

Conferences, Plans & Core Groups

Child Protection Conferences are multi-agency meetings convened & chaired by the Safeguarding Children Service, People Portfolio.

They use a Strength-Based Approach format based on the 'Signs of Safety' model of working with children and families.

An 'Initial' Conference should take place within 15 working days of the strategy discussion which decides to investigate whether or not a child or young person is at risk of significant harm.

The purpose is to determine whether a child or young person has experienced or is likely to experience significant harm.

This is determined through:

- Sharing & analysing information about the risks to the children/young people and what is working well
- Considering each child or young person's current situation, historical concerns, circumstances that may increase risk, & any areas of disagreement
- Deciding:
 - Future action to safeguard & promote the welfare of the children & young people
 - Whether the children & young people should be the subject of a 'Child in Need' or 'Child Protection' Plan

The Initial Conference should be attended by:

- Children's Social Care
- At least two other agencies directly involved with the child or young person
- Agencies who have information about the child, parents or other family members, or with expertise in a particular area
- The child or young person, if of a suitable age & understanding and wanting to attend, and/or their advocate
- Family members (including wider family)
- Foster carers (current or former)

The involvement of family members should be planned carefully. In some circumstances a parent or carer can be excluded from the conference.

Whenever necessary an interpreter should be involved & communication issues addressed.

Part 1 of the conference:

- The Chair will meet with the family to explain the purpose and process of the conference
- Professionals will meet to share reports and any confidential information; and to decide the date of first core group meeting in case it is needed

The main conference will explore:

- Concerns and impact on the child(ren)
- Existing strengths and safety factors
- Any complicating factors or grey areas
- How to reduce the risk
- How safe the children are (safety scale)
- Whether there should be a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan
- Identify the Core Group (if child protection)
- Develop the Outline Plan by identifying:
 - each area of risk
 - who will do what to reduce it & when
- Agree a review date
- If **no** plan is needed, what services are required to promote the child's health & development

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy (DSL/D) must provide a written report to all conferences which assesses the risk factors & impact on the child or young person.

The multi-agency report template is available on the Safeguarding Sheffield Children website in the Education section in the '[Toolkit](#)'.

The contents of the report should be discussed with the child and family prior to the conference wherever possible.

If the family disagrees with any of the content, the different views can be recorded in the report.

The completed, typed report **must** be sent at least 2 days before the conference to the conference Chair:

- via our secure file exchange (SFX), or
- by **secure** email to: child.protection@sheffield.gcsx.gov.uk

8 further copies should be brought to the conference by the attending professional.



The 'Core Group' is responsible for developing in detail and implementing the 'Child Protection Plan'.

Membership of the core group includes:

- The lead social worker (who usually chairs the group and ensures it is recorded)
- The child or young person and their family
- Professionals and foster carers where applicable in direct contact with the family

All members of the group are jointly responsible for actions, updates and monitoring in relation to the child's plan.

The first core group should take place within 10 working days of the initial conference and further meetings should be held monthly to monitor the progress of the plan.

In the absence of the Social Worker the core group should proceed and report back to the Social Worker or their Line Manager.

The child protection plan should:

- Ensure the child/young person is made safe from harm and their needs met
- Promote their health, development and welfare
- Support the family to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or young person
- Be based on the 'Sheffield Single Assessment' completed by Children's Social Care
- Set out what needs to change, by how much, by when and by whom
- Consider the child/young person's wishes and feelings, based on age & understanding
- Be agreed and written with the child/young person & family in their preferred language and copied to them; copies in English should be circulated to the other core group members
- Consider interventions that are most likely to achieve the required changes

Review conferences should:

- Be held within 3 months of the initial conference & then 6 monthly
- Review whether the child or young person is likely or continuing to suffer significant harm and assess their progress towards safety
- Ensure they continue to be safeguarded
- Consider if the plan should continue or change

The same attendance & report requirements apply as for the initial conference.

Child Protection Enquiry Team (CPET), People Portfolio Tel. 0114 2734925 (9am to 5pm)

All Local Authorities should record which children are subject to a child protection plan and for which category of abuse or neglect.

They should make this information available to any professional who rings them (from an office landline only) about a child or young person:

Please note: CPET do not take referrals

If a child protection concern enquiry is made about a child or young person and they have a social worker, the enquirer will be given details of the allocated or duty worker in order to contact them as a matter of urgency. Otherwise, the enquirer will be advised they must refer to children's social care via the **Sheffield Safeguarding Hub Tel. 0114 2734855**

If a general enquiry is made about a child/young person the enquirer will be given limited details of information held and who to contact for further details.

If a second enquiry is made within 2 years, details will be passed to Social Care.

Education settings are expected to document the number of children and young people attending their provision that have a current Child Protection Plan.

This information is reported to the Governing Body and the Local Authority via the Safeguarding Annual Report from Head Teachers.

To see if your setting has submitted this report and to see safeguarding training information for your setting's safeguarding team, Designated Safeguarding Leads & Deputies can use their individual log-in to access the school's Schoolpoint365 Safeguarding Team List

Useful web links/resources:

- [Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures](#)
- [Strength-Based Approach Child Protection Conferences](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE 2015](#)
- [Safeguarding Annual Report from Head Teachers](#)
- [Schoolpoint365 \(Sheffield Safeguarding Children Service area\)](#)