, chaotic home life, 2 previous children in the care of grandmother, lack of engagement and attending appointments, verbal abuse in the household addressed with Ms Lowton.

Judy Thomas, Social Worker said:

- The worries have been mostly addressed by everyone so far
- Parents need to find their own accommodation and be responsible for the home environment
- Ms Lowton has not engaged with services as much as she could have
- Ms Lowton has not previously taken responsibility for mental health issues; a referral to PEACH has been made.
- Parents need have their own home to care for their child.
- Home conditions are sometimes tidy but can also be very untidy and unkempt.

Tracey Jonson, Aspire Housing said:

- Mrs Prince, paternal grandmother, is not coping well due to living conditions.
- Mrs Prince wants her home back and it is now at crisis point. This is now affecting her own mental health and her son Martin's
- The home is cluttered with belongings of all household members. There is animal excrement in the property
- There are worries about the cleanliness and safety particularly in the kitchen
- There are many animals; 2 dogs, 2 guinea pigs, 4 rabbits, all in cages.

Toni Colclough - EWO to Martin Smith said:

- Referred received due to Martin's poor school attendance.
- He is known to CAMHS, likely diagnosis for ADHD/Conduct Disorder. His presentation has an impact on behaviour in the home. E.g. aggression.
- Martin has a poor sleep pattern
- Martin has previously attended High School, now attends Green High School, attendance inconsistent, time keeping poor, he faces possible exclusion.
- Mrs Prince, Paternal Grandmother, asked Toni not see them at home due to her not being happy about the living arrangements / overcrowding,

- The poor home conditions are mainly caused due to Ms Lowton's and Mr Prince's lifestyle and mess.
- Mr Prince and Ms Lowton are mainly the primary carers for Martin as Paternal Grandmother, Mrs Prince, stays at her partners home
- Work cannot be undertaken with Martin in the home due to chaotic environment
- A family meeting was held and the family agreed to improve living arrangements – however nothing has changed.
- Gary is a role model to Martin; however they have had arguments almost becoming physical between them on occasions.

What are the positives for the child(ren)/family?

Mr Prince said:

- He is motivated; however he needs to consider how he will cope with meeting his own needs and that of his baby's and Ms Lowton's.
- His relationship with Ms Lowton is good.
- They have been offered a house

Ms Lowton did not offer any comment; however confirmed her relationship with Mr Prince is good.

Claire Cartwright, Breathing Space said:

- Mr Prince is good at practical skills.

Judy Thomas, Social Worker said:

- Ms Lowton is making a good effort to attend supervised contact with her 2 other children.
- Ms Lowton is now acknowledging the mental health issues and the missed appointments.
- Both parents are open and honest during assessments and there is more to be explored with the maternal family.

Toni Colclough EWO said:

- Joan Prince is a great support to parents

Jackie Dennis Police said:

- There is no intelligence or police calls out in respect of parents and therefore there is no criminal involvement.

What is the daily lived experience for the child?

Ms Conyon invited conference members to consider what the daily lived experience would be for baby Lowton given the worries discussed at conference. Concerns were expressed about the baby not enjoying a healthy development because of her mother's poor mental health and lack of motivation to seek help and support. The lack of a permanent, secure, safe and clean home for the baby was also identified as factors which would hinder the baby enjoying a happy and healthy development when born.

It was also unclear what preparations parents have made for the baby's arrival. For example, purchased baby bottles / clothes / pram etc.

What needs to happen to make positive changes for the child(ren)/family?

RISK:

1. Laura Lowton has previously had two children removed from her care due to neglect. Unborn Lowton is at risk of neglect due to current and historical parenting concerns.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN, BY WHOM & BY WHEN:

- By 4.12.2017 Judy Thomas to complete parenting assessments of both parents
- By 27.10.2017 Judy Thomas to arrange a PLO (Public Law Outline) meeting at the Civic Centre, Newcastle
- As of 23.10.2017 Judy Thomas to visit the home every 3 weeks. Every core group to review this frequency.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- For Unborn Lowton to be cared for by both parents, in a safe and caring home, whereby all of her needs (feeding/warmth/ love etc) are always met.

RISK:

2. Unborn Lowton is at risk of not enjoying a healthy development because of Laura Lowton's poor mental health and lack of motivation to meet her and her baby's needs

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN, BY WHOM & BY WHEN:

- As of 23.10.2017 Laura Lowton must attend every appointment for the psychological assessment

- On 23.10.2017 Judy Thomas to confirm when the appointments are and inform Laura Lowton in writing. Gary Prince and Laura Lowton to attend all appointments offered.
- On 23.10.2017 Laura Lowton to make a GP appointment to talk about her mental health needs. Laura Lowton and Gary Prince must also attend the appointment with PEACH on 12.11.2017. Laura Lowton must follow any advice given about her health/diet/daily routines
- As of 23.10.2017 Laura Lowton and Gary Prince must stop using cannabis and talk to medical staff involved with the family, if support is needed.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE:

- For Laura Lowton to access the right services that are there to help support her mental health needs which will in turn help her to care for and parent her child. For both parents not to use drugs. For Gary Prince to continue to support Laura to attend and engage in all appointments.

