

# Quality Standards for Child Protection conferences



The following standards set out minimum expectations for children, family members and professionals attending Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences to detail the issues that represent best practice and high-quality performance.

The impact will be that children and families are fully prepared for the meeting and are able to contribute and participate fully. The impact for professionals will be a clear understanding of their role, responsibilities and expectations.

## Quality Standards for the Independent Reviewing Service

- A consultation will take place between the Practice supervisor and Conference chairperson following Strategy Meeting
- The consultation will discuss practice issues and actions such as Family Solutions as an alternative to conference.
- The consultation will record if the assessed need of the child requires an Initial Child Protection Conference
- The consultation will consider any special requirements for conference such as a split conference, supporters, venue, cultural needs and /or interpreter that will be recorded on CareFirst
- The consultation will consider how the conference will take place. This could be a face to face conference or virtual meeting facilitated by Microsoft Teams depending on the needs and views of the family
- The consultation will consider how best to achieve maximum participation and the voice of the child and family. Best Practice would mean that child and family are in attendance but could include Advocate meeting with the child, Letter from the child, use of Apps and technology or the chairperson visiting the child
- Invitations to Initial Child Protection Conference will allow the family and professionals time to prepare for conference. Social Workers will detail the people to be invited in a timely manner for the sending of invitations to allow sufficient notification
- Child Protection Conferences will be held at the same venue for the duration of Child Protection Planning
- Child Protection Conferences will be chaired where possible by the same Chairperson to promote consistency and engagement
- Children and families will be greeted and welcomed to the building
- Children and families will be shown the conference room prior to the meeting and be given the choice of seating
- Conference outline plan and meeting records will be completed and distributed as per Children's MARS policy and guidance

### **Quality Standards for Children and Families**

- Children and their families understand before the meeting takes place what a Child Protection Conference means and are prepared for the meeting by: their Social Worker (Using the Cool Kidz Club workbook where appropriate) and other professionals involved
- Families and Children (dependant on age and understanding) have had a copy of the report by the Social Worker and other professionals shared with them before the day of the conference in order that information is not a surprise at the meeting
- The Social Worker and other professionals make sure the child and family understand the contents of the report
- Children and families arrive 30 minutes before the start of conference to meet with the chairperson
- Children and families feel welcomed at the conference and are greeted by the Chairperson
- Children and families are treated with respect
- Children and families meet with the chairperson pre-conference to outline the process and decision making in line with the "Conference Pledge"
- Families are given the opportunity to maximise their contribution and express their views appropriately
- Children are given the opportunity to contribute and express their views safely
- Children and families are offered time out strategies as required
- Children receive a Child Friendly Plan (age assessed) completed by the Social Worker

### **Quality Standards for Professionals**

- Professionals will have written and shared their report with family prior to the conference to allow family feedback
- Professionals will send the report to the chairperson in a timely manner in order that the chairperson has time to prepare for conference
- Professionals will telephone the chairperson if unable to attend to share their views
- Professionals will provide expert knowledge and up to date research in relation to specialised service
- Professionals will arrive 30 minutes before conference to read reports
- Professionals will liaise with the chairperson where there are practice issues prior to a Review Child Protection Conference
- Professionals will fully contribute to actions from the outline Child Protection Plan and contribute effectively to Core Group
- Professionals will review and build upon the Outline Child Protection Plan progress to ensure the plan is jointly owned

### **Quality Standards for Conference Chairs**

- The chairperson will be responsible for leading the conference to produce a strengths based, risk managed, child centred, outcome focused plan
- The chairperson will use appropriate technology (Whiteboard) to enhance contribution and participation
- The chairperson will co-ordinate the meeting in a timely manner
- The plan will include:

- details of who, what and when will be required to safeguard the child
- multi-agency and family actions to achieve successful outcomes
- timescales for actions to be achieved
- name Core Group/ CIN members
- set first Core Group/ review conference date that is timely
- explicitly detail contingency plans
- The chairperson will incorporate models of practice and up to date research to influence outcome focused planning
- The chairperson will offer to undertake a telephone call or visit to the child and family or meet with them where they were unable or declined to attend the meeting
- The chairperson will oversee that the Child Protection Outline Plan and meeting records are produced and distributed within the Children's MARS policy and procedure timescales
- The chairperson will undertake regular Case Tracking monitoring and meeting preparation discussions between Child Protection Conferences and record on CareFirst
- The chairperson will undertake an Enhanced Risk Analysis Meeting when a child has been subject to a Child Protection Plan after the second review conference to prevent drift and delay
- The chairperson will complete child and family feedback with the child and family members where possible post conference
- Quality Assurance of the Conference Chairperson will be completed on a regular basis to observe quality, impact, development and consistency. This will be recorded by Practice Observation Forms and feed into the Case Audit Management meeting