

Wakefield **Safeguarding Children** **Partnership**

Protocol for Police attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences

1. Background:

1.1 The West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures set out the framework for all agencies responsibilities in child protection including to Initial Child Protection Conferences. These can be found by clicking on the link below:

[1.3.1 Initial Child Protection Conferences \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)

1.2 The aim of a child protection conference is to enable those professionals most involved with the child and family and the family themselves, to assess all relevant information and plan how best to keep the child/ren safe.

2. Purpose of this protocol:

2.1 The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that the police contribution to Child Protection Conferences fulfils statutory safeguarding responsibilities and thereby meets the needs of individual cases whilst giving consideration to operational safeguarding responsibilities of the Wakefield District Police (Child) Safeguarding Unit.

3. The Initial Child Protection Conference:

3.1 The purpose of the Initial Child Protection Conference is to:

- To bring together and analyse, in an inter-agency setting, all relevant information and plan how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. It is the responsibility of the conference to make recommendations on how agencies work together to safeguard the child in future.

- To share and evaluate information in a multi-disciplinary setting about the family history, the child's health, development and functioning and the parent/carer's capacity to ensure the child's safety and promote his or her wellbeing;
- To consider the evidence and form a view as to whether the child has suffered or is likely to suffer Significant Harm in the future;
- To decide if the child continues to be likely to suffer Significant Harm and if so, the category of harm and that an inter-agency Child Protection Plan is required;
- To devise an outline, agreed, inter-agency Child Protection Plan setting out how and what actions will be taken forward and with what intended outcomes and time-scales

4. Police role and attendance at Child Protection Conferences:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states in circumstances where an Initial Child Protection Conference is held, Children's Social Care should "consider whether any professionals with specialist knowledge should be invited to participate"

... and all involved professionals should "contribute to the information their agency provides ahead of the conference, setting out the nature of the agency's involvement ... and attend the conference and take part in decision making when invited."

4.1 Police information regarding criminal history and convictions and intelligence is often directly relevant to assessing risk to children and within the home environment.

4.2 This information will be shared at conferences unless there is a circumstance which may compromise operational or criminal investigation. However, this will be raised with the chair as a confidential addendum to the police report.

4.3 Those in attendance at conference should be there because they have a significant contribution to make arising from professional expertise, knowledge of the child, or both. There will be some cases in which the police have this level of contribution to make.

4.4 There are other cases in which the police involvement or useful knowledge of the child or family by the police is negligible.

The West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures state that “the conference should consist of the smallest number of people consistent with effective case management” and includes in the list of those normally to be invited the Police Child and Public Protection Unit.

4.5 A representative of West Yorkshire Police will attend initial child protection conferences in the following circumstances:

1. The child/ren is the subject to current investigation by the police concerning physical or sexual abuse within the family
2. The children have previously been the subject of police investigation concerning sexual or physical abuse within the family and there is clear evidence of an escalation in risk of significant harm
3. Cases involving an active police investigation of suspected wilful neglect
4. Cases where the reason for conference arises out of child/ren being placed in police protection (i.e. the police initiate the safeguarding process as a result of a critical event)
5. Cases where child sexual exploitation is a considered risk
6. Complex/serious domestic abuse where there is current direct involvement with the family in order to manage risk
7. Conferences arising from the presence or association of a registered sexual offender within the household
8. Other cases subject to direct negotiation between the Chair and Wakefield District Police (Child) Safeguarding Unit Detective Inspector where there is a clear and evidenced need for the police to attend.

4.6 The Conference chair will have a discussion with the police on receipt of the report for the Initial Child Protection Conference as to whether their attendance is required based on the information provided.

5. Review Conferences:

5.1 West Yorkshire Police will not routinely attend review conferences unless designated as part of the core group and child protection plan and thereby has an active involvement.

6. Written reports to Initial Child Protection and Review Conferences:

6.1 In accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures the Police will provide a comprehensive written report (as outlined in 4.1 & 4.2 above) which in respect of invitations received to all initial child protection conferences and all review child protection conferences (when required).

7. Invite arrangements:

7.1 Invitations to all Initial Child Protection Conferences will be sent to the CPPU at Normanton via secure email, together with the Child Protection Conference booking form from the Safeguarding and Review Unit. The booking form includes a tick box which indicates if police attendance is required or if a written report is sufficient.

7.2 The invitation will include sufficient information on the reason for the conference being held and the full details of all child and family members to whom the conference relates.

7.3 Invitations are sent at the earliest opportunity to enable the police to give consideration to attendance and prepare a written report. This will be at a maximum 15 working days in advance and at a minimum 5 working days.

7.4 All written reports must be received by the Conference Chair at least 3 working days in advance of initial and review conferences. In cases where the police 5 attendance is not requested, the written report will contain contact details to enable the Child Protection Conference Chair to contact the police to discuss if they feel there is a need for the police to attend the Conference.

8. Review of the protocol:

8.1 This protocol will be reviewed by the Service Manager for Safeguarding and Standards and the Detective Inspector operationally responsible for child protection on a biennial basis (February 2022) or prior to in order to reflect any legislative or practice changes. The outcome of the review will be presented to Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP).

Amended February 2020