

Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People

Changes to the Child Protection Conference Processes from August 2011

Having undertaken a multi-agency review of the child protection conference system, our two main challenges are clearly identified as increasing child and family participation and refocusing initial and review conferences away from spending most of the time on information sharing to the analysis of the risk and safety factors and planning around improved outcomes for children and young people.

Having looked at good practice nationally the 'strengthening families' structure for child protection conferences seems to be a way in which we can meet these challenges. It was given as an example of good practice in the Eileen Munro Review 2011. For Leeds it provides a restorative practice model which increases children, young people and their family's involvement in making realistic plans to improve outcomes.

The main changes being made will be

- a) Children and young people over 10 years old will be invited to attend their conferences to share their views.
- b) Parents and family views to be better represented throughout the process
- c) Moving towards sharing all reports in advance. This will eventually be achieved by secure email between professionals, in the interim there will be time set aside for the professionals to read the reports while the Chair talks to the parents and child or young person. This will mean that all agencies need to share their reports with the parents and child or young person in advance.
- d) The conferences will use a different style aimed at encouraging all participants including parents, children and young people to contribute to the discussion and the planning processes. There will be new agency report formats to use to encourage all participants to come to the conference having analysed the concerns they may have and the protective factors, and what they would want as desired outcomes for the child or young person.

We are going to try out this new structure across the city from the beginning of August and then review it in September. We will collect feedback during this period from children and their families and also from the professionals who have attended.

If you have specific queries about these changes please contact:

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Further briefings will be arranged September – December.

Jane Held, Independent Chair of Leeds Safeguarding Children Board