

ADVOCACY AND THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCESS

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AGED UNDER 18

What is a Child Protection Conference?

A Child Protection Conference happens when there are concerns that a child isn't safe, and they may be being harmed or neglected. The purpose of the meeting is for family and workers to come together to talk about the concerns.

Who is invited to the Child Protection Conference?

- Your child's family (both parents and possibly wider family);
- Your child's social worker;
- An Independent Reviewing Officer (this is the person who runs the meeting);
- Your advocate, if you would like the support of an advocate;
- A health visitor;
- Police who specialise in child protection and GPs may be invited;
- Any other workers who are supporting you and your child.

Before the meeting

Your child's social worker should give you a copy of their report about your child a few days before the meeting so you have chance to read it. They should also discuss what is in the report with you. Your child's Independent Reviewing Officer should call you before the meeting to check you've received a copy of the report and to answer any questions you have to help you prepare for the meeting.

During the meeting

- The Independent Reviewing Officer will explain the reasons for holding the conference and everyone (family and workers) will be asked if they have anything to say about your child, which should include concerns but also things that are going well. You or your advocate will be given chance to share your views.
- After everyone's turn, there will be a discussion about your child and what support would be best for them. A decision will be made about whether your child should have a Child Protection Plan. This plan will say what help and support needs to be in place to keep your child safe.
- If you don't agree with the decisions made at the conference, you have a right to complain and this is something an advocate can support you with.

After the meeting

You should receive a letter telling you about the decisions that were made and you should also receive a written record of what was said at the conference.



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All parents aged under 18 are entitled to support from an advocate if their child has a Child Protection Plan.

Your views are really important and should be listened to so you are involved in the plan to support your child. You can talk to workers to make sure they know how you feel and what you want to happen. If you would like support to express your views and contribute to the child protection process, you can ask for an advocate.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is someone who can help you have your views heard and be more involved when decisions are being made. Advocates are separate from the social work teams and are there just to support you.

How can an advocate help you?

An advocate can:

- Help you plan and prepare for meetings.
- Help you work out what you want to say and how to say it.
- Support you during meetings.
- Help you be more involved when decisions are being made.
- Help you understand information, reports and decisions.
- Make sure you have information about your rights and entitlements.
- Help you make a complaint if you're unhappy with any decisions made at child protection conferences.

Confidentiality

Your advocate will not tell other people what you have said without your permission, unless they are worried about your safety or the safety of another person.

How do I ask for an advocate?

You can speak to your social worker, or contact Speak Up using the details below. Speak Up is the name of the advocacy service.

 Call us: 07769 725174  Text us: 07769 725174

 Email us: speakup@york.gov.uk

 Speak Up



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