**Guidance for Hertfordshire**

**Multi-Agency Child Protection Conference Report and Core Groups**

 **(Strengthening Hertfordshire Families)**

**Contents**

1. **Introduction to Strengthening Hertfordshire Families Approach**
2. **School DSP Role and Responsibilities for Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups**
3. **Completing the Hertfordshire Multi-agency Child Protection Conference Report**
4. **Sending school reports to Conference**

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| **1. Introduction****Strengthening Hertfordshire Families** is the new approach to child protection conferences. Safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is a key responsibility for Hertfordshire’s Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) to ensure that standards are set for all partner agencies. This cannot be done effectively without improving participation and engagement with parents and young people. This new model for child protection conferences derived from the principles of the Strengthening Families framework, this has been implemented in Hertfordshire since November 2014. Andrew Turnell was the co-creator of the Signs of Safety from which Strengthening Families derived; Damion Griffiths was the creator of the Strengthening Families model.The approach is **more collaborative, more visual, and clearer about risk** and also the aim is that the outcome focused child protection plans is **more concise and easier for families to understand**. The multi-agency proforma reflects the above principles and although it is set out differently from the previous form, when the report is completed, you still need to continue use the “Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families”: to evidence and rationalise your concerns, evaluate these and make any relevant recommendations - see [*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/national.shtml#safeguarding)Chapter 1, page 27.**Key features of Strengthening Hertfordshire Families model:*** Chair meets family first in conference room
* Layout of room is different- family can sit where they want to
* Style of chairing – more visual -as white board used to record views and decisions
* Family helped to complete genogram/family tree
* Family present their understanding
* Clear and transparent focus on risk, danger, harm, complicating factors and safety
* The plan – focus on bringing about change

**Potential benefits and challenges:*** Shifts the balance of power
* Shorter periods of CP plans and alternative interventions achieved sooner
* The focus will be on risks and safety
* Requires analysis of information
* Smarter outcome focussed plans
* Reports must be shared in advance of the meeting
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| 1. **School Role and Responsibilities for Child Protection Conferences (CPCs)**

**The purpose of child protection conferences:*** Consider all relevant information and plan how to safeguard the child and promote their welfare.
* Decide whether the child has suffered significant harm and whether the child is likely to suffer significant harm in the future.
* Decide whether a child protection plan is required.
* Decide on category of abuse.

**Who attends:**Conference chair, Children’s centre, Education, GP , Police , Health visitor / school nurse, Family, Family support, child if age appropriate, legal representative, Children services other independent agencies and resources etc. **The Designated Senior Person ( DSP) role in relation to a child protection conference:** * Collate information and prepare a written report
* Share report with child (where appropriate) and Parents
* Send report to the Child Protection and Statutory Review Service.
* Organise attendance of an appropriate school representative.
* Complete pre conference reading.
* Understand the test for likelihood of future significant harm.
* Contribute to the conference and take part in discussion about future significant harm.

**School report to conference:*** A tool for sharing relevant information about the child’s developmental needs, how these are being met and by whom and the child’s progression
* Ensure you have the views, wishes and feelings of the children (if able to) so that they are encouraged to participate directly or indirectly to the process and that their views are available to the CP Conference and contribute to the formulation of the plan.
* Should differentiate between fact and opinion
* Should Highlight **strengths and safety** as well as of risk and concern
* Should reflect the school’s view about risk, the need for a child protection plan or alternatives and the content of any plan
* Should be shared with the family at least 48 hours prior to an Initial Child Protection Conference and 5 working days prior to a Review Child Protection Conference
* When necessary the report should use easily understood language and avoid professional jargon
* The report should be provided to the Chair at least **one working day** before an Initial CPC, and **three working days** in advance of a Review Conference.
* Shared with the social worker
* If any agency representatives are unable to attend the Conference (s)he must ensure a written report is made available through the Chair and that a colleague attend in DSP place.
* Bring 12 copies on the day
* Email a copy of the report to child protection & statutory review service using the following email address :

Childprotection.unit@hertfordshire.gov.uk Cpc.reports@hertscc.gcsx.gov.uk (secure email) 1. **Completing the Hertfordshire Multi-Agency Child Protection Conference Report.**

(An electronic version of the multiagency report can be found at [HGfL: Pupil Welfare: Child Protection: Proformas](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml).) Below you will see a screen shot of the report with some suggestions as to what information schools should consider including.

