

Portsmouth is a Restorative City and this is reflected within our model of practice for Child Protection Conferences.

Restorative practice is a term used to describe behaviours, interactions and approaches which help to build and maintain positive, healthy relationships, resolve difficulties and repair harm where there has been conflict. When we work with and alongside people, there is strong evidence to show that outcomes for children and their families are improved. Restorative practices enable those who work with children and families to focus upon building relationships that create and inspire positive behavioural change. Creating change requires developing an environment of high support/high challenge and co-production with parents and children

For further information please see OMG to Restorative Practice on the Partnership website.

What is a Child Protection Conference and why is it held?

Following S47 enquiries, where concerns of significant harm are substantiated and a child is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, an initial child protection conference (ICPC) is held. This brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), any advocates and agencies involved, to consider with the parents the support needs and in a restorative way, make decisions about the child's future safety, health and development.

The purpose of the conference is to promote discussion through the use of restorative language and open conversations of all relevant information in planning with the parents the work to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. This will ultimately mean assessing whether the threshold has been met for significant harm.

The Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC) will review whether the initial concerns have been reduced or if child is continuing to suffer or likely to suffer significant harm by reviewing progress against the CP plan outcomes

What is the format for the meeting?

All Child Protection Conferences in Portsmouth are chaired by a Child Protection Advisor or Independent Reviewing Officer, all of whom are qualified social workers with very substantial experience. They are based within the Service Quality Team.

Our Chairs are trained in Motivational Interviewing techniques a directive, client centred approach to elicit behaviour change, promote engagement, focus, evoke and negotiate plans in a way that parents are listened to and empowered.

The Chair will have met with the parents or family members prior to conference to explain the purpose and format of the meeting and to answer any queries and allay anxieties. We aim to offer consistency of chairperson throughout the duration of child protection planning - to promote the forming of strong relationships. The Chair will also have oversight of the progress of the CP plan between meetings (See OMG on CPA role)

Within the meeting there will be consideration of the following:-

- Current Strengths - What is working well and what are the protective factors?
- The parent's views and the wider family network support
- The voice of the child or consideration of 'life through the child's eyes' or the lived experience of a child dependent upon age and stage of development. How has the child been impacted?
- Plan and Next Steps - What needs to happen next to support the parents, build safety and reduce risk and concerns?
- Historic risks and past harm- What were we concerned about and what harm did this cause, is it still a concern?



One Minute Guide Child Protection Conferences



- Current Risks - What are the dangers and what are we concerned about now and behaviours and support that reduce these risks?
- Grey Areas - What are the complicating factors and what do we need to know more about?

Within the meeting there will be an opportunity to analyse the information shared and then a decision made regarding whether the criteria for implementing a Child Protection plan is met. This will be dependent upon a decision about evidence of the **significant harm threshold** being met.

The Chair will provide a summary analysis of the identified risks and the threshold towards the end of the discussion and professionals will be requested to give a view and rationale for their recommendation regarding whether a CP Plan is required or whether another plan, such as a Child in Need plan, would be appropriate.

If the outcome of the meeting is to be a CP plan, the Chair will decide which category will be applied (Neglect, Physical, Emotional or Sexual) reflecting the predominant harm that has been identified and inform those in attendance.

The Chair will offer a summary of the decision making that has taken place within the conference. This will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

In line with best practice and Working Together, the Social Worker will have devised an outline plan with the family pre-conference. Within conference if the case becomes Child Protection, professionals work with the family in co-producing an outline CP Plan. This outline plan will include steps to be taken, timescales and reference to measurable outcomes. At the first meeting of the core group they will develop and implement the outline plan into a more detailed interagency plan.

Any plan will be focussed upon supporting the parents to achieve the behavioural changes required in order for them to adapt their parenting and increase their parenting capacity to improve outcomes for their child. The plan will also make reference to the impact for the child in the short and longer term should the plan not be achieved.

What is your role?

- To be fully prepared for the meeting and arrive on time
- To have provided a report for ICPC (police reports are expected at RCPCs as well). The report should outline your involvement with the child and/or family members and interventions offered thus far - this should have been shared with the parents prior to the conference and should be provided to the chair at least two working days in advance of the meeting date (via SQT Business support).
- To come to the meeting prepared to make the necessary respectful contribution which will include active listening, analysis of the information shared within the meeting and using restorative language at all times
- To share information sensitively and proportionately to assist the decision making within the meeting
- To offer a view regarding the application of the significant harm threshold
- To come to the meeting with ideas about future interventions that either yourself or your agency could offer to support behavioural change within the family which can form part of any plan that derives from the meeting
- To come informed with a perspective from the child or having gained an understanding of life experience of the child
- To make a note of the date of subsequent meetings - core group meetings or RCPCs - and ensure these are taken back to your agency to guarantee attendance.

Childrens views and participation

It is the expectation that all children age over four years will participate in the meeting in some way ranging from attendance through Advocacy, through to submission of views through any chosen medium.



One Minute Guide Child Protection Conferences



In Portsmouth we offer a fantastic application which offers children and young people an opportunity to share their views on line - This is called Mind of My Own. It is an expectation that all children who are subject to CP conference will have been offered this application by their social worker as part of their investigation and preparatory work for the conference.

However, any professional can promote this App with Children and a leaflet is attached to explain all about this.

Included are some useful links to copy into your web browser

["I use it all the time" How Mind Of My Own saves time and helps young people voice their authentic concerns on Vimeo](#)

[Finally finding my voice on Vimeo](#)

For more information:

Please speak to the Child Protection Advisors or the SQT Service Leader.