RISK:

3. Unborn Lowton is at risk of being raised in a house where the home conditions are poor and chaotic which could impact on her health and development.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN, BY WHOM & BY WHEN:

- By 31.10.2017 Judy Thomas to arrange a Family Group Conference which must be attended by Laura Lowton, Gary Prince and Joan Prince (paternal grandmother).
- First core group to advise parents of any financial entitlements and what housing support can be provided. A Family Support Worker can support parents with the housing forms.
- As of 24.10.2017 Laura Lowton, Gary Prince and Joan Prince must clear the house of all rubbish and hazards and make sure the house remains free from clutter and rubbish. This also includes keeping clean the animal areas.
- By 23.10.2017 Toni Colclough to make a referral to Children's Social Care in respect of Martin.
- Week commencing 30.10.2017 Tracy Johnson to visit the property.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- For unborn Lowton to live in a home which is free from clutter and danger. For both parents to be supported in their care of their child. For an assessment of Martin's circumstances to be undertaken and for any unmet needs to be addressed.

RISK:

4. Laura Lowton is not attending all her antenatal appointments; therefore the health and development of Unborn Lowton and Laura Lowton cannot be closely monitored.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN, BY WHOM & BY WHEN:

- As of 23.10.2017 Laura Lowton and Gary Prince must attend all appointments offered (including the appointment with the Consultant on 27.11.2017) and inform the professionals beforehand if you are unable to attend.
- As of 23.10.2017 and throughout the pregnancy, Karen Perks to continue to work with Laura Lowton 3 visits per week to complete practical support and mellow bumps.
- Before Unborn Lowton is discharged from hospital, Judy Thomas and Mandy Stensonto hold a discharge planning meeting and a birth plan must be developed by 1.11.2017.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

- For Unborn Lowton's health to be monitored before and after birth and for both parents to attend all appointments offered.

Chairs summary to include risks and strengths

Throughout the conference Ms Conyon reflected on the worries, positives and what needs to change in order to address the concerns for the baby Lowton which are all highlighted above. To summarise the worries are in relation to Ms Lowton's mental health and her lack of motivation to seek help. Ms Lowton has had two previous children removed from her care due to concerns of neglect. Parents are currently living in poor home conditions which are overcrowded and chaotic. Both parents also misuse cannabis. Positively despite Ms Lowton's evident lack of

motivation she has attended conference today with Mr Prince who appears to support her as best as he can. A family group conference is also due to held in order for the family to develop their own plan to support Ms Lowton and Mr Prince in their care of their baby.

In light of the concerns expressed about Martin Smith at conference Ms Conyon requested an urgent referral to local Safeguarding Team is made today.

Ms Conyon duly invited agencies present to consider the need for a child protection plan for unborn Lowton given the concerns raised at conference today.

Decision making (Child in need or child protection)

It was a unanimous decision of the conference today that unborn baby Lowton should be made subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect.

- Judy Thomas, Social Worker :

There is a high risk of neglect to the unborn given the history and current home situation. Supportive of child protection planning given the need to undertake an assessment to establish whether Mr Prince is a protective factor, to assess parents motivation to change and maintain any changes made in addition to ongoing assessments of Ms Lowton's mental health

- Claire Cartwright, Breathing Space

In support of child protection planning due to the reasons highlighted throughout the conference.

- Mandy Stenson & Melissa Hill, Health

In support of child protection planning given concerns for Ms Lowton's health. The health and wellbeing of Ms Lowton and her unborn baby are a priority. There are also concerns about the chaotic home conditions

- Tracy Johnson in support of child protection planning given the reasons stated

- Jackie Dennis, Police

The threshold has been met. In support of child protection planning given poor home environment particularly regarding the dogs in the household / risks posed to the family when the dogs are not in cages and the aggressive behaviour. Further concerns regarding the lack of accommodation for

parents.

- Toni Colclough in support of child protection planning given there are so many unknowns. The living conditions are unacceptable for Mr Prince, Ms Lowton, Mrs Prince and Martin let alone for the baby.

Review date, core group members, core group dates and visiting requirements

Core Group Membership

Name	Role/Relationship to Child (Lead Social Worker)	Agency (Children's Social Care)	Telephone No.
Judy Thomas	Social Worker	Families First	01782 296290
Laura Lowton	Mother		07123456788
Gary Prince	Father		07123456870
David Maher	Team Manager	Families First	01782 296290
Toni Colclough	FSW/EWO	Families First	01782 296290
Karen Perks		Breathing Space	01538 12345
Mandy Stenson	Midwife	Royal Stoke UHNS	01782 12345
Tracey Johnson	Support Worker	Aspire Housing	01782 12344
Melissa Hill	Health Visitor	NHS	01782 15689

First Core group – 2 November 2017 at 10am at The Civic Offices, Newcastle

Child Protection Review Conference – 8 January 2018 at 10am at The Civic Offices, Newcastle

Signature

Independent Conference Chair

Name	Paula Conyon
Signature	P. Conyon
Date	23.10.17

A typed name constitutes the signing of this document

REDACTED