

Understanding What's Going On

Child Protection Core Groups, Review Child Protection Conferences and the Child's Plan



Being Involved in the Child Protection System

We know being involved in the child protection system can be a stressful time for families. It's important you have an understanding of what is going on and what is happening at every stage and why, and also know where you can get independent help and support.

If your child's name has been placed on the Child Protection Register, you along with a small number of key workers will be expected to work together to deal with the issues that raised concerns about your child's safety, as well as dealing with any other identified needs. This small group is known as the **Core Group**. It is important that you and your child are fully involved in decisions that affect you both. Depending on your child's age and understanding they may also be a member of the core group.

The core group will meet shortly after registration has been decided and work together to prepare a plan that will help to reduce the risk and also deal with any other identified needs. This is known as the **Child Protection Plan**. It will detail the risks and areas of concern that are affecting your child's safety and action to be taken to address these. It is often referred to as a **SHANARRI** plan. This means we want to work with you as a family to ensure your child is:

- **S**afe
- **H**ealthy,
- **A**ctive,
- **N**urtured,
- **A**chieving,
- **R**espected,
- **R**esponsible,
- **I**ncluded.

Our aim is to get it right for every child. The Lead Professional supporting you can explain the plan to you in more detail.

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The plan will say what is being done, who by, timescales for this and the expected outcome. These things will be discussed and agreed during meetings of the core group. It is likely that there will be things that you are expected to do and workers will help to make sure that you understand what is being asked and provide any other help as is needed.

While your child is on the register the core group will meet on a regular basis (approximately every 4- 6 weeks). The group will be led by a social worker and involve other key workers who work with you and your child. This might include health visitors, school nurses, teachers or any others who can help to provide support to ensure your child is kept safe and their needs are met. When the group meets they will look at how things are getting on to make sure that the level of risk and areas of concern are being reduced. You will be invited to attend these meetings and have your say.

Three months after your child has been placed on the Child Protection Register there is a formal meeting to review this decision. This meeting is known as the **Review Child Protection Conference**. The purpose of the review meeting is to look at what has changed and if there is still a need to have your child's name on the register. The meeting will be very similar to the initial child protection conference where your child was registered. You will be allowed to have your say at the meeting. You will be given a form to complete to help record your views and help to complete this if required. Depending on their age and understanding your child may be invited to the meeting. In every case we will ensure that the meeting includes either your child's views or observations from people who know and have been working with them.

At the end of the meeting a decision will be taken about whether there is still a need to keep your child's name on the register. If it is decided that registration is to continue the Core Group will carry on dealing with the Child Protection Plan and a further Review Child Protection Conference will take place between three and six monthly periods or earlier if circumstances change. If it is decided that registration is no longer required then support to you and your child will still continue if it is needed.

Your rights at an Initial Child Protection Conference - You have the right to disagree with any decision made at an Initial Child Protection Conference and to have your disagreement noted. If you disagree with the decision to place your child's name on the Child Protection Register or not to place your child's name on the Child Protection Register you have the right to appeal and request a review of this decision by writing to the Head of Social Work Services.

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Your rights at a Review Child Protection Conference - You have the right to disagree with any decision made at a Review Child Protection Conference and to have your disagreement noted. If you disagree with the decision to keep your child's name on the Child Protection Register or to remove your child's name on the Child Protection Register you have the right to appeal and request a review of this decision by writing to the Head of Social Work Services.

The request for a review of the decision should be made, in writing, within five working days of the original decision. Where necessary, your social worker or other worker can advise and support you.

You should contact:

NAME:

TELEPHONE:

If at any time you feel that you need legal advice on what you or your child's rights are you can contact:

- A solicitor (Legal Aid may be available) www.slabb.org.uk
- The Scottish Child Law Centre www.sclc.org.uk



All our information for families can be translated by request.