



One minute guide

Child Protection Conference Chair

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What is the Child Protection Conference Chair role?

Child Protection Conference Chairs lead Initial and Review [Child Protection Conferences](#). Initial conferences are held for children who are deemed to be at risk of significant harm and review conferences are held to review the plans for children subject to a Child Protection Plan. The first review is held within three months of the ICPC, and subsequently at least every six months for the duration of the plan.

The Chair is responsible for coordinating the review of child protection plans to a high standard and ensuring that children and young people's participation is promoted throughout the process. This may include attendance at all or part of a conference, the involvement of a Children's Advocate and/ or provision of a Children's Meeting.

In Leeds, a Child Protection Conference Chair is a qualified social worker from the council's Integrated Safeguarding Unit. They have no operational or line management responsibilities for social workers; this means they are **independent** from any decisions made by the Children's Social Work Service. They have a minimum of five years' social work experience, as well as the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out this sensitive, demanding role.

What do Chairs do before and at the start of the conference?

The Chair liaises with the allocated social worker to manage any circumstances where consideration may need to be given to excluding an individual from the conference process and/ or receiving the conference reports. If it is agreed that someone is not to be invited to attend the conference, the Chair records this and the reason for the decision in the meeting record.

Prior to the conference date, the Chair makes contact with the family members, including the child if appropriate. This contact can be either by telephone or in person if the family prefer, and is used to: ensure the family understand the purpose of the conference and what will happen; check they have received explanatory leaflets and any other documents they need; and to answer any queries the family may have.

At the start of the conference, the Chair re-iterates the purpose of the meeting to all participants, emphasising the confidential nature of the meeting and clarifying the agenda. They ensure that all those present introduce themselves and share which agency they represent, for the benefit of the family and the other practitioners. A key role of the Chair is to enable all those present - including/ as well as the child and those who may not be able to attend the conference in person but have submitted information to it - to make full contributions in respect of the discussion and decision-making process.

What do Chairs do during the conference?

The Chair is accountable to the Director of Children's Services for the conduct of the conference. The Chair ensures that the conference maintains a focus on the child(ren) as the primary client, whose interests must supersede those of their parents/ carers. They support those at the conference to use the available information provided by contributors and make recommendations that form the Child Protection Outline Plan. This includes ensuring the appointment of a lead social worker if the child is to be subject of a Child Protection Plan.

In Leeds, we use the Strengthening Families Framework (SFF) which focuses on the family's strengths as well as the risks to the child(ren). The SFF enables the Chair to lead the conference process using a restorative, outcome focused, family-facing approach.

It is important that the conference is conducted in a restorative and anti-discriminatory manner and gives proper consideration to issues of race, culture, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability; the Chair is responsible for ensuring this.

What do Chairs do at the end of the conference and afterwards?

At the end of the ICPC, a date is arranged for the first **Core Group meeting** which needs to take place within ten working days. The Core Group members are those individuals identified to develop the Outline Plan and implement the resulting, agreed Child Protection Plan.

Other responsibilities include setting a date and time for the first review child protection conference, the distribution of an accurate record of the meeting, and for ensuring agreement about how non-attending children, young people or parents/ carers are informed of the decisions and recommendations of the conference.

Who are the key contacts?

The Chairs work within the Child Protection Service. This is managed over three areas; East North East, South and West North West. The service is managed through the Integrated Safeguarding Unit.

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