
Preparation for and attendance at Child Protection Conferences

As a brief guide the top 10 expectations for agencies who are helping and protecting children and families through child protection conferences are:

- Be specific about who will be at the conference and make sure names, addresses, dates of birth, wider family members and friends are explored and contact details are agreed. Remember the family can have a supporter at the conference
- Explain your role within the child protection process to children and parents
- Be mindful of language used within your report and at the conference and uphold anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice, being respectful of cultural customs, values and beliefs and show understanding of diversity issues. Arrange translation and interpreter services where English is a second language
- Encourage children's attendance and/or their contribution. This could be attendance for a short period supported by e.g. school staff, an advocate attending with them or on their behalf or the use of direct work tools to promote the child's voice. The conference chair where possible will make contact with the child
- Share your report with the family and other professionals prior to the meeting (two days before an Initial Child Protection Conference and five days before a Review Child Protection Conference). Include the child and parents voice in the report and provide an up to date chronology and genogram
- Be clear about the risks and impact upon the child(ren)
- Be on time and available for third party information. This is information such as police intelligence or ongoing police enquiries that cannot be shared with the family. This part of the conference, if required, will be held without the family present
- Remain on task and focused in the conference. Using virtual technology can be unpredictable and requires all attendees to give their full attention and respect
- Give a clear rationale for your decision making and evidence based judgement about whether the child is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm as you will be asked to provide a professional view regarding the need for a child protection plan
- Contribute to the multi agency outcome focused plan that should be reviewed and updated at every core group meeting. Make sure the plan is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time scaled (SMART) and reviewed in a timely manner

[For more information see the Children's MARS Policy and Procedures for 'Assessing Need and Providing Help' which is available on the Children's MARS website.](#)