

The Child Protection Register

What is it?

Shetland, like every area in Scotland, has a confidential list of children who may be at risk of future harm. A child's name may be placed on the register under one or more of the following categories:-

- Physical neglect
- Physical injury
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Non organic failure to thrive

The register is kept by children's social work and information is restricted to people within agencies responsible for child protection.

How long will my child be on the register?

If your child's name is placed on the child protection register there will be a date set for a review case conference within 6 months. The review will discuss how well the protection plan is working and consider if your child's name still needs to be on the register.

What happens next?

The child protection case conference will have named a key worker (social worker) for your child. They will also have named a core group of people who will meet with you regularly to put together a detailed Child Protection Plan and monitor its progress.

You will receive a copy of the minute taken at the conference.

What should I do if I have a complaint?

Talk to your child's social worker; they can give you advice and information on what to do, depending on what it is you are unhappy about.

If your complaint is about the child protection case conference you should contact the Chair of the meeting on 01595 744400.

Further Information

Shetland inter-agency child protection procedures can be found at <http://www.shetland.gov.uk/socialwork-health/services/documents/ChildProtectionProcedures.pdf>

Or ask a social worker if you would like to see a paper copy.

If you feel you need legal advice, The Law Society of Scotland can provide a list of solicitors and information on legal aid (tel. 0131 2267411).

Information for Parents and Carers

Child Protection Case Conferences and the Child Protection Register

Name of Social Worker

Contact number

Shetland Child Protection Committee
Safeguarding Children and Young People in Shetland

Introduction

A child protection case conference is a meeting that has been arranged because there are concerns for your child's safety and welfare.

This can be a worrying time for parents, the information in this leaflet will help answer any questions you have about the meeting. You will have a short meeting with the Chair just before the conference to talk about the process. The Chair is the person who runs the conference. The Chair is an independent senior social work manager.

What is a child protection case conference?

Government guidelines say that all agencies concerned about protecting children should meet to discuss concerns and make plans to keep children safe. A child protection case conference is the meeting that does this.

It is usually held after a child protection investigation or where there are concerns about an unborn baby.

The child protection case conference will decide if your child's name should be placed on the child protection register.

What happens at a child protection case conference?

The Chair will open the meeting with introductions, explain the reason for the conference and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

The conference will:-

- Share information about concerns
- Share information about things that are going well
- Gather information about how things are for you, your child and any other family members
- Decide if their name needs to be on the child protection register
- Decide if a referral needs to be made to the Reporter to the Children's Panel
- Make recommendations for a child protection plan, or if the decision is not to place your child's name on the register, other types of support.

A child protection conference cannot make legal decisions. If the conference feels legal action is necessary a referral will be sent to the Reporter to the children's Panel who will decide if a hearing is needed.

Who will be at the conference?

Your child's social worker will be there and usually their supervisor attends.

Other people with knowledge of your child and family may be there. Depending on circumstances, this could be teachers, a health visitor or a GP, or someone providing a service to you as an adult.

A police officer will usually attend. This is because the police have a responsibility to provide any relevant information, where there are concerns about a child's safety and welfare.

There will be someone taking down notes of what is said (the minute).

Will I be invited to the conference?

Usually both parents are invited to a child protection case conference. Other family members may also be invited where they are closely involved.

You can bring someone for support, a close friend or advocate (Advocacy Shetland tel. 01595 743929). If you decide to bring someone this should be discussed with the social worker and agreed by the Chair. Please remember when choosing a supporter that there will be a lot of confidential information at the meeting.

Sometimes there may be part of the meeting that you cannot attend, for example the agencies may be discussing private information about someone else – the Chair would explain this if it happens.

What if I don't want to go?

You may find it difficult to come to the conference but it is still important that everyone there knows your feelings, wishes and views. You could put something in writing or ask your child's social worker to pass on your views.

If you are able to attend the conference that will help everyone work together to make sure your child is safe.

Will my child go to the conference?

Your child's social worker will discuss this with you and your child. Only children who are old enough, and not likely to be upset, should consider going to the conference.

If they attend it may not be appropriate to be there for the whole meeting.