

## **Strength Based Review Child Protection Conferences (RCPC)**

### **Preparation for an RCPC**

It is recognised that parents can be anxious about attending a Review Child Protection Conference and therefore, to ensure that parents are adequately prepared and supported to attend conferences, the following steps are to be followed.

It is important that prior to the Review Child Protection conference:

1. The Social Worker explains to parents the reasons for Review Child Protection Conference and to consider if a translator or family member/friend is required to support them.
2. The Social Worker supports the family to attend the conference, including moral support and/or practical support (e.g. transport).
3. The Social Worker ensures the parents are able to attend the venue of the Child Protection Conference or that the parent understands and supports them to join a virtual meeting.
4. The Social Worker should ensure that where parents have attended the Final Core group that they have had sight of and understand the report following the Core group, that will be presented the RCPC.
5. If the Parents have not attended the Final Core Group, the Social Worker should ensure that parents have been provided opportunity to read the Final Core group report and that they understand the contents. Parents should be given this in a format that they can access. For example, a translated document, larger print or coloured texts if they have specific need. (Please see: <http://intranet.ad.lancscc.net/how-do-i/council-and-democracy/interpretation-and-translation/?page=2> for further details)
6. The voice of the child is central to the conference and therefore the Social Worker must consider how they will gain this. If the child would like to attend the conference, it is important that this is supported and that they are enabled to attend. The Social Worker will consult with the IRO to agree how this will be facilitated.
7. An Advocacy Service is available, and a referral can be made in conjunction with the child's wishes and feelings (Appendix 1). Alternatively, a direct piece of work should be undertaken with the child to be presented at the Child Protection Conference. This could be from Mind of My Own or another tool to support the views of the child on the intervention service we are providing.
8. The Social Worker will ask parents if they wish to bring a photograph of their child to conference and explain that some parents like to do this to ensure that their child(ren) remain central to all decisions that are made. If they don't want to bring a photograph, they could bring something of the child's to re-focus the meeting on the child.
9. Professionals who have attended the final core group and are in agreement with the recommendations from the social worker do not need to provide an additional report. Therefore, it is important that the social workers report for the conference reflects the multi-agency views from the core group.
10. If a professional must provide their own report if they have not been able to attend the Final Core or is not in agreement with the Social Worker recommendations. This report should be shared with parents before the RCPC.
11. These reports must be submitted **72** hours prior to conference to the [cpadminteam@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cpadminteam@lancashire.gov.uk) mailbox who will then distribute this to the IRO. (Appendix 2)
12. The IRO telephones parents to re-introduce themselves and to check that they have received all of the conference report(s) and that they feel able to attend the meeting. The IRO discusses the format of the conference and answers any questions that the parent or family may have. The IRO will ask parents how the review period has been using the suggested questions below. These views will then be shared at the beginning of the RCPC. Purposeful visits to the family will be considered where appropriate.

### **Day of the conference (if professionals are in a building)**

13. On the day of the conference, professionals, children, parents and carers are invited to attend the relevant 'Conference Preparation' time. This is mandatory and is part of the conference process.
14. On arrival, a Minute Taker will be in attendance to escort parents and professionals to the relevant meeting room at the venue. Family will be taken directly to the conference room and professionals will be taken to a different room.

### **Day of conference if Hybrid conference model:**

15. On the day of the conference, professionals are invited to attend the relevant Conference Preparation time, this will be virtual for professionals. This is mandatory and is part of the conference process.
16. The Minute taker will facilitate the meeting by opening the virtual meeting and asking that all professionals share their own email address and then each professional can share their own reports, using the email addresses provided to each other in the conference preparation time.
17. The reports shared by professionals must have been shared with parents beforehand. In the exceptional circumstances where a report has not been shared the conference will need to go through this report in detail.

### **Family- if they are attending a meeting venue:**

18. The IRO will greet parents/child and family members and try to make them feel comfortable. The IRO will have a structured conversation with parents and child(ren) in a way that is appropriate to their needs and that will support them to engage in the conference. As part of this discussion they will recap the discussion that they have had previously and see if there are any amendments to be made.
19. The IRO reiterates the purpose of the conference, ensuring that they understand the possible outcomes. The IRO will explain that the role of the conference is not to decide about legal action and removal of children although the outcome of the conference may lead to seeking legal advice as part of child protection planning.
20. The IRO will ask parents if they wish to share a photo of their child(ren) in the conference and also if they feel comfortable saying a few words about their child(ren) at the start of the meeting.
21. The IRO will tell parents the names and agency that professionals are representing at the conference. They will ask parents if they have any preference where professionals are seated during the conference.

