

Introduction

This report has been designed to help professionals provide relevant written information for child protection conferences. The information will contribute to comprehensive risk analysis, decision making and planning for the children being considered at the child protection conference.

When a decision is made to hold an initial child protection conference on a child or young person an **Initial Child Protection Conference Report** should be completed prior to the child protection conference. Professionals will be required to provide reports that should be consistent with the domains and dimensions of the Assessment Framework for Children in Need and their Families. Professionals must be prepared to interpret, analyse and explain their information for the benefit of other conference attendees.

A Child Protection Conference Report should include details of your involvement with the child and family and information concerning the professional's knowledge of the child's developmental needs and the capacity of the parents to meet the needs of their child within their family and environmental context. This information should be drawn from the practitioner's records. The practitioner should ensure that they are aware of all names used by the child or young person and their family, and that all members of the household are included.

The Principles of Writing a Child Protection Conference Report

- Child Protection Conference reports should be made available to the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) at least two working days prior to the Initial Child Protection Conference and at least 3 days prior to a Review Child Protection Conference. This is to allow the Conference Chair time to scrutinise all reports to enable him/her to have an overview of professional contact with the family and professional perspective of risk and protective factors.
- The Review Conference report should be made available to the IRO at least three working days prior to the Child Protection Conference.
- Where professionals are unable to attend the Conference, they must ensure that their written report is made available to the Conference through the Child Protection Conference Administrator, and that a colleague attends in their place.
- Professionals attending Conferences should confer with their colleagues before preparing their report to make sure it contains all relevant and available information. Inclusion of third party information, e.g. from GP records, must be agreed with the professional concerned.
- The reports must make it clear which children are the subject of the Conference, but address any known circumstances of all children in the household.

- The reports should be shared with the parents and the child (if old enough) before the Conference. Indicate on the report if this has not been possible, in order that the Conference Chair is aware.
- Use of interpreting services should be considered as appropriate.
- Your reports will be attached to, or summarised within the minutes, for circulation. Therefore if you have information which cannot be shared in a report, you should discuss this with your Child Protection lead and /or the Conference Chair.
- A dated and signed copy of your report should remain in the child's /children's record.

Writing a Child Protection Conference Report

- The Child Protection lead within your organisation may be available for support with writing reports.
- Plan sufficient diary time to write your report.

Key Features of a Child Protection Conference Report

The report should be:

Factual; statements in reports should cross reference with any professional record.

Objective; the report should give consideration to protective and resilience factors as well as professional concerns. No subjective comments or value judgments should be made.

Succinct; Comment on the child's developmental needs, the capacities of the parents or caregivers to respond to those needs, the impact of the wider family and environmental factors on parenting capacity and the child/ren and or the Child Protection plan. You do not need to comment for the sake of it.

Professional opinion is acceptable as long as this can be supported by evidence. For example - If a comment is made suggesting that a child appears to be isolating himself from his peers support this with evidence. For example the child does not play with his friends at playtime as he has done previously or the child does not want to engage with his peers in joint classroom activities.

Completing the Chronology

A chronology is a tool to help provide an overall picture of the events in a child's life. It is NOT a contemporaneous record but can help identify risk factors and recognise change. It is not expected all the information from a completed **Chronology** will be recorded, but that relevant information should be transferred to produce a succinct summary of key changes and events relevant to the Conference. In completing the chronology it is important to remember that it may commence before the birth of the child or young person who is the subject of the conference. For example, if an older sibling was subject to a Child Protection Plan before the child or young person's birth. In some cases, because of multiple events a child or young person has experienced it may be necessary to attach a longer chronology as an appendix to the report.

For it to be effective it needs to be:

- Comprehensive
- Succinct (of manageable size to absorb the information)
- Each entry should be no more than two lines
- Date of the Event
- Births and Deaths
- Diagnoses of disability/difficulties
- Referrals to and from other services.
- Attendances at appointments where referrals have been made and DNA's
- Attendances at A&E
- No Access visits (if significant)
- Assessment of Mental Health
- Hospital Admissions
- Divorce/Separation
- Discussions with other professionals, especially if raised concerns or other issues.
- Changes in observations of parenting or relationship. This implies the first observation must be recorded to give a baseline.
- Contain both risk and protective factors
- Changes of address or nursery, school etc

(the above are examples and not an exhaustive list)

The assessment framework

The subsequent sections of the report gather information on the child or young person's needs, parenting capacity and family and environmental factors.

These sections record the child or young person's views and separately, those of parents/main carers regarding the concerns that led to an initial child protection case conference being held. Need to add in professional observations, analysis etc. It should also identify the action(s) the child or young person and parents and you as a professional believe should be taken.

Child's Developmental needs: Provide information about each child including the child/ren's current and past developmental attainments, and observations of peer / familial interactions / relationships, in comparison with what would be expected of a child of a similar age.

Health professionals should include any health or developmental assessments. Record height/weight/head circumference percentiles and state whether this is within the normal or expected parameters for that child.

Education professionals should include a record of school attendance and educational attainment.

Parenting Capacity: Consider Basic Care, ensuring safety, emotional warmth, stimulation, guidance and boundaries and stability. Include your views on whether the family sought professional advice / support appropriately, whether they have worked in partnership with

you and / or shown a willingness to implement advice and whether they regularly keep appointments made

Wider Family and environmental factors: Consider family history and functioning, wider family, housing, employment, budgetary management, social integration and community resources.

Analysis/Assessment of Risk

Analyse the information gathered and identify the implications for the child or young person's future safety, health and development.

This should include consideration of;

- Comments of the child/young person
- Comments of parents/main carers.
- Those factors that increase the level of identified risk to the children and cause concerns should be recorded, alongside those factors which may help to minimise risk. Risk factors also to be considered are; the impact of a parent's mental ill health, learning disabilities, substance misuse or domestic abuse.
- All identified risk and protective factors must be evidence based, and the reason for professional opinion (e.g. about the quality of attachment) must be clearly documented within your report.
- Include your professional opinion about whether the child/children should be made the subject of a Child Protection Plan, based on the knowledge available to you at the time of writing the report. You can give an alternative view in the conference if your view changes based upon other information shared at the meeting.

When the practitioner has completed the **Initial/Review Child Protection Conference Report, the professional** should, in so far as is consistent with the safety of the child or young person, share the report with parents, and with the child / young person, if of sufficient age and understanding.

At the Child Protection Conference you will be asked to give a brief summary of your report, being open to question and challenge from other professionals, and you will also be expected to give an opinion as to the need for a Child Protection Plan.

The final report should be signed and dated by the practitioner and his or her manager.

Please note that the City of York Safeguarding Children Board run courses entitled 'Contributing Effectively in Child Protection Processes'. All staff whose role involves attending Child Protection Conferences are advised to attend this course to enable effective multi-agency working

For further information, please visit www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk