

ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S CASE CONFERENCE

This leaflet tells you about how case conferences work. It should help you to understand why we hold Case Conferences, who attends them, and how you might be involved. The Bradford Safeguarding Children Board recognises your rights and responsibilities to care for your child and wants to support you in this. However, we have a legal duty to investigate concerns about the well-being of children. Remember that above everything else, people at the Case Conference are there to help you.

What is a Case Conference and why are they held?

A Case Conference is a meeting arranged by the Social Services Department on behalf of the Bradford and Airedale Child Protection Committee. They are held to talk about concerns about injury or harm to a child. The Case Conference is to:

- Share information
- Identify any family problems
- Agree plans to deal with concerns about injury or harm to the child.

Who attends the Case Conference?

The people invited to attend a Case Conference may include:

- An independent chairperson. This person is a senior officer from Bradford's Social Services Department but must act independently.
- You, as the parent(s) or carer(s) of the child; and a friend or supporter if you wish.
- A social worker
- A police officer who specialises in child care.
- A senior nurse
- A member of Social Services staff who takes the notes of the meeting.
- A paediatrician
- The child involved (depending on their age and understanding).
- Your Health Visitor
- Your Doctor
- A representative from the school your child attends.
- A representative of the Probation Service.
- The Council's Solicitor.

Ask the person who has invited you to attend or your Social Worker, who will be at your child's Case Conference. All the professional people taking part in a Case Conference are bound by strict rules of confidentiality. This means that they are not allowed to discuss details of the Conference with anyone except the people they work with who need to know.



How do I take part in a Case Conference about my child?

As this will probably be a new experience for you, it may help if you bring a friend or supporter. Please remember that personal information about your family will be discussed, which your friend may hear.

A Social Worker will tell you in more detail about what usually happens at a Case Conference. Before the Conference you will be able to meet and talk with the Chairperson, who will consider any worries you have about it. If you have any difficulty travelling to the Conference or problems about childminding or anything else, a Social Worker will help you to sort them out.

It is very important for you to come to the Case Conference, but it will not go against you if you don't attend. If you prefer, you can put your views in writing, which will be read out at the Conference – a Social Worker can help you with this. There may be reasons why you might not be allowed to attend the Conference. You might not be allowed to come if your being there would cause serious trouble, or if it is not in the best interests of your child for you to be there.

Perhaps you don't know whether to come or not, or you want to know more about what to expect. If so, you can talk it over with a Social Worker, Doctor, Health Visitor or anyone else who will be attending the Conference.

What is decided at the Case Conference?

1. The Conference will decide whether your child's name will be put on the Bradford and Airedale Child Protection Register. This is a list of children considered to be in need of protection. If your child is, this will be explained to you either by the Chairperson at the meeting or by the Social Worker afterwards.

2. If your child's name is put on the Register, the Conference will decide who will be your child's Key Worker. The person, who will be a Social Worker, has to make sure that the decisions and recommendations of the Case Conference are carried out.

If your child's name is put on the Child Protection Register, a 'multi-agency protection plan' will be agreed to help your child and your family. Your involvement and co-operation with this plan are extremely important. You'll have the opportunity to meet all the professional workers who will be seeing that the plan is carried out. The safety and well-being of your child will have been carefully considered at the Conference, as well as the help and support that can be given to you. The multi-agency protection plan will list what work needs to be done by you and by the professional workers together, to make sure your child is protected and is safe, happy, well and developing satisfactorily.



3. You and the professionals involved may agree to meet regularly to review the plan. This is called a Core Group.

4. A specialist assessment may also be recommended. It may be decided that your child is not considered to be at risk of continuing harm, that his or her name will not be placed on the register. In this situation consideration will be given to your child's needs and what future help would assist you in responding to them.

5. On the other hand, if your child's name is already on the Child Protection Register, the Conference may decide to remove their name from the Register. This will happen if your child is no longer believed to need the same protection. It is known as 'de-registration'.

What happens to my child?

Usually the plan is to work with the family while the child stays at home with them. The professional involved will want to work in partnership with parents so that everyone is clear what the concerns and issues are and what it is that needs to change. Sometimes the Conference may feel that your child is at serious risk at home. It cannot take children away, but it may recommend to the Social Services Department that they seek legal advice. This may result in them asking for a legal order to remove the child.

If there is a court case, the Social Worker will explain to you how you can get legal advice to help you.

Social Workers and the Social Services Department don't have the power to remove your child against your wishes. A magistrate or court must make this decision.

What happens after the Case Conference?

After the Case Conference, you will receive a copy of the notes taken at the meeting, and the reports which were presented.

Can I appeal against a Case Conference decision?

Yes. If you disagree with the decisions made by the Case Conference, you can appeal in writing to the Secretary of the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB).

If you want to appeal, please write to:

The Secretary
Bradford Safeguarding Children Board
c/o Olicana House
Chapel Street
Bradford BD1 5RE



The BSCB represents many authorities, such as the local authority, health authority, police, general practitioners and education. It is responsible for ensuring that child protection matters are dealt with according to agreed procedures.

How can my child's name come off the Register?

A review meeting is held within six months for each child. This will consider whether your child's name should stay on the Register or not. The decision will depend on what changes have taken place since the Case Conference.

It's vital that you take part in this meeting, to make sure the best decision is made to keep your child safe.

How can I find out more about the Case Conference?

If you have any questions about the Case Conference, please feel free to ask your Social Worker or the person who will chair the Conference.

Please remember that local authorities have a legal duty to investigate and decide what should be done when Social Services are told that a child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed. The interests of your child must come first, although your rights and wishes as parents will be recognised at the Conference.