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| **This report template is to be used by all agencies presenting at a Child Protection Conference in Hertfordshire****Please advise the Chair in advance if there is any information in this report that should not be shared with** **certain members at conference** | **You may insert your agency logo**  |

**Hertfordshire Multi-agency Child Protection Conference Report**

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| **Why are you working with the family?** | **Child is on roll at the school*** **How long they have been at the school?**
* **Include the work you are doing, any other work planned, and the response of the child/ren and family to that work. This may include any services and resources that you have signposted the child and family to outside of the school setting e.g. children centre, health provisions mental child and adolescent mental health.**
* **Any in-house opportunities utilising PHSE programmes, pupil premium or other funding for projects and resources for the child? Parenting support signposting them to other resources etc**
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**Please NOTE: *The following headings ( A, B and C ) will form the basis of discussion at a CP conference, parents are asked***  ***these questions first followed by professionals. The chair records this on a white board and later this information informs***  ***the decisions and outcome of the meeting.***

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| **A: What are you worried about with regard to the child/ren?****Impact on the child**  | * **What are the main issues and the perceived risk factors? ( see below)**

**Past Harm - What has happened to these children or other children in the care of the adult that worries you or you consider being a risk? You can add a chronology in this section if you have been keeping one; otherwise a brief outline of incident time frame and outcomes.** **Present and future danger - what are you worried is happening or might happen to the child/ren in the care of the adults?*** **How is the above impacting on the child’s overall emotional and physical well-being e.g. Health, learning and development, attendance, emotional and behavioural well-being?**
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| **B: Strengths and Safety, What is Working well** | * **Details of positive features of family life and parenting styles/ methods (that reduce the risk of harm /reduce your concerns e.g. if a child goes missing, does the parent report this to the police? is the adult seeking help because they are worried about the effects that their domestic abuse is having on their child?)**

**Use the assessment framework to think holistically about the child and family** (see [*Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/national.shtml#safeguarding)Chapter 1, page 27  |

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| **C: Grey Areas or Complicating Factor** | * **Are there any areas that are unclear that may be of potential concern? Is there anything that is unknown which needs clarification to support the child and keep them safe? (This could include un-evidenced concerns or areas of disagreement, e.g. issues around Parental Responsibility and family dynamics; third hand information about substance misuse ,DV, mental or physical health of the care givers.)**
* **Think about what may need further exploration, but is out of your role and capacity to assess / explore.**
* **What makes safeguarding the child and working with the family more difficult? Are there times when the risk increases?**
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| **What do you believe to be the likely outcome for the child/ren if the concerns continue** | **This is about risk of significant harm or likely risk of harm to health and development.** * **Use the assessment framework to rethink about the child’s development needs - are these being met? by whom? if not, why not?**
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| **What do you think needs to change to prevent harm and future harm?** | **These suggestions and actions may form/be included in the CP plan if this is the outcome (conference agree child should become subject to a plan).** |
| **What support can you or your agency provide to help prevent ongoing harm to the child/ren?** | **Consider the current internal support your school can provide for example, through your PHSE programme; counselling services; mentor etc. and any wider support that you can access. To find local support you may wish to look at the Families First Portal**  |

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| **Any other comments** | * **Do you have information / anomalies that do not immediately fit into the above headings? For example, in relation to background history / chronology of previous incidents**
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| **Has this report been shared with parents/carers?** | **Yes/No** | ***If not, please state reason*** **The ethos of this approach to protecting children is to work openly with parents (when safe to do so) and other agencies, this is to ensure concerns about unmet needs/ perceived or otherwise can be discussed in an honest way in order to agree actions for change and child safety** |
| **Has this report been shared with the child/ren/ young person if appropriate in your professional opinion** | **Yes/No** | ***If not, please state reason*** As above  |

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| **What are the views of the parents/ carers and/or the child/ren / young person on this report?** | ***This is the first question posed by the chair, parent’s share their view followed by professionals account of the child’s view e.g. what they have told DSP or teacher etc. (if appropriate) this is recorded on the white board.*** |
| **For review conferences, what difference do you the think the plan has made to the lives of the children and the concerns identified?** | **This section is relevant for when the case is reviewed three months after the Initial CPC, so no need to fill this in at this stage.**  |

1. **School Reports to Child Protection Conferences**
* Reports need to be sent (prior to conference and in addition to sharing with parents/s) to: Childprotection.unit@hertfordshire.gov.uk
* Please send the report in line with your **School Policy for ICT Acceptable Use**.

**Please state in the report if you are unable to attend the conference.*** Please bring twelve copies of the report to the conference.
* A proforma report for conference is available at:  <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml>

**The time and date of the next Child Protection Conference is always stated at the end of a Child Protection Conference and is in the Decision letter and Minutes sent following the conference. If any clarification is required this can be obtained through contacting the allocated Lead Social Worker.** **Core Groups** **What happens after a child protection conference?****If a child protection plan is made:*** First core group meeting takes place within 10 working days of the **Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)** and thereafter every 6 weeks.
* The first **Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC)**  takes place three months following the date of the **ICPC** and **RCPC** will follow thereafter at intervals of not more than 6 months.

**If a child protection plan is not made:*** Step down plan to child in need plan – thereafter if appropriate, common assessment or universal support.
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