

What is an Initial Child Protection Conference?

The Initial Child Protection Conference brings together family members (including anyone they wish to bring to support them) or advocates, the child (where appropriate), and those professionals most involved with the child and family. In brief its purpose is to:

- Discuss the information that has been obtained about the child's developmental needs, and the parents' or carers' capacity to respond to these needs;
- Ensure the child's safety and promote their health and development within their wider family and environment;
- Consider the evidence presented to the conference, and taking into account the child's present situation and information about his or her family history, present and past family functioning, make judgments about the likelihood of a child suffering significant harm in future;
- Decide what further action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. This may include the child becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan, what the planned developmental outcomes are for the child and how best to intervene to achieve these;
- Identify a multi-agency core group to develop and monitor implementation of the Child Protection Plan.

The Chair

The conference is facilitated by an independent person called the Chair. This person has no line management of the social worker for your child and has no prior knowledge of your family,

unless they have chaired a conference before. The Chair's role is to ensure the conference runs smoothly and everyone understands what is being discussed, that people treat one another respectfully, that everyone has an opportunity to express their views, that the focus remains on the child's safety and welfare, and most importantly, after hearing all the information, to decide whether your child needs a protection plan.

The Chair is available 30 minutes before the start of the conference to meet with the parents, carers and the child, where they can explain what will happen and talk about any worries you have.

Where the conference takes place

The conference will be held in a private room in the civic centre and every attempt is made to ensure that your family's privacy is protected, including making sure that there are no signs on the door to say what the meeting is about.

The conference process: what happens?

During the conference, information is shared and the Chair will write any relevant information onto the white board specifically set up for this purpose into the following five categories so everyone can see them:

1. Current risks/concerns

What the current risk factors and concerns are for the child.

2. Historic/complicating factors

What the previous concerns were for the child or issues that may complicate matters to be resolved.

3. Grey areas

Areas that remain unclear or require further assessment or information.

4. Safety/protective factors

What parents should do to help support the child's safety and welfare.

5. Strengths/positives

The parental attitudes which help to support the child's safety and welfare.

Everyone will be given the opportunity to speak at the conference and give the information they know about your family and their views on the risks that are present as they see them to your child. Once all the information giving is concluded you will have a chance to make any comments and ask any questions of the professionals. The Chair will then hand out a paper to all the professional participants for them to record their views about whether your child requires a Child Protection or Child in Need plan.

At an initial child protection conference professionals and parents will also be asked to rate the safety of the child in the current situation, on a scale of 0-10.

0 means everyone is really worried about the child's safety and immediate action may need to be taken by professionals and 10 is where the child is safe and well cared for by their family. This will then help to measure at each subsequent conference improvements in the 'scale' of the risks. The Chair will then open discussions about what the plan should be dependent on the risks that have been identified. It may be that no child protection plan is needed and a child in need plan is sufficient to provide support to your family.

If a child protection plan is required it will be devised against the following headings:

- **Desired outcome**
- **Actions**
- **By who**
- **When**

After the plan is formulated, the Chair will ask the other professionals to state whether your child requires a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan to adequately address any concerns and provide support. The Chair has the final say as to what type of plan is put in place. If a Child Protection Plan is decided upon the core group members will be selected.

The core group is responsible for making sure there is progress in the work with you and your child or children. As parents you will automatically be members of the core group. The core group will meet regularly (at least every six weeks) until the next review conference when the Chair will ask about the progress of the work of the core group in making sure your child is safe.

If the initial conference decides that your child is at risk of or has actually been harmed, their name will be shown against a Child Protection Plan and the type of abuse they have been subjected to or may be subjected to will be included in the plan. The categories of abuse are:

- **Sexual abuse** – can involve, forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, the activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

- **Emotional abuse** – can involve, conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- **Neglect** – can involve, persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- **Physical abuse** – can involve, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Bringing someone to accompany you

Families have the right to be accompanied by a friend, advocate or solicitor who will be able to observe the conference.

Ending the child protection plan

A child should no longer be the subject of a Child Protection Plan if the child is no longer continuing to, or be likely to, suffer significant harm and no longer requires a Child Protection Plan. In this case at the conference you will be told what other arrangements for support may be made for your family.

www.brent.gov.uk

Child In Need Plan or Common Assessment Framework

A child may not be the subject of a Child Protection Plan, but he or she may nonetheless require services to promote his or her health or development. In these circumstances, the conference members together with the family should consider the child's needs and what further help would assist the family in responding to them.

Location and directions

Brent Civic Centre
Engineers Way, Wembley HA9 0FJ

Public transport

Nearest station Wembley Park.

Bus routes: 83, 92 and 182.

Alternatively visit

www.journeyplanner.tfl.gov.uk or
www.transportdirect.info for advice on your transport route.

Parking

There is limited paid parking available and Blue Badge spaces.

By foot

Pedestrian approach via Engineers Way.



08.148DU7129 Photos posed by models. www.johnbirdsall.co.uk



Child protection conference in Brent

Information for parents and professionals

