

## **What is a Child Protection Conference?**

A Child Protection conference is called when concerns exist that children are suffering or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm.

At the conference information will be shared about the family history, the child's health, development and functioning and the children and their parent/carer's capacity to ensure the child's safety and promote their well-being.

Those present will consider the evidence and form a view if the child has or is likely to suffer significant harm, then an inter-agency Child Protection Plan or Safety Plan will be written together about what everyone is going to do and when and how they are going to do it so that the children can be kept safe.

### **Confidentiality:**

What is said in this conference and the record of the meeting and any reports presented and taken away are confidential and must not be shared with anyone outside of this meeting who do not have a right to access them without the express permission of the chair.

### **Behaviour:**

In the conference it is expected that everyone will be respectful of each other and everyone will be given the opportunity to speak and share their information and point of view.

It is expected that no one will display any abusive behaviour such as shouting, swearing, making rude, racist, sexist or homophobic remarks. If anyone does they will be asked by the chair to leave.

### **Complaints:**

If the family is not happy about something that happened in conference or that the decision was not reached properly then you can make a complaint. Your social worker will give you the details of the complaints process.

If a professional is not happy about the conference process they should raise the issue with the chair or with their line manager to seek to resolve it with the Team Manager of the Safeguarding and Review Unit.

If family or professional are unable to resolve their complaint then the Safeguarding and Review Unit will assist them in how to escalate their concerns.

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## **Definitions of categories of Abuse**

**Definitions from HM Government *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*.**

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### **NEGLECT**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.