



CHILD PROTECTION

CONFERENCE

ADVOCACY



NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

WHAT IS

**A CHILD PROTECTION
CONFERENCE**



You have been given this leaflet because a meeting (called a Child Protection Conference) is taking place as a result of concerns about your safety or the safety of a member of your family.

The reason for the meeting is to decide whether or not there is a risk of significant harm. If the meeting decides that there is a serious risk to your safety, a child protection plan will be put in place to ensure you are properly cared for.

If the meeting decides you are not at risk of significant harm, they might decide that your family needs some help and support and could make a Child in Need Plan. The plan will be agreed by your parent/carers and all the professionals involved. This will ensure that everyone knows what they have to do to keep you safe.

You will be given a copy of the plan by your Social Worker shortly after the conference.

HOW DO I GIVE MY VIEWS

TO THE CONFERENCE



**YOU'RE
NOT
ALONE**

It is important for you to give your views to the conference. The person who runs the meeting is called a Chairperson. You can talk to the Chairperson before the meeting starts about coming to the meeting, and whether you want to stay for all of the meeting.

If you would like the support of an Independent Advocate, this can be provided by the Participation & Advocacy Team.



WHO ARE

THE PARTICIPATION & ADVOCACY TEAM



The Young People's Participation & Advocacy Team promotes the rights of children and young people living in the Northumberland area, or who are the responsibility of the Northumberland County Council, and who are considered in need.

We encourage children and young people to influence services and decisions that affect their lives.

**WHAT
CAN WE
DO FOR
YOU?**

How can the Participation & Advocacy Team help you have your say?

Someone from the team could:

- Go to the meeting with you and support you.
- Go to the meeting in your place if you didn't want to attend and give your views for you, which you can prepare together before the conference.
- Go to the meeting in your place and feedback to you what happens if you don't have anything you want to say and didn't want to attend the meeting.
- Act as an advocate for you and help you gain answers or get your views across before, during or after the meeting.



WHAT IS

AN ADVOCATE



An advocate is someone who will help you to get your voice heard.

They will help you to make an impact and be listened to when you feel people haven't been paying attention to you or the problem you are having.

They will help you have your say in tackling difficulties you are having, or on decisions being made that affect you.

An advocate can help you with things like bullying, problems in your foster placement or children's home, difficulties with your Social Worker or other professionals, worries about contact with your family and a whole range of other things.

When you contact our service you stay in control of what happens next – we can give you the information and advice but what happens is up to you – we take our instructions from you!


We also keep what you say confidential and don't talk to anyone unless you ask us to.



The only time we would break this promise is if what you told us made us think that you or somebody else may be at risk of harm – then we would have to tell someone but even then we would always try to talk to you about it first.



WHO WILL BE AT THE MEETING?

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- **CHAIR-PERSON** – The person who chairs the meeting.
 - **MINUTE-TAKER** – Someone to take notes of what is said.
 - **YOU!** – If you are considered old enough (over 10 years) and you want to be, you will be invited (you may not be able to be present for the whole meeting, but the Social Worker and/or the Chairperson of the meeting will explain the reasons for this).
 - **ADVOCATE** – You can have an advocate with you if you wish. The Social Worker will talk to you about this and we will help you to understand our role and how we can help you.
 - **PARENTS/CARERS** – Your parents/carers will be invited and they can bring a friend of legal representative with them if they wish.
 - **SOCIAL WORKER** – The Social Worker who has met with you and your family.
 - **EDUCATION** – Your teacher or someone else who knows you from school.
 - **HEALTH** – Health Workers who know you such as a Health Visitor, Doctor or School Nurse.
 - **POLICE** – A Police Officer who works with young people and their families.
 - **OTHERS** – Other important people in your life may be there, like a Youth Worker or Connexions Advisor.



WHAT WILL

HAPPEN AT THE MEETING



The point of the meeting is to make sure that all important matters about your safety are discussed, that everyone present has an opportunity to give their views and that careful decisions are made about how you and your family can be supported.

To ensure that everyone is treated with respect and everyone has a chance to give opinions without interruptions, a Chairperson will lead the meeting.

If you attend the meeting, he/she will talk to you in private before the meeting and will explain what will happen, how you will be involved and discuss any worries you may have. They will do the same with your parents/ carers.

People at the meeting will have reports they have written about you and your family. You will be given parts of these reports which relate to you. This should be in plenty of time for you to think about anything you may want to say or ask about them.

Your
Social Worker will
also visit you after the
conference to give
you some feedback
and explain what will
happen next.

If you do not wish to attend, your Advocate will let you know who attended the meeting, the outcome of the meeting and what decisions have been made.



WHAT DECISIONS WILL BE MADE



- The conference will decide if they feel a Child Protection Plan is necessary.
- This decision will be made by the professionals at the meeting. The chairperson does not make the decision but he/she will make sure everyone's views are listened to and taken into account. If a Child Protection Plan is necessary, it will be made by a smaller group of people who will meet regularly to make sure everyone does what they should to keep you safe. This is called a Core Group. The first Core Group will be within 10 working days, when the plan will be made.
- The plan will set out what is needed to ensure you are safe and properly cared for.
- It says what Social Care and other people will do to help you and your family.
- It says what you and your family can do to improve the situation.
- You will have a review Child Protection Conference after three months and every six months thereafter.
- The review Child Protection Conference will review the plan, check it is working and decide if and when a plan ends.
- If a Child Protection Plan is not necessary it is likely that a Children in Need Plan will be made.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT ?

If the conference decides that a child protection plan is needed to ensure that you are safe and properly cared for then there will be smaller meetings that take place every month. These are called Core Group Meetings. At Core Group meetings all the different professionals get together and make sure that you are safe and supported. This could include school, your doctor, your social worker, and any other people who work with you.

If people feel you can be involved in this, they will talk to you and agree how you can contribute.

WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE DECISIONS ?

If you feel that you haven't been listened to, or you don't agree with what has been said about you, or you are unhappy with the way a decision has been made then you can complain. A member of the Participation & Advocacy Team can help you and support you with this.

GET IN TOUCH

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