

Child Protection Conferences and COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

In these unprecedented times we are having to change the way we run Child Protection Conferences to make sure we keep everyone safe and well.

Conference Meetings

To make sure we keep people safe and well we are going to have '**virtual**' meetings in place of face-to-face meetings. This means that we will still meet but not in the same room – **you will be able to attend and contribute from your own home.** There are different ways we can do this.

You should have received an invitation to attend the Child Protection Conference for your child/ren. This invitation will provide you with the information regarding when the Conference is due to take place.

You will then be contacted by your Social Worker to agree the arrangements for you to participate virtually in the Child Protection Conference for your child/ren; either by phone or your computer and you will be provided with the necessary details to do this.

What if I am too unwell to participate?

Please let the Social Worker or the Chair of the Child Protection Conference know if you are too unwell to participate and together, we will consider how best to proceed.

If we do not hear from you, the Conference will be held without you taking part.

You will be fully updated regarding the outcome of Conference by post or telephone call.

It is important you keep your contact details up to date with your Social Worker, please make sure you let them know of any changes in your contact details to ensure we are able to communicate with you as effectively as possible.

Keeping families safe and well is very important to us

- Please tell us if you are isolating yourself and/or your family.
- If you or a family member has symptoms of a dry persistent cough or temperature.

Arrangements for children/young people participating in Conference

Your child/ren's views are very important – this means they are welcome to contribute and participate in the Conference.

For a virtual Conference a child/young person over 10 will be invited to participate for an agreed period of time to share their views.

In Norfolk there is an organisation called **Coram Voice** that helps children and young people get their views heard in Child Protection Conferences.

Currently an Advocate can speak to your child/ren over the phone ahead of the Conference to help prepare them for the meeting and can also participate virtually on behalf of your child/ren to share their views.

Further information and contact details:

<https://coramvoice.org.uk/latest/child-protection-conference-video-launched/>

norfolk@coramvoice.org.uk

Tel: 01263 732613

Purpose of the Conference

The aim of the Conference is to bring together family members and professionals who know your child/ren. We share information regarding Risk and Safety.

A decision is made regarding your child/ren's safety and welfare. If it is believed your child/ren's safety and welfare is at risk, then together we will make a plan which aims to increase your child/ren's safety and welfare. It is important that you and other people in your family and/or support network, contribute to this plan where possible.

Please note: It is not a decision of Conference whether your child/ren should be removed from your care.

What will happen before Conference?

Somebody from the Independent Chairing Service will call you at least a day before Conference to:

- Explain the meeting, how you can participate and who else will attend.
- Give you the Chair's contact number.
- Get your thoughts about the Conference, why it is being held and whether or not you are able/want to participate.

Before Conference the professionals working with your family will write a report of the information they will be sharing in the conference. **This should be available to you at least one day before the Conference, if not please contact that professional direct.**

What can you expect during Conference?

The Chair will ensure you can hear and explain how the meeting will go. Everyone will introduce themselves, saying who they are.

Keeping your data safe is important to us, we will ask all professionals to call from somewhere away from others so that their call is private.

We will make sure you know what is being said and that you are given lots of chances to share your thoughts and views. We will check that you understand what is happening and explain any decisions and plans that are made.

We will make sure you are able to fully participate. If you can't hear we will try and sort the problem out. This may mean we stop the call and try again.

Before we end the Conference, we will make sure you know what is happening next. For example, if somebody is going to visit you, who this will be and when. As well as making sure you have the dates and times of any meetings, including if there needs to be another Conference.

Please note that due to COVID-19 extra planning will need to be considered, which will include:

A clear plan of who will visit when and an alternative plan in case there is a problem due to COVID-19.

Emergency contact numbers for professional support.

Education support on offer to the family.

What can you expect after Conference?

We need to make sure you understand the Plan that was agreed at Conference and any decision made. If you did not participate in the Conference, the Chair will contact you to explain the Plan and the reason for any decision made at the Conference.

In this situation, the Chair will also make sure that you are fully aware of the immediate visiting schedule and any immediate actions that need to be completed either by yourselves, wider family members or professionals.

Further Information:

More information can be found on the NSCP website: www.norfolkscb.org

Please note we will be monitoring the Government's advice and instructions regarding COVID-19. We will follow all advice to ensure we do all we can to keep you and your family safe and well. This might mean that at times, changes will need to be made to the way we do things at very short notice. We apologise in advance if this needs to happen.