



South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board
Working Together For Children

Child Protection Conferences

Your right to appeal or make a Complaint

A guide for Parents, Carers and Young People

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What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet is designed to help you to appeal against a decision made by a Child Protection Conference or to make a complaint about the conduct of the conference.

(The leaflet will refer to your child even though you may have more than one child who is the subject of a Conference)

You have the right to:

- Make a complaint about the conference process and whether the procedures were correctly followed;
- Appeal against the registration decision, including the category;
- Appeal against the decision not to register or to de-register

If you have a Complaint about the content of the minutes, these will be dealt with by the conference Chairperson

For Complaints relating to;

- Services that are delivered by agencies as a result of conference decisions, or
- Complaints about a professional attending a conference;

These will be dealt with under the internal complaints procedures of the relevant agency. If an issue emerges in relation to a professional whilst a conference complaint is being dealt with, it will be referred to that individual's agency to follow up.

What is the Child Protection Register?

The Child Protection Register is a confidential list of children held by the Children's Services Division, and can be accessed only by professionals

Who can appeal or make a complaint?

- A parent/ Carer
- A person with parental responsibility
- A child or young person (if they are old enough to understand why the conference was held and what it means to be on the Child Protection Register)

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How do I appeal or make a complaint?

Step 1

You should discuss your concerns with the Conference Chairperson either immediately following the conference, or by telephoning or in writing to the Chairperson. Complaints should be addressed to the Conference Chairperson within 14 working days from the Conference minutes being sent.

(The address and telephone number is included at the end of this leaflet.)

You will be offered a meeting with the Chairperson to talk about your appeal or concerns, and to make sure you have all of the information you need to decide if you want to go ahead. The Chairperson will also advise you whether you should be taking up your concerns in a different way—for example through a Complaints Procedure. The Chairperson will aim to resolve your complaint within 7 working days of receiving your complaint.

Step 2

If you are still not satisfied the Chairperson will give you a form to complete which should be returned to the Child Protection Co-ordinator (the address will be on the form, a copy of which is included in this leaflet)

You may want to get help or support from someone you trust in filling out the form—this could be a friend, family member, your Solicitor or your Social Worker.

Step 3

A Complaints Panel will be arranged, and you will be invited to attend. You can then decide if you want to attend, or if you want to put your appeal or concerns in writing to the Panel—you can do whichever you prefer.

Who is on the Panel?

The Panel will be made up of at least 3 senior managers from agencies that are represented on the Local Safeguarding Children Board and will not include anyone who has had direct involvement with you or your family. No one who attended the Conference can be a member of the panel

What will the Panel consider?

If you are appealing against the registration decision, the Panel will consider whether the criteria for registration or deregistration have been met, or whether the category of registration is the right one.

If you are making a complaint about the conference process, the Panel will consider whether the Procedures for all of the professionals and agencies represented at the Conference have been followed correctly.

What happens at the Panel meeting?

If you decide that you do not want to attend, the Panel will read everything you have sent to them, plus the Conference minutes.

If you do decide to attend you can bring someone with you to support you, perhaps a family member or a friend. You will need to be sure that this is

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someone you can trust to hear the personal information that will be shared. The person can also speak on your behalf at the meeting if you wish. You can bring a Solicitor if you have one. Although they can speak on your behalf this will be only as an advisor or supporter, not to legally represent you—it is not a legal meeting.

If you are a young person you can also attend the Panel if you were invited to the conference and are old enough to fully understand what it means when your name is placed on the Child Protection Register. You will also be able to bring someone with you if you decide to attend the Panel.

You will be invited to tell the Panel why you disagree with registration or deregistration, or to explain your concerns about the conference. If you wish you can ask someone to give evidence to the Panel in support of your appeal. The Chairperson of the Panel will ask questions if they need to throughout the meeting.

What can the Panel do?

The Panel cannot add or remove a child's name from the Child Protection Register; this can only be done at a Child Protection Conference.

In an appeal against registration the Panel will decide;

Either: that the Conference must meet again to reconsider the decision about registration, or the category of registration. Following the panel the Chair will speak to the Child Protection Coordinator/Safeguarding Manager within 1 working day to ensure that you will be invited to attend a further conference which will be chaired by a different Chairperson. This will be held within 15 working days of the Panel meeting. The original conference decision will stand until the reconvened conference has taken place.

Or: that the decision was correct because the criteria were met.

In a Complaint about a Conference the Panel will decide:

Either: that the Conference did not follow the procedures correctly, in which case the Conference must meet again. You will be invited to attend that new conference which will be chaired by a different Chairperson and will be held within 15 working days of the Panel decision. The original conference decision will stand until the reconvened conference has taken place.

Or: that the conference did follow the Procedures correctly.

The Panel can also make recommendations to the individual agencies that attended the conference.

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How will I know the outcome?

You will be sent a letter informing you of the Panel's decision and the reasons for that decision.

How long will it take?

We aim to complete the process within 30 working days of receipt of your signed complaint form. In exceptional circumstances this may take a bit longer if, for example, the Panel needs to meet again to allow time to obtain further information.

What if I disagree with the Panel decision?

The decision of the complaints panel is the final stage in this appeal process. However, if you are still dissatisfied at this stage you can refer the matter to the local government Ombudsman:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed, Bridgend
CF35 5LJ

Telephone number: 0300 790 0203

We hope that this leaflet has helped you to understand more about how to appeal or make a complaint. If you want to know more then please ask your Social Worker.

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Name of Complainant:

Relationship to the child:

Address:

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Telephone Number:

Date:

Please return to:

South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager
Business Unit
Floor 2, Ty Penallta
Parc Tredomen
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7PG

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