



THE VOICE OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AT INITIAL AND REVIEW CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES IN WAKEFIELD - GUIDANCE



INTRODUCTION:

This document describes the process which will strengthen the participation and attendance for children and young people at their Initial and Review Child Protection Conference.

The CP Service is committed to ensuring the voice of all children and young people is presented at all conferences (Initial and Review) as children and young people can feel that child protection processes are being 'done' to them and not done with them.

Professionals speak about child participation and how important it is, yet we keep falling into the same trap of not always inviting them to their conferences and on occasions their views and the impact of their lived experiences are not fully represented to conference.

It is important that practice is strengthened to really hear children and young people's voices in their conferences.

The CP Service would like children and young people to say their experience of conference (direct or indirect attendance) was a positive one as they were listened to and their worries were acted on by their caregivers and professionals involved with them.

WHY IS THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S VOICE IMPORTANT?

- ✓ Not a tick box exercise. We really want to hear our children/young people's voices.
- ✓ Conference will hear their lived experiences from their point of view
- ✓ Feel listened to about the impact of their lived experiences
- ✓ Feel valued and empowered
- ✓ Influence decisions that affect them to improve their outcomes
- ✓ Develop their own safety plans.

PROCESS:

To strengthen the attendance (directly or indirectly) of children and young people at their conferences (Initial and Review) the CP Chairs are to continue to liaise with their Social Worker to determine attendance:

Directly:

- ✓ The child/young person attends their conference face to face supported by their caregivers, Social Worker and an advocate.



Indirectly:

If the child/young person decides they do not want to attend their conference face to face this is okay. They can present their wishes and feeling's via:

- ✓ Mind of My Own App
- ✓ Barnardo's Advocacy
- ✓ Social Worker
- ✓ Core group member(s)
- ✓ Write a letter
- ✓ Record a message
- ✓ Join indirectly by dialling in to conference (education to support and facilitate)
- ✓ The child/young person requests a meeting with the CP Chair before the Conference to share their views. This can be achieved by the CP Chair visiting the child/young person if this is what they want with the agreement of their caregiver. Or the child/young person may request a phone call from the CP Chair which again needs to be agreed by their caregiver. The CP Chair will then present the child/young person's views to conference
- ✓ The options of participation are endless and an open mind approach is to be applied

CP SERVICE:

- ✓ All CP Chairs will continue to have a positive and enthusiastic approach to participation
- ✓ Encourage children/young people's attendance at their conference directly/indirectly
- ✓ Encourage children/young people to chair with the support of the CP Chair part of their conference
- ✓ Write to all age appropriate and understanding children/young people who have contributed directly or indirectly following their conferences. Also write to children/young people to encourage participation and attendance
- ✓ There should always be evidence that the child and young person's voice has influenced the decisions that CYPS and partner agencies have made
- ✓ It may not be appropriate for some children/young people to attend their conference due to the nature of the worries of significant harm. The child/young person's resilience and capacity to engage and be present in their conference must be sensitively considered with their Social Worker.



CYPS:

- ✓ Will continue to ensure children/young people are aware of why they have a Social Worker and why they are subject to a CP Plan
- ✓ Continue to encourage children/young people's attendance directly/indirectly at their conferences. This can be confirmed within the booking form for ICPC's
- ✓ Promote the use of Barnardo's Advocacy to support attendance and support in participation including speaking at their conference
- ✓ Following conference hand deliver the letter from the CP Chairs and provide feedback in how they received the letter
- ✓ Children/young people are to be continually involved in their conferences and core group meetings (directly/indirectly) and have information fed back to them in a way that they can understand
- ✓ Encourage children/young people to contribute to achieving their CP Plans

PARTNER AGENCIES:

- ✓ Continue to encourage children/young people's attendance directly/indirectly at their conferences
- ✓ Encourage children/young people to contribute to achieving their CP Plans

CHILD PROTECTION ADMIN

All children/young people will be welcomed to their conference by the minute taker. They will be shown to the conference room to meet the CP Chair and offered refreshments and snacks (confirm any allergies / dietary requirements)