A Guide to Child Protection Conferences in Merton –

for children & young people over age of 12

**What is a Child Protection Conference?**

A Child Protection Conference is a meeting which happens when people are worried about how things are for you and your family. It brings together people who know you and your family.

**Who will be there?**

The only people at your conference will be those who know your family or who may be able to help you in the future. These may include:

\* The Chair of the meeting, known as an IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)

\* Your parents/carers

\* A social worker

\* Someone from your school

\* A doctor or nurse

\* A health visitor

\* A police officer

\* Other people who have worked with you or your parents

**What will happen in the meeting?**

In the meeting we:

\* Look at what people are worried about

\* Look at how you are doing/keeping safe

\* Look at what people are doing to keep you safe.

\* Look at what we think needs to change

**Can I have my say?**

Yes you can. This can be done in three ways...

\* Come to the meeting yourself

- You may get an invitation to go to the meeting, although this might sound a bit frightening; remember everyone will be there to help you.

\* Write something down

- If you find it hard to talk, try writing down or even recording how you feel and giving it to your social worker to read out at the meeting.

\* Tell someone who is going to the meeting

- Talk to your social worker or an advocate/family member who is going to the meeting so that he or she can report your views at the meeting.

**Will I have to go?**

You may well be invited to attend. You do not have to go if you do not want to, but this would give you that chance to state your views.

**Can I bring someone with me?**

You can bring someone with you. This will often be your parent(s), or you can choose another safe adult. For example this could be another relative, friend of the family, or an advocate.

**What is an advocate?**

An advocate is someone who you can talk to and someone who will speak on your behalf, who knows about these meetings. If you would like an advocate, speak to your Social Worker and they can speak to Jigsaw4U advocacy service.

**What happens after the meeting?**

If it is decided that a child protection plan is needed to keep you safe, the plan will set out what needs to be done to protect you and who could help and support you. It will also suggest ways your family can be helped.

The people involved in the plan will meet regularly to talk about how the plan is working and to check that you are happy, safe and well. This is called a Core Group.

**Complaints**

If you are unhappy or think that Merton Children’s Services could be doing better, please tell us. If you can, start with someone who works closely with you. This might be your social worker, professional assistant, personal advisor (or their team manager), teacher (or someone in school) or Catch 22 worker or your advocate from Jigsaw4U.

