



Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership

Complaints and Appeal Procedure

1. Complaints Procedure:

In respect of a complaint about a child protection conference, the procedure is to provide a resolution in cases where a child protection conference has not been followed within the correct procedure and rules which has led to an unreasonable outcome.

A complaint can be dealt with under the child protection conference complaints if it concerns the below reasons only.

- The process of the conference.
- The criteria for the decision that the child should have a child protection plan were not met.
- The criteria for the decision that the child should continue to have a child protection plan were not met.
- That the criteria for the decision that the Child Protection Plan should be discontinued were not met.

Complaints about individual agencies (performance or the provision or non-provision of services) should be managed in line with those individual agencies' complaints process. For instance, a complaint about the information in a Social Worker's report would be handled by the Local Authority statutory complaints procedure.

2. Process:

Immediate Resolution

An expressed concern which arises during or because of the meeting must be, raised with the Conference Chair at that time This must be noted, and an attempt made by the Conference Chair to resolve it with the service user either through a telephone conversation or face to face meeting within 5 days of the conference. If this initial attempt to resolve matters fails, the service user should be advised of the process by the Social Worker or Conference Chair. A complaint should be made either [online](#) or sent in writing to Children's Complaints Manager, Liverpool City Council Cunard Building, Water St, L3 1QX.

Stage 1 - Exploration by Conference Chairs\Team Managers

The Conference Chair should inform Liverpool City Council (LCC) Children's Complaints Manager, and the Conference Chair Team Manager about the complaint. The Conference Chair and Team Manager should meet in person, with the complainant (who may be supported by a friend or relative) within 15 working days of the Initial Child Protection Conference to:

- Ensure the complainant sufficiently understands the child protection process.
- Clarify grounds for, and the nature of, their representation.
- Establish the outcome desired by the complainant\appeal.



- Ensure the complainant understands the scope and relevance of the representation
- process about their circumstances.
- Gather relevant information. This should include clarifying whether there are aspects of the appeal that, in fact, constitute a complaint and advise accordingly.
- Aim to resolve the complaint\Appeal.

The possible outcomes at this stage are:

- The complainant accepts that the decision of the conference was correct.

or

- If the person making the complaint remains dissatisfied and wishes to pursue the matter to Stage 2, this must be sent in writing to the LCC Children's Complaints Manager and Child Protection Conference Service Manager within 5 days of receiving the Stage 1 response letter.
- Within 5 working days of the Stage 1 meeting, the Team Manager should provide a written response to the person making the complaint including notes of the outcome of their meeting.

Stage 2 - Service Manager

A complaint meeting at Stage 2 should be arranged and held within 10 working days of receipt of the notification from the person making the complaint. The complaint meeting should have access to and will consider:

- Minutes of the Child Protection Conference.
- Reports submitted to the Child Protection Conference.

Correspondence regarding the complaint at Stage 1. The meeting should still aim to address areas of dissatisfaction and to resolve matters. Following the meeting,

- If the person making the complaint remains dissatisfied and wishes to pursue the matter to Stage 3, this must be sent in writing to the LCC Children's Complaints Manager and Child Protection Conference Service Manager within 15 working days of receiving the Stage 2 response letter.
- The LCC Children's Complaints Manager should be informed of the outcome of Stage 2.

Stage 3 - Consideration by the formal Review Panel

The panel should be convened within 28 working days of the receipt of the letter from the person making the representation. The panel will be arranged to hear the complaint. The complainant will be notified of the details of the venue, time, and date.

The panel will base its decision on the complainants' written submissions, the conference minutes and the notes of the Stage One, Stage Two and Stage Three together with any relevant protocols and procedures.

The Panel will consist of a minimum of three members



- The Chair of the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- At least two other members of the Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership who have had no previous or present direct line management responsibility for the case in question.

The Panel Chair will decide on the precise composition of the Panel based on the expertise needed to resolve the issues presented by the case. The Panel Chair has the authority to co-opt other professionals where specialist advice is needed.

The Panel Chair will invite the following to attend the Panel

- The complainant to explain his or her reasons verbally for making the complaint and to make further representations if they wish.
- The Conference Chair to clarify points about their decision making and other commitments that may be useful.

A minute taker will be present.

The Panel may make one or more of the following decisions based on a majority decision.

- To state that the Child Protection Conference procedures were followed correctly.
- To state that the Child Protection Conference procedures were not followed correctly, in what respects and make a recommendation as to how this should be remedied.
- To support the original Child Protection decision.
- To recommend that the Child Protection Conference be reconvened with the same or a different Conference Chair to reconsider any recommendation regarding that the child should be or continue to be subject to a Child Protection Plan and the Category of Significant Harm on which any such decision is based.
- To decide that they have insufficient information to decide, set out a timescale for completing the task and a date for a further hearing.
- To decide whether there are any learning points for a specific agency.

N.B. The Panel does not have the authority to reverse a Child Protection Conference decision.

The Panel Chair will then ensure that the minutes of the Panel meeting are sent to the complainant and to all those who were sent minutes of the Child Protection Conference.

The Panel should communicate any specific concerns and recommendations relating to practice or procedure on the part of any Liverpool Safeguarding Partnership agency to the relevant Board member.

Further challenge

No further internal procedure exists in those cases where the Child Protection Review Conference supports the original Conference decision to make the child subject to a Child Protection Plan. A person who is making the representation, who remains dissatisfied, may wish to pursue her or his grievances via legal challenge or the /Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.