Your child's protection plan

This guide is for you if your child has a child protection plan.

DARLINGTON
Borough Council

A child protection plan means that professionals are concerned about your child's safety. Because of these concerns a formal plan has been put in place. The plan is there to keep your child safe and to support you and your family. This page explains what the plan means and what you can expect.

What is the plan for?

The plan sets out:

- what the concerns are
- what needs to change to keep your child safe
- what support will be provided to help your family
- who is responsible for each action
- how progress will be reviewed

What the plan means

A child protection plan sets out what everyone, including you, has agreed to do to keep your child safe. Its a formal commitment and following it is important.

It sets out how everyone will work together to:

- keep your child safe
- make sure your family gets the right help in place

Who leads the work?

Your Family Help Lead Practitioner is responsible for working with you and your family supported by their manager. Your Lead Child Protection Practitioner will oversee your family until the child protection plan ends. Other professionals from health, education, and other services will also be part of the team supporting your family.

The core group

A core group will be set up. This will include you and a smaller group of the professionals most involved with your child and family.

It will usually include:

- your Family Help Lead Practitioner
- other professionals (for example, a teacher or health visitor)
- sometimes family members or others supporting you

What the core group does

The core group meets once a month to review how your plan is progressing and what else may need to be done.

How often will your Family Help Lead Practitioner visit?

While your child is on a child protection plan, your Family Help Lead Practitioner will visit your home at least every 10 working days. These visits are to check on your child's safety and wellbeing and to offer support.

Some visits will be planned and arranged in advance. Some visits may be unannounced. This allows your Family Help Lead Practitioner to make sure your child is safe outside of planned visits.

Child protection plan process

If a child protection plan is put in place, the following will happen.

1. Initial child protection conference

A core group will be set up - a smaller group of professionals and family members who will work together to follow the plan.

2. First core group (within two weeks)

The core group will meet withing 10 working days of the first conference, then monthly for as long as the plan is in place.

3. Core group meetings (monthly)

Your Family Help Lead Practitioner will visit your child at home at least every 10 working days.

4. First review conference (three months)

A review conference will take place every three months. At this conference, a decision can be made for the child's protection plan to end or to continue.

5. Continue core group meetings

Core group meetings continue at the same intervals – monthly – for as long as the plan is in place.

6. Second review conference

A second review conference will take place at nine months. At this conference, a decision can be made for the child protection plan to end or to continue.

7. Ongoing review conferences

Review conferences continue at least every six months. At each review conference, a decision can be made for the child protection plan to end or to continue.

The plan will end when the child is no longer considered to be at risk of significant harm. This will only be decided at a review child protection conference

What we expect from you

We ask you to:

- work with us and follow the plan as best you can
- attend core group meetings
- allow your family help worker to visit your home
- tell your family help worker if anything changes, for example, if things become more difficult
- let us know if there are any changes to who lives in or regularly visits your home

If you are finding things difficult

If you are struggling to keep to something in the plan, please tell your family help worker or your Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP)

- it is okay to ask for help
- being open and honest really helps

We would rather work through any problems with you than not know about them.

What can you expect from us?

You can expect:

- to be treated with respect
- to have our concerns and thinking explained clearly
- to have your views listened to and taken seriously
- to be told what support is available and to receive it
- to receive reports before every conference
- to be fully involved in decisions about your child
- to be clear about what specifically needs to change in order for the plan to end and support you achieve this.

If support is not provided

If support in the plan has not been given, you can speak up. You can:

- talk to your Family Help Lead Practitioner's manager
- contact the Lead Child Protection Practitioner

It is important to raise concerns so we can put things right.

Review conferences

A review child protection conference will take place after 3 months, then at least every 6 months until the plan ends.

What happens at a review

At each review it will be decided whether:

- the plan should continue (if there are still concerns)
- the plan can move to less support, such as a Child in Need plan
- the plan can end (if concerns have been resolved)

You will be invited to every review conference. You should receive all reports before the meeting. You can find more information about what to expect and how to prepare on our child protection conference page.

If you disagree

You have the right to disagree with the plan or with any decisions made. You can:

- raise your concerns at a core group meeting or conference
- make a formal complaint
- to get advice and guidance by contacting ParentCarerAdvocacy@darlington.gov.uk
- get free independent legal advice and you may be able to get legal aid

It is okay to speak up if you do not agree. Your views are important.

OPTIMA

We want to hear from you

Our aim is to put you and your family first and provide you with the best possible service.

It is important that you have the opportunity to tell us what you think about the services we provide.

You can tell us when we get things right, make comments about the things we do and suggest new ways of doing things.

Your feedback helps us improve our services for all families.

You can also tell us when we get things wrong so we can put them right.

Using the council's complaints procedures is one way you can do this.

Most concerns can be resolved informally by speaking directly with the member of staff working with you, or their team manager. You can share your concerns with them and they will aim to resolve the issue by the end of the next working day.

You can make a compliment or a complaint using the contact details below.

- **Online:** use our online complaints form at darlington.gov.uk
- **Email:** complaints@darlington.gov.uk
- **Phone:** 01325 406777
- **In person:** Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

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