

Multi-disciplinary Case Conference on Protection of Child with Suspected Abuse

Leaflet for
Adolescents



社會福利署
Social Welfare Department

All children deserve to grow up healthily with proper physical, psychological and emotional care. They should be protected against harm and exploitation. However, if the physical/psychological health and development of a child is endangered or impaired, people working with the child have the responsibility to take necessary actions to protect the safety of the child and safeguard his/her interests.

What is a Multi-disciplinary Case Conference on Protection of Child with Suspected Abuse (conference)?

When it is suspected that the physical/psychological health and development of a child is endangered or impaired, social workers from the Social Welfare Department or non-governmental organisations and other related professionals will meet the child and the family. They will also contact others who have knowledge of the child and the family, in order to understand their situations and discuss how to provide care and guidance for the child in future. The professionals will hold a conference. The purpose of the conference is NOT to discuss whether anyone is to be prosecuted, but to allow professionals who concern about the child to exchange available information and then recommend a follow-up plan for the child and his/her family, especially with regard to how to protect the safety of the child. All details discussed at the conference will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone without the need to know.

When will the conference be held?

If the required information is ready, the conference will normally be held within 10 working days after the social worker has received the case.

Who will attend the conference?

The conference is usually convened by a social worker. Members will include professionals who are involved in the investigation of the case, those who have knowledge of the child and his/her family members and those who may follow up the case in future. Normally they are:

- social workers
- medical personnel

- clinical psychologists
- school personnel
- police officers
- professionals currently providing services to the child or the family
- other professionals who are required to provide information or may handle the case in future

How will the conference be conducted?

Professionals attending the conference will report the information obtained as well as their knowledge of the child and the family, and then proceed to discuss the following:

- What issues or incidents have happened to the child?
- What is the level of possible harm the child and/or his/her siblings may suffer in future?
- What arrangements can be made to protect the safety of the child and safeguard his/her interests? For example:
 - ◆ Is it necessary to have alternative residential care arrangements for the child and/or other family members?
 - ◆ Is it necessary to apply for an order from the Court for the care or protection arrangements of the child and/or his/her siblings?
 - ◆ Do the child and other family members need other services, such as schooling arrangements, physical or psychological treatment, etc.?
- Will the information of the child and/or his/her siblings be registered on the Child Protection Registry of the Social Welfare Department?
- Social workers from what service units and what other professionals will provide services for the child and his/her family?

Can the parents or the child attend the conference?

The conference consists of two parts. The first part is for discussion among professionals. The second part is for the professionals to meet with parents. Unless it is considered unsuitable due to special reasons, the social worker will invite the parents to attend the second part of the conference to let the parents know members' views on the child and his/her family. The parents can also give views on the future care

arrangements for the child and have a better understanding of how to collaborate with the professionals.

If the Chairperson and members of the conference consider the child's attendance necessary, the social worker will invite the child to attend the conference.

If the parents or the child are not present at the conference, or their attendance is considered unsuitable by members of the conference, they can express their opinions to the social worker or other members beforehand for consideration during the conference. After the conference, the Chairperson or social worker may, jointly with other members, explain the decisions and recommendations to the parents. They will also explain to the child when needed using the way the child can understand. If necessary, the social worker will pass the views of parents and child to other members.

How can the child play a part if he/she attends the conference?

Before the conference, the Chairperson or social worker will explain clearly to the child the purpose of the conference, the participating members and the procedures of the conference, etc. During the conference, the child may provide additional background information about his/her family and express opinions about the care plan or other arrangements recommended by members. The child can ask the Chairperson or members to explain anything he/she does not understand.

What are the arrangements after the conference?

The conference will determine the social worker from what service unit will follow up the case. The responsible social worker and other professionals will meet and communicate with the child and his/her family, and implement the care plan and other arrangements recommended by the conference. The child can tell them about his/her views, situations or even worries for a discussion on how to address them.