Understanding Child Protection

Your rights, your voice, what happens next | Ages 11 to 17

Children's Services are involved because someone is worried that you may not be safe. You might feel worried, angry, confused, relieved, fed up - or none of those things. There is no 'right' way to feel.

What is a child protection enquiry?

It is how Children's Services find out more when there is a serious worry about a child's safety. You may hear adults call it an enquiry under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Your social worker will usually talk with you, your parent or carer and other people who know you.

Will my social worker talk to me on my own?

Usually, yes. It is important that you have a chance to talk about your life without feeling you have to give the answer somebody else wants. You can ask why they want to talk, what information they already have, what will happen with what you tell them and who they may need to share information with.

About privacy

Your social worker should be honest about what can stay private and when they may need to share information to help keep you or somebody else safe.

What is a Child Protection Conference?

It is a meeting where your family and people who know or work with you share information and think about your safety and wellbeing. The Child Protection Chair leads the meeting and should make sure different views are heard.

Want to see what a Child Protection Conference is like?

Scan the QR code to watch Cheshire East's short animation about Child Protection Conferences, made with children and young people.

Watch



- **What are we worried about?**
  - What has happened, or could happen, that may affect your safety?
- **What is working well?**
  - Who and what already helps you feel safer?
- **What do you think?**
  - What is life actually like for you?
- **What needs to happen?**
  - What needs to change?
- **Who can help?**
  - What will family, friends, and professionals do?
- **How will we know?**
  - What would you notice in everyday life if things were getting better?

Do I get a say?

Yes. Adults are responsible for making safeguarding decisions, but decisions should not simply be made about you without you. You can say what you think, what you want, what you do not want, ask questions, correct something you think is wrong and say when you disagree.

Being listened to does not always mean adults can do exactly what you want.
If a decision is different from what you wanted, you should be given an honest explanation of why.

Do I have to attend the conference?

If you are high-school age, you will usually be invited to take part in some or all of your conference. You can talk with your social worker about what feels right for you and how you would like to be involved. You can also share your views by talking to your social worker or the Child Protection Chair, writing or recording something, asking someone to share your views, or having an advocate support you.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is independent. They can help you understand what is happening, work out what you want to say, come to meetings with you, help you ask questions and speak on your behalf if you want them to.

What is a Child Protection Plan?

A plan is made when the conference decides there is a continuing serious risk to your safety. It should say what people are worried about, what is going well, what needs to change, what help will be provided, who has agreed to do what and how everyone will know things are getting better.



The plan is about your life.

Your social worker should help you understand it. If something is wrong or does not make sense, say so. Your view should be recorded even if you disagree.

What happens next?

Your social worker will keep working with you and your family. A smaller group of family members and professionals, called the Core Group, will meet to make sure the plan is happening. There will also be another Child Protection Conference to review whether the plan is still needed.

What happens after a conference?

Adults should explain the decision and what happens next. Depending on the conference, this might mean a Child Protection Plan is made or continues, a different kind of support is agreed, or a plan is no longer needed. You can ask what the decision means for you and when it will be reviewed.
Questions you are allowed to ask?

- Why has this decision been made?
- Where have my views been recorded?
- Who will see what I have said?
- What are adults worried might happen?
- What are professionals doing to help?
- What would need to change for the plan to end?
- Who can help me if I do not feel heard?

Your rights

- To be listened to and treated with respect
- To know what is happening and why
- To ask questions
- To understand decisions that affect you
- To say when you agree or disagree
- To have help to express your views
- To know what adults have agreed to do to help keep you safe



Who can I talk to?

? Your social worker or Child Protection Chair

You can ask questions, say if you do not understand, and tell them if you do not feel listened to.

Independent advocacy - Coram Voice

Want someone independent to help you have your say? An advocate can help you understand your rights, work out what you want to say and help adults hear your views. Scan the QR code to find out more or ask for support.

Freephone: 0808 800 5792

Text or WhatsApp: 07758 670369

Email: help@coramvoice.org.uk

Advocacy

If you are unhappy with Children's Services

You can talk to your social worker, their manager or the Child Protection Chair. You can also contact Children's Social Care Complaints.
Telephone: 0300 123 5038
Email: socialcarecomplaintsmanager@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Complaints

Need to talk to someone outside Children's Services?

Childline is free and available 24 hours a day.
Call: 0800 1111

Childline



! If a child is in immediate danger
Call 999. For an urgent social care concern outside normal working hours, call 0300 123 5022.

People I can contact

My social worker:

_____

Their phone number:

_____

My Child Protection Chair:

_____

My next meeting / review:

_____

