



One minute guide

Child Protection Conference Chair

No.38, February 2021

What are Child Protection Conference Chairs?

Child Protection Conference Chairs (CPC) lead **initial and review Child Protection Conferences** (ICPCs and RCPCs) (there is a One Minute Guide on these). 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 again, at least every six months thereafter.

In Leeds a CPC 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 and the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out this sensitive, demanding role.

The CPC is responsible for coordinating the review of child protection plans to a high standard, and ensuring that **children and young people's participation** (which 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) is promoted throughout the process.

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

The CPC 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 minutes. If it is agreed that someone is not to be invited to attend the conference the CPC records this and the reason in the minutes.

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

At the start of the conference the CPC 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 CPC is to enable all those present (including 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 they do during the conference?

The CPC is accountable to the Director of Children's Services for the conduct of the conference. The CPC ensures that the conference maintains a focus on the child (ren) as the primary client, whose interests must supersede those of the 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**. 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 CPC is responsible for this.

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 CPC to lead the conference process using a restorative, outcome focussed, family-facing approach.

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

At the end of the ICPC, they make sure a date is arranged for the first **Core Group meeting** which needs to take place within 10 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 RCPC, for the distribution of accurate minutes 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 CPCs 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 (often referred to as the ISU).

You can ring the teams on:

East North East tel: 0113 3782844

South tel: 0113 3782833

West North West tel: 0113 3784150

The team manager is: Johny Blanc johny.blanc@leeds.gov.uk