

Why is my child/children being involved in a Case Conference?

The Child Protection Case Conference is usually arranged as a result of the Child Protection Inquiry that has just taken place or where staff have become increasingly concerned for a child's safety.

The Conference has been arranged because it is felt that there are enough reasons to be concerned that your child could be at risk of 'significant harm' because of abuse or neglect.

What is significant harm?

Significant harm is serious and may be continuing or is likely to happen again.

What is the purpose of a Case Conference?

A Case Conference is arranged to get people together to share information about your child and your family and to consider whether your child is at risk of being abused or neglected.

The Case Conference has two main tasks:

- *to decide if a child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register*
- *to consider if a referral should be made to the Children's Reporter.*

However, any decisions made will include a plan to work out how best to support your family to reduce any risks to your child.

Who will be at the Case Conference?

The Case Conference is arranged by Social Work staff. It includes professionals who know your family or who have been involved in the Child Protection Inquiry. People who may attend include:

- *your Health Visitor if your child is under five*
- *someone from your child's school*
- *your family Doctor (GP)*
- *a Social Worker*
- *other Social Work staff*
- *a Police Officer from the Public Protection Unit.*

Who is the Children's Reporter?

The Children's Reporter is the independent person locally who has to consider if a child is in need of compulsory measures of supervision. If your child/children are referred to the Reporter, you will be given more information about this process by your Social Worker. Compulsory measures may be necessary if plans for your child/children cannot be made voluntarily.

Can Parents/Carers attend?

Parents and carers should attend the Case Conference. It is your child that is being discussed and you have the right to know what is being said. You will also be asked to contribute to the discussion about your child.

At times, however, the Chairperson may need to hear some information without you being there. This could, for example, be

where the Police have information they do not wish to share with you at this stage.

People will understand that you are upset and angry that your family has become involved in a Child Protection Inquiry. However you will be expected to contribute positively to the discussion about your family.

If you feel that you want to bring a friend or relative to support you at the conference, you can discuss this with your Social Worker. There is usually no problem with this but this is the decision of the Chairperson and they will need to be asked in advance of the Case Conference.

Should my child attend the Case Conference?

This depends on whether the Chairperson and your Social Worker think that:

- *your child is old enough to understand what is happening.*
- *your child will not be too distressed by the process.*

If your child is not able to attend, your Social Worker will speak to them and represent their views at the Case Conference. Sometimes children like to write things down if they are not able to attend and the Chairperson will read this before the Case Conference.

What does it mean if my child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register?

If your child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register, it will be under one or more of the following categories:

- *physical abuse*
- *neglect*
- *sexual abuse*
- *failure to thrive*
- *emotional abuse.*

The purpose of the register is to record that there are serious professional concerns about your child's safety.

Only professionals closely involved with your family will have access to this information.

What happens next?

A core group meeting will be arranged. You will be invited to attend this meeting along with the professionals closely involved with your family.

A Child Protection Plan will be agreed and various tasks identified. The Child Protection Plan is a voluntary agreement worked out with you and the professionals.

How long will my child's name remain on the Register?

Initially for three months after which there will be a Review. The Review meeting will decide to either:

- *remove your child's name from the register or*
- *keep your child's name on the register under the same or additional categories.*

If your child's name remains on the register, a further Review will be arranged in six months time.

What do I do if I do not agree with the decision of the Case Conference?

If a parent/carer or child does not believe that the decision made has been based on relevant or accurate information, a Review can be requested.

This can be done by writing to the Head of Service, Children & Families Services, at the address given below within 14 days of the Case Conference.

The Social Worker allocated to your family can explain this process to you in more detail.

Social Worker Name _____

Tel _____

The address to write to is:

Head of Service
Children & Families Services
Education & Children's Services
Perth & Kinross Council
Pullar House
35 Kinnoull Street
PERTH
PH1 5GD

For further information contact:

Senior Social Worker Child Protection
Tel 01738 476768

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Senior Social Worker Child Protection on 01738 476768.



Council Text Phone Number
01738 442573

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TAYSIDE POLICE

Case Conferences
Information for
Parents/Carers