

# What happens if your child has a child protection plan – a guide for parents



**London Borough of Waltham Forest  
Children and Families' Service**



# What is a child protection plan?

Every local authority is required by law to provide child protection plans for children who need special protection because they are at risk of physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect.

A child protection plan is a multi-agency plan. All the professionals involved with your family will work together to support you as written down in the plan. The social worker will usually take the lead to coordinate your child's plan.

Your child's plan is private and cannot be seen by your friends, neighbours or relatives. However, professionals who might be concerned about your child, such as teachers, doctors, youth workers or the police, can ask us if your child has a child protection plan.

# Who will decide that your child needs a child protection plan?

The decision about whether your child has a child protection plan will be made at a child protection conference. This is a meeting of professionals such as social workers, doctors, teachers and police officers. The meeting will be held after an investigation into what has happened to your child.

Unless there is a reason not to, you will be invited to the conference so you can hear what is being said and give your views. An experienced social work manager who is not involved in the investigation will be in charge and will talk to you before it starts, giving you a chance to ask any questions and make sure you understand what will happen.

# Can your child come to the child protection conference?

In some cases, older children may come to part of the meeting.

A child protection conference is not the right place for younger children. The meeting may last some hours and it is important that you give your full attention to what is being said. Well in advance, you should arrange for someone to look after your children when you attend. Please tell us at once if this will be a problem for you.

# What happens if your child requires a child protection plan?

The aim of a child protection plan is to keep your child safe. The plan will be written down and you will be sent a copy to keep.

A social worker will work with you and your family to make sure the plan is carried out. Three or four other professionals who are close to your child and family will also work with you in what is called a core group. The core group will meet regularly to check that the plan is working.

# What can you do if you do not agree with your child having a child protection plan?

There is no legal right of appeal against a child having a child protection plan. Bear in mind that the decision has been made jointly by professionals from many different organisations.

If you want to make a specific complaint about the process employed during the case conference or a decision about the child protection plan, this should firstly be made to the conference chairperson within 28 days of receiving the minutes.

If there is no resolution following this, you can contact the Local Safeguarding Children Board who will arrange for this to be investigated further. Your social worker will provide you with contact details.

You can also contact an organisation which helps families who are involved with Children's Social Care, a solicitor or an advice worker. Solicitors and the Citizen's Advice Bureau are listed in a classified telephone directory.

## Do you have to do what the social worker says?

Yes, we expect you to work with the social worker and any other professionals involved so that the child protection plan is carried out and your child is kept safe. Make sure that you go to meetings so you know what is going on. Tell the social worker if you do not understand anything or if you cannot do what you are expected to do.

## What are you expected to do?

The child protection plan will set out what we expect you to do. You must make sure that you understand why your child has a child protection plan, what needs to change and what you are expected to do to keep your child safe. For example, if the person who has harmed or may harm your child is living in the family home, the plan may say they have to leave.

If the plan does not work and your child is still at risk, we may need to take further steps to protect your child including consideration of legal proceedings.

# How do we make sure the plan is working?

We make sure the plan is working by careful monitoring.

No longer than ten days after the child protection conference, the core group will meet to decide in detail who is responsible for doing what. You will be part of these discussions. We always try to work with you and your family to carry out the plan.

Three months after the first child protection conference, we will hold a review child protection conference to check the plan is working and talk about any new information or changes which have happened. Further review conferences take place at least every six months.

# When will your child no longer need a child protection plan?

If the review child protection conference decides the child no longer needs special protection because of the risk of abuse, this will be considered.

Your child will no longer need a child protection plan if, for example:

- The child protection plan has worked to reduce the risk of abuse
- The person who abused your child is no longer living at home and cannot contact the child in a way which puts them at risk
- Your child is being looked after away from home and cannot be contacted by adults who may put them at risk

If your child no longer has a child protection plan, will we stop helping you?

The final child protection meeting will explain any ongoing plan we will put in place to support your family in the future. This may involve other professionals in the community.

# Complaints

We always try to provide good quality services for children but we know that sometimes we get things wrong, and we try to resolve any problems as soon as they arrive.

The Family Rights Group is an organisation which helps families involved with Children's Social Care, who may be able to offer assistance:

The Family Rights Group  
The Print House, 18 Ashwin Street, E8 3DL

Tel: 0808 801 0366  
[www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)

If you are unhappy with the service that you have received, you can write to:

Complaints Team  
Waltham Forest Town Hall  
Forest Road, Walthamstow  
London, E17 4JF

Tel: 020 8496 3000  
[complaints@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@walthamforest.gov.uk)  
[www.walthamforest.gov.uk/complain](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/complain)