Child Protection Conferences and Advocacy

A guide for children and young people



This leaflet explains what happens at a Child Protection Conference and how an advocate can help

coram Voice
getting young voices heard

What happens at a Child Protection Conference?

This leaflet is to help answer your questions about what happens at these meetings and how an advocate can help you take part and get your voice heard.

Also take a look at our video 'My Meeting, My Voice: A film about Child Protection Conferences' on the Coram Voice You Tube channel where some Norfolk young people talk about what taking part in their meetings was like.

The link to our film is https://youtu.be/4_z-pIP-DrU

What is a Child Protection Conference?

This is a meeting arranged by your social worker when there are worries that something has happened that has caused you harm or might happen to you in the future.

What is the conference for?

The meeting brings together people who are worried about you (and maybe other children in your family too).

The meeting looks at what is going well for you and your family, what there are worries about and then works out with you and your family how best to help.

The person in charge of the meeting is called an Independent Chair – their job is to make sure that everyone at the meeting gets their say and the right support is put in place to keep you safe and happy.



Who will be at the conference?

Your social worker and the Independent Chair can tell you about who will be at the meeting. Usually there will be:

- You
- Your parents/carers
- Your social worker
- The independent Chair
- People who know you or your family well like a teacher from school
- Other people who work with children and their families
- An advocate if you want one - their job is to help you get your voice heard

Can I bring someone to the meeting?

You might want someone independent to help you put across your views and be your advocate. Being independent means they only work for you not, for example, your social worker or your family. Your social worker or your Independent Chair can help you get an advocate if you would like them to.



Can I come to the conference?

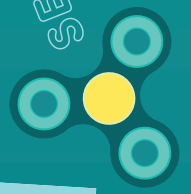
Usually.

Sometimes the adults might decide you shouldn't go to the meeting. If this happens you, or your advocate if you have one, can ask them to think again.

If you are invited then you decide about going or not.

An advocate can meet with you on a day before the meeting and help you plan what you want to do about the meeting.

You can also talk to your social worker and the Independent Chair about the meeting - including how you will get there and if you will need any extra support to be able to join in.





CONFUZZLED

How can I tell everyone what I think ?

Your views are very important - whether you go to the meeting or not it's really important that the meeting knows what you think.

Your advocate will sit down with you and ask you what you think, and how you'd like to say this to the people at the meeting.

Your advocate can help you put your views in writing if you want them to.



Who will know about what is said in the meeting?

The things that are said in the meeting are private and will only be shared with people who need to know to help keep you safe.

KEEPING ME SAFE

How can I make sure my views are heard?

In London there is an organization called Coram Voice that helps children and young people in your situation get their voice heard. Your social worker or Independent Chair will ask you if you want a Coram Voice advocate. You can also contact us yourself or ask someone you trust to help you do this - please see our contact details below.



What can I do if I am not happy with the conference?

You have the right to tell people what you think and also to complain. People will listen.

It's good to talk to someone you trust who can help you to decide what to do. This could be your social worker, the Independent Chair, a teacher or your advocate. You have the right to ask for an advocate to support you in making a complaint.



Contact Details

If you want an advocate for your child protection conference or to talk about advocacy, please contact us by ringing our free phone helpline on **0808 800 5792** or by email to **help@ coramvoice.org.uk**.

Our helpline is open Monday to Friday from 9.30am-6.00pm & Saturday 10am-4pm.

www.coramvoice.org