### **Professionals (if attending a building).**

22. The other professionals will be gathered in a separate room, allowing time to read each other's reports and verify any facts with the Social Worker. This is not a meeting but provides time to ensure that the professionals present are prepared for the conference. (This is not a meeting and a discussion about the family should not take place).
23. A Minute Taker will be present, the role of the Minute Taker is to ensure that all professionals have reports, name plates are completed, and all professionals are prepared for the conference.
24. Cycle of change will be available for professionals as this should be a regular discussion point throughout the duration of assessment and planning for the child/children.
25. The IRO will escort professionals into the conference room and the IRO will be mindful of the parent's views in terms of where people are seated. (Considering that parents should not sit next to the minute taker due to confidentiality issues).

### **The Child Protection Conference**

#### **If everyone is attendance:**

The room will be set out in a horseshoe shape, tables will still be in use. Flip chart paper will be on the wall (unless this is not appropriate for the chair or parents). The parents will decide where they want to sit and also if appropriate can decide where some of the professionals sit.

#### **If hybrid:**

The IRO will seat parents in the room, with social distancing measures in place. The IRO will explain the technology and how this will work to support the meeting.

#### **The Meeting:**

Once seated and name plates completed the IRO will:

(See agenda, appendix 5 for further details)

26. Make introductions and advise of any apologies received. (If the meeting is being held late – explain the reasons for this).
27. Confirm the status of meeting and read the confidentiality statement.
28. Verify family details.
29. Chair (IRO) provides decisions / recommendations and summary of previous conference.
30. Chair (IRO) reads any written amendments received
31. Chair (IRO) Seeks view from parents as to progress during the review period. This can be presented by the parent or the IRO.
32. Chair (IRO) Seek the child's views on how the review period has been for them. this could be from the child, the child's advocate or another source.
33. If child or advocate is not present at conference, it should be agreed who is the most appropriate professional to discuss with the child about attending future conferences or consenting to a referral to the Advocacy Service.
34. Update from social worker on behalf of the core group
  - a. Child Protection Plan
  - b. Review of progress of Child Protection Plan

c. Current concerns

35. Updates from agencies who didn't attend the final Core Group and report shared.
36. Updates from agencies who attended the final core group, who have provided a report as they are not in agreement with the social work report.
37. There will be the time for a confidential section, please see appendix 6 below for guidance.
38. Discussion involving everyone in attendance:
  - Concerns and needs
  - What is going well/strengths (including things that reduce risk)
  - What might impact on progress
  - What would make things better? (including the proposed plan).
39. Parents and Children are asked to give their views throughout the meeting.
40. The IRO provides a succinct summary and the threshold criteria, including the strengths and concerns.
41. The IRO asks the professional representing each agency their decision in relation to the level of need and the Decision of Conference
  - a. Continuation/discontinuation of the Child Protection Plan;
  - b. Changes required to the Child Protection Plan;
  - c. Provision for Children In Need Support.
42. See guidance on step downs.
43. Dissenting views
44. IRO provides the decision of the conference.
45. Review of Core Group Membership and next Core Group date
46. Agreement of Review Conference date
47. Any other business / clarification for parents/child.
48. The IRO to thank everyone for coming to the conference.

### **Minutes**

49. All virtual child protection conferences must be recorded to support the minute taker, unless there is an objection to the recording.

If the IRO has used the flip chart paper, then either

- a. The minute taker can take this and use it to support their minutes and then dispose of this in confidential waste.
- b. The IRO can dispose of this in the confidential waste at the building they are in.
- c. The parents may choose to take this home as a visual reminder.

### **The Child Protection Plan**

53. If there are additions to the child protection plan in the RCPC then these will be added to the plan within the outcomes form by the IRO.
54. The CP plan will be reviewed by the IRO in the mid-point monitoring following the RCPC.

## **Implementing recommendations during Covid 19 pandemic**

55. At the time of writing this document Lancashire is only holding RCPC's as virtual meetings, however as government guidance changes further updates will be given as to how to hold an RCPC in a conference venue safely.