

Barnardo's Coventry and Warwickshire
Children's Rights Service
Child Protection Conference: Advocacy
Information Sheet



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We provide independent advocates, someone that can make sure that children and young people involved in Child Protection conferences have a chance to share their views, join in meetings in a suitable way, and better understand plans that are being made about their care.

If a Child Protection conference is happening about you and your family, you may want an advocate to help you to have your voice heard and understand what is going on.

If you would like an advocate, and there is a reason why you need someone else independent to represent you (like you want to attend the meeting, or would like to talk to someone other than your Social Worker) then you can be referred for an advocate. Anyone can do this for you, or you can do it yourself on 0800 0272 118.

A Barnardo's advocate will meet up with you, talk more about what will happen at the meeting and your views and what you'd like everyone at the meeting to know. They may also be able attend all or part of the meeting with you, or on your behalf, and speak with you afterwards about the decision that was made and what will happen next.

If you are not sure if you would like an advocate, we can speak to you more about it so you can make a decision. You do not have to have an advocate and you can change your mind about this later if you decide you don't want one after all. We are funded by Warwickshire and Coventry Local Authorities to provide this independent service to you.

What is a Child Protection Conference?

This is a meeting arranged by your Social Worker because people working with you and your family are worried about your safety. The meeting is about what needs to be done to keep you safe.

Who will be at the Conference?

You may be able to attend if you wish but you don't have to. Even if you don't want to attend, your views are really important. It is a good idea to talk to your Social Worker about what you think but if you don't want to do this, an advocate can help you work out what you'd like someone to say at the meeting on your behalf.

Many people that you already know will be at the Conference including your parents or carers and maybe another member of your family. Some of the adults who work with you will be asked to come, including your Social Worker, school nurse and someone from school.

There will also be people there who you haven't met before – maybe someone from the police or a solicitor. There is a person called the "Chair" who leads the meeting and another person to write down what is said in the meeting.

What will happen before the Conference?

Your Social Worker will talk to you about the report they have written about you and answer any questions you have about the meeting. If you are attending the meeting, you can meet the Chair before the start if you would like to.

What will happen at the Conference?

The meeting will probably be at an office belonging to the Social Work team or the Council.

The Chair will ask everyone to introduce themselves and check your family information. The people at the Conference will share all the important information about your life and your family – what they are worried about and what is going well.

The Chair then asks everyone what needs to change for you to be safer and asks people to agree to take action to make those changes happen. This is called a plan. It is really important that you say what you think would make you safer and feel happier.

If the Conference thinks that you are at risk of significant harm and this is likely to continue they will call this plan a Child Protection Plan. Someone will take notes from the meeting that will be shared with everyone that was there.

What happens if I need a Child Protection Plan?

A group of people, decided at the Conference, will spend time helping you and your family make things safer for you. They are called the Core Group and they will meet regularly to make sure the Child protection Plan is keeping you safe. Someone from your family, normally a parent, will attend the Core Group meetings. After a few months there will be another Child protection Conference to see if things have changed.

What happens if I do not need a Child Protection Plan?

The plan from the Conference will make sure that you can still get all the help and support to make your life better. This is called a Child in Need Plan. You will not have another Child Protection Conference, unless there are concerns in the future.

Can the Conference decide I will be taken away from my parents or carers?

No. The Conference decides what plan is needed to keep you safe and how everyone will work together to make sure that happens. Only a Court can order that children have to live somewhere else. Most children who have a Child Protection Plan stay at home with their family.

What if I am unhappy with the meeting or how people are working with my family?

You can speak to your Social Worker, the Chair or a manager from the Social Work team. You also have a right to make a complaint. An advocate could help you with this or you can do this yourself if you prefer. We can tell you the right phone number to contact.