



Children and Young People
in Herefordshire Partnership

Multi-agency report template and threshold guidance for professionals attending child protection conferences

Statutory responsibilities of all agencies

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) places a statutory duty on all agencies to work collaboratively and effectively to safeguard children and young people. All agencies invited to attend child protection conferences are expected to provide a written report, using the multi-agency report template. This guidance has been produced to help you to complete your agency report. You need only submit one report per family, even if you are working with more than one child or adult in the family.

Sharing reports

You should share your report with the family in advance of the conference and submit it at the latest 2 working days before the meeting. Reports can be emailed securely to:

safeguardingbusinesssupport@herefordshire.gov.uk

Any information given may be used in work relating to public law (care) or criminal proceedings. This includes your agency report to conference and any information shared verbally at conference, which will be summarised in the conference minutes.

Confidential information

All professionals and parents will receive a set of conference minutes which consists of a summary record of the conference discussion and all agency reports. If your report contains confidential information that should not be shared with all conference participants, please ensure you submit a redacted report alongside your full report, and indicate which participants (non-professionals) should receive only the redacted version.

Chronology

The conference reports asks you to detail chronologically relevant and significant events relevant to safeguarding from your agency's perspective. Events that are relevant and significant are ones which will allow conference to understand family's needs and risk over time, looking at patterns of engagement, support, behaviour and concern. Chronology events should allow conference to gain a clear understanding of the lived experience of the child / young person and should focus conference on determining whether or not the threshold of significant harm has been reached

Your role in the conference

Whereas your report is likely to focus on the child(ren) or adult(s) your agency supports, in conference you will be asked to contribute to the decision being made in respect of all the children being considered at the meeting. In your report you are asked to provide your professional opinion about whether the subject children have suffered and / or are likely to suffer significant harm, based upon your knowledge at the time of writing the report. You can give an alternative view in conference if your view changes having heard all of the information shared by other agencies and the family during the conference.

As a professional attending conference you should determine, based upon evidence, whether or not the threshold of **significant** harm is met. This decision is an important one, as it justifies compulsory intervention in family life (Working Together, 2015). You will be asked to provide justification for this, based upon the evidence you have heard and following the steps below. In exceptional circumstances, where



the chair's view is that professionals have not provided sufficient justification, the chair has authority to overrule the decision.

You should consider the steps below before writing your report for conference, and throughout the conference itself.

Step 1a – can the concerns be evidenced to have an impact on the child? Consider impact individually for each child. Concern about parental behaviours alone is not sufficient to evidence significant harm to the child, because parental behaviours will affect parenting capacity to varying degrees.

OR

Step 1b - where impact is not evidenced, can impact be demonstrated as 'likely' based upon research evidence? 'Likely' means a 'real, substantial risk' as opposed to 'possible' or 'probable'.

Step 2 – does this impact amount to significant harm? Compare impact against what you would reasonably expect from a similar child of a similar age.

Step 3 – are the concerns attributable to parental care, or lack thereof? Not including young people involved in risk taking behaviour where there is no evidence of parental collusion or failure to protect. Risk management approaches are more suitable for this group of young people.

Step 4 – can it be evidenced that significant harm is likely to continue? The level of parental engagement and understanding of concerns should be taken into account. Likelihood means that there is a 'real, substantial risk', as opposed to 'possible' or 'probable'.

If YES to either step 1a or step 1b and YES to all steps 2-4:

Step 5a – significant harm threshold is met. Consider the category of significant harm and provide justification for this category.

If not:

Step 5b – significant harm threshold is not met. Consider with the family what services may be required to support them.