

5.3.9.2 Chair's responsibilities

The Chair must meet with the family, child and social worker prior to the conference to ensure they understand the purpose of the conference and how it will be conducted.

At the start of the conference the Chair should:

- Set out the purpose of the conference;
- Confirm the agenda;
- Emphasise the need for confidentiality;
- Address equal opportunities issues and ensure necessary interpreters are present (e.g. specifying that racist, homophobic and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated);
- Clarify the contributions of those present, including supporters / advocates of the family.

During the conference the Chair should ensure that:

- They summarise the risk of harm to the child and what needs to change;
- Consideration is given to the needs and circumstances of all the children in the household;
- All those present, including the parents and child/ren, are enabled to make a full contribution and that full consideration is given to the information they present;
- Information from the reports of those not present is made known to the conference (the reports should have been circulated before the conference);
- The wishes and feelings of the child/ren are clearly outlined;
- Issues of race, religion, language, class, gender, sexuality and disability are fully taken into account in the work of the conference;
- Appropriate arrangements are made to receive third party confidential information;
- Appropriate arrangements are made for those attending only part of the conference;
- The conference reaches decisions in an informed, systematic and explicit way;
- Consideration is given to the issue of criminal injury compensation, if appropriate;
- All concerned are advised / reminded of the CYPS social care complaints procedure;
- Ensure that arrangements are made with the social worker for absent child/ren and/or parents to be informed of the decisions of conferences.

If a decision is made that a child requires a protection plan to safeguard their welfare, the Chair should ensure that:

- They summarise and state the risks to the child and specify what is needed to change;
- A qualified social worker is identified as a key worker to develop, co-ordinate and implement the child protection plan. A core group is identified of family members and professionals;
- A date is set for the first core group meeting within ten working days of the initial conference and timescales set for subsequent meetings;
- A date for the child protection review conference is set;
- The outline child protection plan is formulated and clearly understood by all concerned including the parents and, where appropriate, the child.

If the conference determines that a child does not need the specific assistance of a protection plan but does need help to promote their welfare, the Chair should ensure that a child in need meeting is arranged to draw up a child in need plan or makes appropriate recommendations for a plan.

The child protection plan should be reviewed at regular intervals of no more than every six months (initially three months).

The Chair is responsible for holding the conference in a timely manner - unless in exceptional circumstances, an initial conference should be no more than two hours and review conferences no more than one and a half hours.