

Child Protection Case Conferences COVID-19 Update 08/07/20

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the arrangements for the administration of Child Protection Case Conferences.

You will be aware since the start of “lockdown” we have moved to conducting Child Protection Case Conferences (CPCC) on a virtual basis. On the whole this has been hugely successfully and has allowed us as a partnership to continue to ensure we are focused on the safety and protection of the most vulnerable children in our community. We are all becoming more accustomed to using this technology and this is enabling these critical meetings to proceed in a smooth manner.

It is apparent from the Scottish Government’s Route Map that “social distancing” will remain a part of our lives for the foreseeable future. Accordingly we have had to consider this within the planning for CPCC’s going forward. As such I am writing to advise of the following adaptations that we will be making:

1. CPCC’s will continue to be held on a virtual basis.

Professionals from Health, Education and Police Scotland will continue to be invited to attend CPCC’s virtually via Microsoft Teams. Reports should continue to be submitted in the same manner.

Feedback from families has indicated that they can find it difficult to engage in discussions, particularly for initial CPCC’s. Accordingly we would intend to offer them the opportunity to attend initial CPCC’s in person. They would be in the conference room with the Chair and the allocated social worker, taking full account of social distancing expectations. Partners contributions would be made via Teams to ensure multi agency decision making. Decisions about such an arrangement for other CPCC’s will be taken on a case by case basis.

2. Re-introduction of Review CPCC’s

Following the start of lockdown routine Review CPCC’s were put on hold with priority given to Initial CPCC’s and CPCC’s where de-registration was being considered. There have been a few circumstances where the needs of a child have necessitated a Review CPCC being convened, however for the majority these have been postponed. We now intend to work through the overdue review CPCC’s, taking a risk based approach to prioritise these.

Dates for these will be issued by the Administration Team allowing sufficient time for information to be pulled and reports submitted. We would intend to start with those requiring their first Review. In relation to children of school age, the programme for recommencement of those Review case conferences will begin in the week of 11 August when schools resume to ensure Education professionals familiar with the child and family can contribute to the discussion and decision making.

In relation to de-registration, we intend to trial the conduct of these as a paper exercise where it is clear to the Chair that all professionals and the family support this. This reduces numbers of meetings, reduces pressure on professional time and is compliant with ongoing public health expectations. If de-registration is not the clear recommendation from all partners, or circumstances are such that a meeting would be beneficial for any reason, a virtual Review meeting will be convened.

3. Changes to minuting arrangements.

As we all become more confident using Microsoft Teams we want to utilise the full functionality of this tool. Microsoft Teams allows for the recording of CPCC's, accordingly it is our intention that from 20 July 2020 we will electronically record all CPCC's. This will create a digital file which will be stored securely. We consequently intend to stop producing a standalone minute in the current format from 20 July 2020. We will continue to focus on the production of family friendly Child Protection Plans, which will provide a brief context to the actions agreed at the CPCC.

The only exception to this will be CPCC's which are also being asked to give consideration to ruling out rehabilitation of a child to parental care. In recognition that these minutes may be required to be submitted to Court at a future point a minute will be produced, summarising the discussion and the reasons for the decisions agreed at the CPCC.

By way of assurance for partners:

- Families will continue to be advised of the outcome of the case conference within 24 hours
- The document prepared by the Chair following the case conference will substitute for the "minute" required by the National Guidance for Child Protection. It will satisfy the requirement to ensure the decision is appropriately and timeously intimated to the Child Protection Register, partners, CareFirst, and will gather any other data required to meet national or local data requirements
- Where parents request a copy of the recording from the CPCC, we will be able to provide them with a verbatim record of the CPCC
- The focus will shift from the current minute to a child's plan which monitors outcomes and identifies actions required of both professionals and the family

I recognise that this will be a change, like so many others over the past three months, we will all have to adapt to. There will inevitably be learning we will need to consider from this change. In particular, Partners may wish alert those staff attending case conferences of the need to ensure that their contributions withstand being recorded. A helpful rule of thumb is to always speak as if the parent is in the room. We will, of course, review the implementation of this change, drawing on feedback from parents, children and stakeholders to understand any learning we need to take onboard.

I am sure I can count on your support and that of your agency with regards to the above as we continue to build back services.

Regards



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