



Making a complaint about a Child Protection Conference

Introduction

This information sheet gives details on how to make a complaint if you are a parent or have parental responsibility for a child who has been the subject of a multi agency child protection conference you have attended.

You can complain about:-

- the way the meeting was managed, or
- the decisions that were made

This information sheet also tells you how we will respond and in what timescales.

The decision of the Conference remains in place whilst your complaint is investigated. If your complaint is about a specific agency or professional involved in the child protection process, you will need to contact that agency to find out how to make a complaint.

Stage 1 – Early Consideration by Chair

If you are unhappy, please talk to the chair of the conference during or immediately after the meeting or make contact by telephone, letter or email within 10 working days from receiving the conference notes. The chair will want to listen to your concerns and wherever possible, resolve them.

Complaints made outside the 10 working days time limit may in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the chair be considered.

The chair should meet with you within 10 working days of receiving your complaint. A friend or relative can go to the meeting with you for support if you want. Or you can approach one of the organisations listed in our Advocacy for complaints leaflet to see if they can provide someone to support you. The chair will want to know from you what you think will resolve your complaint.

Within a further 10 working days, the chair will reply to your complaint in writing, but cannot change the decisions that were made at the conference. The chair will make it clear in their letter to you what you should do if you are not happy with the response and you want to take your complaint further.

Stage 2 - Formal Consideration by a Panel

If you are not satisfied with the response and would like to take your complaint to the next stage, you should contact the Complaints Manager within 20 working days of receiving the chair's letter. You should say why you are not happy with the response and what you want to achieve by taking your complaint further.

A Panel meeting will be arranged by the Complaints Manager in liaison with the Safeguarding Manager within 20 working days to consider your complaint. The Panel will be made up of at least three senior representatives from at least two different agencies such as health, education, police, or children's social care. They will not have had any direct involvement with you and your family, so will bring independence to the process. You can be at this meeting if you want to and you can bring a friend or an advocate to support you.

The Complaints Manager will advise you about the process and will arrange for the Panel to have copies of all relevant records, reports, correspondence and details of all the people involved in the conference.

The Complaints Manager will be present on the day to oversee the Panel meeting.

The Panel cannot change the initial decision that was made at the conference.

The Panel can decide:-

- that the conference did not follow the correct procedures or that the decisions made were unreasonable and so direct that the conference is held again with a different chair
- that the review conference is brought forward
- that correct procedures were followed, the recommendations made were reasonable and therefore the original conference decisions stand. Any new information will be considered in the usual way at the next review conference.

The Panel Chair will write to you within 10 working days of the Panel Meeting to inform you of their decision.

Next Steps

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint:-

- you can seek legal advice from a solicitor about taking your complaint to judicial review. Your local Citizen's Advice Bureau can help you find a suitable solicitor.

or

- you can refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Local Government Ombudsman's address is at the end of this leaflet.

Useful Contact Details

Safeguarding Manager
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance
4th Floor
St Mark's House
14 Upperton Road
Eastbourne
East Sussex, BN21 1EP

Phone: 01323 466606

Email:

cpconferencingservice@eastsussex.gov.uk

Complaints Manager

Children's Services Complaints Team

East Sussex County Council

County Hall

PO Box 4

St Anne's Crescent

Lewes

East Sussex, BN7 1SG

Phone: 01273 482304

Textphone: 07797 878888

Fax: 01273 481367

Email:

CScommentscomplaints@eastsussex.gov.uk

Opening hours:- 8.30am to 5pm from
Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm
on Fridays

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771

Coventry

CV4 0EH

Phone: 0845 602 1983 or 0300 061 0614

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Other Useful Information

For more information about the Local
Safeguarding Procedures

[http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/
childrenandfamilies/childprotection/
default.htm](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/childrenandfamilies/childprotection/default.htm)

For more information about the Children's
Services Complaints Procedures

[http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus/
complaintsprocedure/default.htm](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus/complaintsprocedure/default.htm)

For more information about the Local
Government Ombudsman

<http://www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint/>

Getting more copies of this leaflet

You can get all our leaflets in large print, easy read format, in Braille, on audio tape or CD, or in other languages. Please phone 01273 482304

East Sussex County Council

County Hall

St Anne's Crescent

Lewes BN7 1UE

Phone: 0345 60 80 190

Fax: 01273 481261

Website: eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus

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