

**Child Protection Conference Agenda**

The conference is held under Merton Safeguarding Partnership procedures. Any information we talk about is confidential to those who are at the meeting or the agencies they work for and will only be shared as necessary in the interest of the child/ren. The record of the conference is provided on the strict understanding it will be stored confidentially in a safe place. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to share the record of this meeting available to Solicitors, Children’s Guardians, the Civil and Criminal Courts, Child Psychiatrists, other Local Authority Social Workers or other professionals involved in the welfare of the child or children.

The London Borough of Merton has an Equal Opportunities policy. Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership recognises that certain people are disadvantaged and experience discrimination. Comments that contribute to this discrimination are not acceptable and will be challenged by the Chair and other conference members.

**We must all make sure the child is at the centre of our discussion and decision making.**

1. **Attendance –** attendance, apologies, reason for any exclusion, quoracy - representatives for decision making for each child
2. **Confirmation of family details:** spelling of family names, parent/s read report,
3. **Reports received –** confirmation of all reports received.
4. **Why are we here today –** danger statement from the social worker, parents understanding of reasons for conference
5. **Discussion - any significant information not in the professional report must be identified by the professional or the Chair for the conference record.**
6. **What are we worried about?** Includes past harm, current and future danger and worries and the impact these have on the child/young person
7. **Complicating Factors –** Things that happen in the family or around the children that mean it is harder to make sure the child is always safe and looked after like they need to be. Sometimes these things cannot be changed. What things might have an impact on the child/young person’s safety.
8. **What is working well?** Strengths and positives in meeting the child/young person’s needs, including existing safety and previous steps taken by mum /dad / others in the family network to keep the child/young person safe.
9. **Child’s Voice –** What is the child telling us about their lived experiences at home; what would they say is working best / worst and what would they want to change if they could?
10. **Danger Statement –** including **past harm, future danger and what will happen to the child / young person if nothing changes** this may be a revised danger statement following the conference discussion.
11. **Safety Goals –** what needs to happen next for people to be less worried about the child / children’s safety particularly when things get difficult or hard at home
12. **Safety Scaling –** all responses recorded. The scaling question is, “If 0 is that there is no safety in the child’s life and they are at significant risk if they stay within the family and 10 is there is enough safety in the child’s life that they no longer need a child protection plan, where do you scale the child’s safety?”
13. **The Plan/Next Steps –** to include What we want to see be better and / or safer for the child / young person? What needs to happen to help make things better and safer for the child / young person? Who will be responsible and When they will do this?

**The Back Up Plan** (contingency) - if the plan is not working what needs to happen, what will the family do in an emergency or crisis? Signs of things that are not going well: What needs to happen to help make things better and safer for the child / young person? Who will be responsible? When they will do this?

1. **Chair’s summary**: analysis of the information provided to help family and professionals to give a view about whether a child or young person is at risk of significant harm and why

**The test for likelihood of significant harm is that:**

* **The child can be shown to have suffered harm to their health or development because of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse and the professional opinion is that further harm is likely; or**
* **Professional opinion, which is supported by assessment and enquiries in this case or by research, predicts that the child is likely to suffer harm to their health and development as a result of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse.**

**(Reference: London Child Protection Procedures Part A 4.9)**

1. **Decision**: is the child at risk of or has suffered significant harm and need will to have a multi-agency Child Protection Plan to help reduce the risk or the impact of harm in the future? Which category of harm?

If the child **IS** at continuing risk of significant harm conference members must make a child protection plan which will be reviewed regularly with the family by the core group. The review child protection conference will consider whether the plan is working and if the child protection plan is still needed.

If the child **IS NOT** at risk of continuing significant harm conference members must make a child in need plan and agree who will be part of the child’s network. The child in need plan will be reviewed regularly, within 10 working days of the conference, with the family by the professional network.

**Future Meetings:**

1. The frequency of visits to the child to be confirmed and any dissenting views from professionals about the decision recorded. The child/young person’s involvement in future conferences should be agreed.
2. **Core Group –** membership of the core group and the date, time and venue of the first Core Group meeting within 10 working days of the conference for Initial Child Protection conferences and within 6 weeks for Review Child Protection conferences.
3. **Next Child Protection Conference –** date, time and venue of the next Conference to be set. Review Child Protection conference – within 5 months or Child in Need Review within 3 months

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| **CATEGORIES OF ABUSEPhysical Abuse**Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. “Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy” may also constitute physical abuse, whereby a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes ill health in a child. | **Emotional Abuse**Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. |
| **Sexual Abuse**Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. | **Neglect**Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs. |

**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:** If any parent is dissatisfied with a professional’s conduct at the Child Protection Conference, and this cannot be dealt with informally through the social worker and their manager, please email: **childrensservicescomplaints@merton.gov.uk**. Or **telephone: 020 8545 3086**