

# Information for Professionals Attending a Child Protection Planning Meeting



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## **1. What is a Child Protection Planning Meeting?**

A Child Protection Planning Meeting is a formal multi-agency meeting to decide whether the child is at risk of significant harm. The meeting brings together relevant professionals, the child (if appropriate), parents and other important family members to:

- Share and analyse information (including the multi-agency chronology).
- Assess risk and protective factors.
- Decide whether the child's name should be placed on the Child Protection Register (CPR).
- Develop a Child Protection Plan to safeguard and support the child.
- Consider if a referral to the Children's Reporter is required.

The decision to hold the Child Protection Planning meeting is made within an Initial Referral Discussion (IRD) held between Social Work, Police and Health following the receipt of a serious concern for the child's welfare. If the decision is made to progress to an ICPPM, the meeting must be convened within 28 days of the commencement of the IRD discussion.

A Child Protection Planning Meeting can take the form of an Initial Child Protection Planning Meeting (ICPPM), Review Child Protection Planning Meeting (RCPPM), Pre-birth Child Protection Planning Meeting (RCPPM) or a Transfer Child Protection Planning Meeting. (P. 33 – Edinburgh and the Lothian Multi-agency CP Procedures).

## **2. Your Role as a Professional**

Professionals attending a Child Protection Planning Meeting are representing their agency/service and are therefore expected to prepare sufficiently in order to present their professional assessment and views confidently and competently.

Professionals are expected to:

- Submit a written report and chronology 10 calendar days before the Child Protection Planning Meeting. All reports apart from Police will be shared with the parents/carers and other professionals who will be attending the meeting.
- Share relevant information about the child and family in line with your service's Information Sharing Guidance (GIRFEC principles) and data protection law (p.17 - Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency CP Procedures).
- Present factual, evidence-based information on your involvement with the child or family.
- Contribute to risk analysis, assessment and the development of the Child Protection Plan.
- Identify support and interventions your agency can provide.

## **3. Preparation pointers**

### **Before the Meeting**

- Review your agency's records relating to the child and family.
- Prepare a concise written report, using the chronology to summarise:
  - Voice of the infant/child.
  - Key involvement and observations.

- Concerns about harm or neglect – identifying any patterns of behaviour.
- The impact of risk factors on the child.
- Assessment of parenting capacity – identifying any patterns of behaviour.
- Child’s vulnerabilities (anything about the child that increases the impact of the risk). Identify the ways in which the child is or may be impacted, as well as the relevant vulnerability (p41 - Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency CP Procedures)
- Strengths, supports, and protective factors – identifying any patterns of behaviour.
- Reports should be shared with the family (where possible) in advance of the meeting. The child, parents and carers should have an opportunity to clarify any issues before the meeting with you and there should be no surprises within your report.
- Ensure you are familiar with both local and national guidance:
  - [Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency Child Protection Procedures](#)
  - [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#)
  - [Getting It Right For Every Child](#)

### During the Meeting

East Lothian and Midlothian Children’s Services take slightly different approaches to how the meeting is facilitated. East Lothian use the Signs of Safety model<sup>1</sup> and Midlothian use an Outcomes Focused model.

The Chair (Independent Reviewing Officer – East Lothian/ Reviewing Officer – Midlothian) will:

- Outline the purpose and process of the meeting.
- Support respectful discussion and a clear focus on the child’s safety and welfare.
- Encourage robust discussion. Challenge and differences of opinion are a valuable element of decision making and effective multi-agency working.
- Ensure all professionals and family members have the opportunity to contribute.
- Reach a decision about Child Protection Registration through consensus. Consensus means ‘general or widespread agreement’ - not a majority vote.

If consensus cannot be reached and a professional disagrees with the decision or any element of the Child Protection plan the Professional Dissent Process can be instigated (p.40 - Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi-agency CP Procedures).

Professionals should:

- Speak clearly, avoiding jargon.
- Be clear and specific about concerns and protective factors. Openness and transparency are key in enhancing safety. Systems work more effectively and efficiently when there is accurate and relevant sharing of information.
- Carefully consider what information can be shared with the family and how restricted information is managed to ensure risks are addressed.
- Support a collaborative, trauma-informed approach.

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<sup>1</sup> [Signs of Safety](#)

- Be prepared to give their professional view on Child Protection Registration and associated rationale.
- Speak out if they disagree with any element of the meeting.
- If the meeting is a Review, be clear on any progress and evidence how the plan has or has not addressed the risks to the child.

### After the Meeting

If the child's name is placed on the Child Protection Register, a Core Group will be established to implement and monitor the Child Protection Plan.

Professionals are expected to:

- Review the minutes from the Child Protection Planning Meeting, ensure that any matters of accuracy are referred to the Chair, and the minutes are stored in accordance with your agency's record keeping procedures.
- Appropriately share relevant information about the Meeting and Plan with any other professional within your agency who needs to be involved in the Protection Plan.
- Attend Core Group meetings regularly (the date of the first Core Group will be agreed at the meeting and should be held within 15 working days of the Initial or Pre-birth CPPM). Core Groups should be held at least every 4 to 6 weeks.
- Share updates on progress and risks.
- Record decisions and actions promptly in agency systems.
- Take responsibility for implementing and reviewing the child's Plan on a regular basis - in partnership with the family as agreed and appropriate.

### 4. Restricted Access Information

This is information that cannot be shared freely with the child and family/representatives within the full CPPM. It must NOT be shared with any other person, including the child and/or family, without the prior permission of the provider. It will be shared verbally in the Restricted Access Information section of the meeting.

Restricted information includes:

- Sub-judice information that forms part of legal proceedings, and which would compromise those proceedings.
- information from a third party that could identify them if shared.
- information about an individual that may not be known to others, even close family members, such as medical history and intelligence reports.
- information that, if shared, could place any individual(s) at risk, such as a home address or school which is unknown to an ex-partner.

Professionals must justify why information is Restricted Access Information.

**If you are uncertain about any aspect of the meeting contact the Chair prior to the meeting (contact details can be obtained from the child's Social Worker).**

## **5. Additional Resources**

[NHS Scotland/Healthcare Improvement Scotland Child Protection Planning Meetings – guidance for Health professionals](#)

[Keeping children safe in Scotland – Guides for younger children, young people and parents and carers](#)