

How to make a Complaint or Appeal about a Child Protection Conference or Review

A guide for adults, young people and children

Who can make a complaint or appeal?

Parents, carers or children who are involved in Child Protection Conferences or Reviews, who have concerns about their Conference or Review.

When can I make a complaint or appeal?

You can make a complaint or appeal if you think the conference did not follow the correct process, used wrong information, decided on the wrong category of primary concern, or made the wrong decision about making or stopping a child protection plan.

Note that during the course of a complaint or appeal; the decision made by the Conference will stand.

Can I complain about individual people or agencies?

Complaints about individual people and agencies, their performance and provision of services, are not dealt with under this process. You should deal with this by using the relevant agency's complaints process.

How do I start my complaint or appeal?

You should tell the Chair of the conference immediately if you have any concerns about how the conference is proceeding. If the Chair cannot sort out the problem; he or she will ask you to send your complaint/appeal in writing within 10 working days of the conference.

Tell the Chair straight away if you need help to put your complaint or appeal in writing. The Chair will arrange for a professional worker to help you.

Complaints/Appeals should be addressed to:

Service Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Children & Young People's Service

Halifax Town Hall, Crossley Street, Halifax, HX1 1UJ

Email: cpadmin@calderdale.gov.uk

Stage One - Informal Stage

Who will be involved?

The Senior Independent Reviewing Officer for Child Protection Conferences and the Child Protection Conference Chair.

What will happen?

Your complaint/appeal should be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days. An appointment will be arranged for you to attempt to resolve the areas of your concern within 10 working days of receiving your written complaint/appeal.

Following this meeting, you will receive a letter outlining your concerns and any outcomes or actions agreed. If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right to move to Stage 2 (Formal Stage) of the process within 28 days.

You can bring an advocate or friend to support you at all stages of the complaint/appeal process.

Stage Two - Formal Stage – Complaint Meeting

Who will be involved?

The Service Manager for Child Protection Conferences.

What will happen?

A Complaint Meeting at Stage 2 should be arranged and held within 28 days to attempt to resolve the areas of concern.

The Complaint Meeting should have access to and will consider:

- Minutes of the Child Protection Conference
- Reports to Child Protection Conference
- Correspondence regarding the complaint at Stage 1

The meeting should aim to address areas of dissatisfaction and to resolve matters. Following the meeting the complainant should receive a letter to confirm what was agreed and to advise the complainant of their right to move to Stage 3 within 28 days, if they are still dissatisfied.

Stage Three - The Complaint and Appeal Panel

Chair of the Panel:

The Safeguarding Children Partnership will nominate a chair for the Panel

Membership of the Panel:

The Panel will be an interagency panel made up of at least two senior representatives from Safeguarding Children Partnership agencies, none of whom have previous or present direct line management responsibility for the case in question

Record of the meeting:

The Partnership will provide a minute-taker

Advisor to Panel:

The Panel Chair has the authority to identify other professionals where specialist advice is needed

What will the Complaints and Appeals Panel do?

The Panel will look at all the information available. The Panel will decide what further evidence or information is needed. The Panel will decide the process to be followed in considering your complaint.

Decision Making:

The Panel may make one or more of the following decisions based on a majority view:

- That Child Protection Conference procedures were followed correctly
- That Child Protection Conference procedures were not followed correctly and recommend how to remedy this
- To support the original Child Protection Conference decision
- Recommend the Child Protection Conference is reconvened with the same or different conference chair.
- To reconsider a recommendation regarding the decision that the child should be or continue to be, subject to a Child Protection Plan and the category of Significant Harm on which such decision is based
- To decide they have insufficient information to make a decision and set out a timescale for completing the task and set a date for a further panel
- To decide whether there are any learning points for a specific agency
- To communicate any specific concerns and recommendations relating to practice or procedure on the part of any Safeguarding Children Partner organisation

The Panel does not have the authority to reverse a Conference decision.

What will the Panel base its decisions on?

The Panel will base its decisions on your written Complaint/Appeal, the Conference minutes and other available information.

Who will know about the Panel's decisions?

The Panel Chair will make sure that you are sent the minutes of the Panel meeting within five working days. Everyone who was at the Child Protection Conference will also be sent minutes of the Panel meeting.

The Panel will tell Safeguarding Children Partner organisations about any specific concerns and recommendations relating to practice or procedure.

What happens if the conference is reconvened?

The Chair of a reconvened Child Protection Conference will make sure that all those present have seen, or are briefed at the start of the Conference, about the decisions and any recommendations made by the Panel.

The Conference will again consider, taking fully into account any recommendations made, whether the risk of continuing significant harm criteria for a Child Protection Plan are met, and if so, the relevant Category of Significant Harm.

What if, after all this, I am still not satisfied?

If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the process you may wish to take your grievance further with the Local Government Ombudsman or seek legal advice about other remedies such as Judicial Review.

The Complaint/Appeal process is explained in more detail here:

See [Chapter 2.7 Complaints and Appeals \(Child Protection Conferences\)](#)

The Safeguarding and QA Service want to provide helpful, accurate and understandable information. If you find any of this information unclear, wrong or out-of-date, or if you think additional information would help other readers contact the Safeguarding and QA Service on 01422 394055.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you would like this information in another format or language, please contact: 01422 394055

Help and Advice

The following is a list of advice and advocacy services that you might find helpful:

Solicitors

A list of solicitors who specialise in family law can be found in the Solicitors and Barristers Directory, available at the Central Library, through the east gate of the Piece Hall.

Central Library & Archives
Square Road
Halifax
HX1 1QG

Tel: 01422 392633

www.lawsociety.org.uk/choosingandusing/findasolicitor.law

Citizens' Advice Bureau

There are offices in Halifax, Brighouse, Elland and Todmorden

Advice line: Tel: 01422 842848/0300 330 9048

www.calderdalecab.org.uk

Other local advice centres include:

Rhodes Street Advice Centre

Tel: 01422 341908

Parentline

A free, confidential helpline for anyone in a parenting role is provided by Parentline.

Tel: 0808 800 2222

www.familylives.org.uk

Family Rights Group Advice Line

Tel: freephone 0800 801 0366 – from Monday to Friday 9.30 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

(Advice can be offered in languages other than English)

www.frg.org.uk