

CHILD PROTECTION CASE CONFERENCES

The Case Conference is a non-statutory meeting organised by the social work services to consult with other agencies to collate information about the child and family. The Child Protection Case Conference has a specific role regarding the protection of children. The purpose is to allow the participants to pool their knowledge of the child's health, development and functioning and the carer's capacity to ensure the safety and well being of the child and assess risk.

The case conference is central to child protection procedures.

Its function is to:

1. Bring together all the information from people working with the child.
2. Using this information to analyse and then to assess the measures needed to be taken by the various agencies in order to protect the child.
3. If it is considered necessary to put a child protection plan in place then the child will be registered on the child protection register.
4. There will also be a decision made regarding referral to the Children's Reporter.

You will be asked to write a report for the Case Conference. This should arrive at least 2 days before the date. At the Case Conference you will be expected to speak to your report.

The case conference may start with a 'protected period' – this allows agencies to share information that is confidential or has not been shared as yet with the parents – this period should NOT be used to share information that should be shared with parents, any request for a protected period must be justified to the Chair.

At the end of the case conference, once all the information has been shared, you will be asked for your professional opinion regarding the registration of the child and the category to be used. In order to do this you will have to consider if the threshold for registration has been reached and, with reference to the definitions, the category that should be used. If the child's name is registered, a planning meeting will take place after the case conference and you will be expected to attend and contribute to the plan if appropriate.

This first case conference is referred to as an initial case conference. A review case conference refers to any subsequent one.

WHO ATTENDS?

Parents/carers and children are invited to attend child protection case conferences, in addition the following people will be invited:

The child's social worker; senior social worker or team manager; police; health professionals including health visitor, school nurse, community paediatrician, GP; Designated person for child protection from the child's school, head teacher, guidance teacher, class teacher; Reporter to the Children's Panel (observe only); Procurator Fiscal; Highland Council legal services; other appropriate people as identified by the senior social worker/team manager.



DEFINITIONS

Significant Harm

The concept of significant harm is a complicated matter, and depends on professional judgement based on assessing the child's and family's circumstances. Significant harm can be as a result of a specific incident, a series of incidents or as a result of many concerns, which have arisen over a period of time. It is essential when considering whether there is significant harm, that the child's needs and circumstances come first, rather than the view of the alleged abusive behaviour.

Physical Injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child, including the administration of toxic substances, where there is knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse

Any child may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person(s), by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity to lead to sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other person(s) including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact or whether or not the child is said to have initiated, or consented to, the behaviour.

Emotional Abuse

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child.

This can occur where as a result of behaviour by the care-giver(s) children appear to be rejected, denigrated or scapegoated; inappropriately punished; engage in uncharacteristic anti-social behaviour or put in a state of terror or extreme anxiety by the use of threats or practices designed to intimidate them; isolate or are isolated from the group, and do not form friendships.

Physical Neglect

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include food, clothing, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care, including deprivation of access to health care, may result in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence, to circumstances which endanger the child.

Non-Organic Failure to Thrive

Children who significantly fail to reach normal growth and developmental milestones(i.e. physical growth, weight, motor, social and intellectual development) where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established.

Training

There are regular training events across Highland for child protection, including basic awareness raising and case conferences. For more information please contact your designated person for child protection.

Further information can be found in 'Working Together to Protect Children in the Highlands' – inter-agency child protection guidelines, copies of which are available in all schools, social work offices, libraries and health clinics throughout the Highlands, or are accessible on www.highland.gov.uk.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES AREA OFFICES

Badenoch & Strathspey	01479 810251
Caithness	01955 605040
Inverness	01463 724220
Lochaber	01397 703397
Nairn	01667 453746
Ross & Cromarty	01349 868567
Skye & Lochalsh	01478 612943
Sutherland	01408 633033
Emergency out of hours service	08457 697284

EDUCATION AREA OFFICES

Badenoch & Strathspey	01463 663800
Caithness	01955 602362
Inverness	01463 663800
Lochaber	01397 702466
Nairn	01463 663800
Ross & Cromarty	01349 863441
Skye & Lochalsh	01478 613697
Sutherland	01408 623900

POLICE AREA COMMAND HQs

Caithness & Sutherland	01955 603551
Inverness	01463 715555
Lochaber	01397 702361
Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey	01479 810222
Ross, Cromarty & Skye	01349 862444
Child Protection Unit	01463 720259

HIGHLAND CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Clerk to the Committee	01463 703483
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CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm	01463 703462
Out of hours	08457 697284

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

HEALTH

Child Protection Advisors, NHS Highland

Dr Malcolm Baxter, Consultant Paediatrician	01463 701310
Sandie Young, Senior Nurse Child Protection	01463 701309

Designated persons

Badenoch & Strathspey, HPCT	
Barbara Black	01479 872528
Caithness HAHT & HPCT	
Doreen Bell	01847 893442
East Ross, HPCT	
Christine Gilmour	01349 866410
Inverness & Culloden, HPCT	
Brian Lamond	01463 242860 Extn 3401

Lochaber, HAHT & HCPT

Morag MacNeill	01397 702481 Extn 273
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Nairn, HPCT

Cynthia May	01667 452618
Raigmore Acute Trust	
Christina MacKenzie	01463 704000 Extn 4357

Skye & Lochalsh, HPCT

Alison Hudson	01599 522331
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Sutherland, HPCT

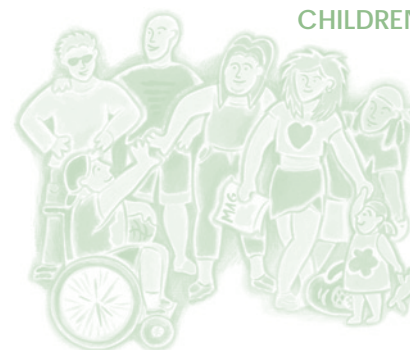
Valerie Wares	07748 761883
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West Ross, HPCT

Gina Mackenzie	01854 633263
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CHILDREN'S REPORTER

Authority Reporter
(Highland)
01463 245302



Highland Child Protection Committee

Working Together to Protect Children in the Highlands



Initial Child Protection Case Conferences

Information for People Invited to Attend and Contribute