

Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Complaint Resolution Procedure

The Child Protection Conference Process



Keeping Children Safe

Throughout the child protection process, all professionals involved will have worked very hard to answer your questions and keep you fully informed.

What if I'm not happy?

If you are unhappy following a child protection conference you can speak to the chairperson about your worries and the issue may be resolved at this point. We will keep a record of your worries and what happened as a result of your conversation with the chairperson.

If you are still unhappy and would like to appeal against the conference decision we have a complaint resolution process that you can follow. You may wish to appeal if:

- You disagree with the reasons as to why your child(ren) should not have a Child Protection Plan
- You disagree with the outcome that your child(ren) should continue to have a Child Protection Plan
- In your view, the information on which the outcome of the conference was based was wrong.

Please note this resolution process cannot change a Child Protection Plan decision and whilst the matter is being investigated the decision made by the conference stands.

There are three stages to the resolution process. At all stages of the process you may bring an advocate (someone who can speak on your behalf) or friend to support you.

Stage one – informal stage

If you have an issue about any part of the child protection conference you should write to the chairperson (the Independent Reviewing Officer) no later than 10 working days after the conference.

The chair of the meeting will write back to you no later than 3 working days after we receive your concerns. We will offer you an appointment to attempt to resolve things no later than 10 working days after we receive your concerns in writing.

Following the appointment, we will write to you about the points you have made and any actions agreed. If you are still unhappy you have the right to move to Stage 2 of the process. You should do this within 28 days of making us aware of the issue.

Stage two –The Complaint Resolution meeting

A resolution meeting will be arranged and held within 28 days of the issue having been raised in an attempt to resolve your concerns.

The meeting will consider:

- Minutes of the child protection conference;
- Reports to the child protection conference;
- Correspondence regarding stage 1 of the process.

Following this meeting we will write to confirm the outcome.

If you are still unhappy, you have the right to move to Stage 3 of the process. You should do this within 28 days of having first been written to.

Stage three – The complaint resolution and appeal panel

If the issue remains unresolved then at Stage 3 the matter will be heard by an independent panel of professionals.

Who will be involved?

The Independent Chair of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership or someone they nominate will lead the Panel. There will be at least two senior representatives from other organisations, who do not have responsibility for the case (or have had previous responsibility). The Chair can bring in other agencies who have specialist expertise on the issues if that is needed.

When will the panel meet?

The panel will happen within 15 working days of having received your letter stating that you wish to move to Stage 3 of the process.

What are the likely outcomes?

The panel may make one or more of the following decisions based on a majority view:

- That child protection conference procedures were followed correctly
- That child protection conference procedures were not followed correctly and make recommendations about how to resolve this.

- Support the original child protection conference decision
- Recommend that a child protection conference is reconvened with a different conference chair to reconsider the outcome
- To decide they don't have enough information to make a decision and rearrange the panel;
- To identify any learning for the organisations involved.

The Chair of the Panel will write to you with their decision within 5 working days of the Panel meeting.

Please note: The panel does not have authority to reverse a conference decision.

The chair of a reconvened Child Protection Conference must ensure that all those present have seen or are briefed at the start of the conference about the decision and any recommendation(s) made by the Panel. Minutes of the Panel meeting will also be shared.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of the complaints resolution process you have the right to make contact with the <https://www.lgo.org.uk/> or to seek legal advice about remedies such as judicial review.