



CSCP COMPLAINTS PANEL

PROCEDURES

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The child protection conference brings together family members, the child (where appropriate), supporters, advocates and professionals most involved with the child and family to:
- share and evaluate information in a multi-agency setting regarding the child's health, development and needs;
 - share and evaluate information in a multi-agency setting regarding the parent / carer's capacity to ensure the child's safety and promote the child's wellbeing within the context of the wider family and environment;
 - assess the likelihood of the child suffering significant harm in the future and the need for a child protection plan;
 - decide what future action is needed to safeguard the child and promote their welfare and how that action will be taken;
 - in the case of review case conferences, decide whether or not the child should remain subject to a child protection plan.
- 1.2 Parents, carers or children may make a complaint in respect of one or more of the following aspects of the conference:
- the process of the conference;
 - the outcome, in terms of and/or the category of primary concern at the time the child became the subject of a child protection plan;
 - a decision for the child to become, to continue or not to become, the subject of a child protection plan.
- 1.3 All parties must be made aware that this complaints process cannot change the decisions made by the conference and that while it is proceeding, the decision made at the conference continues to stand.
- 1.4 The outcome of a complaint will be either that a conference is re-convened under a different chair, that a review conference is brought forward, or that the original decision stands.
- 1.5 Complaints about an individual agency, its performance and provision (or non-provision) of services should be responded to in accordance with that agency's complaints handling processes.

2 IMMEDIATE RESOLUTION

- 2.1 If a complaint by a parent, carer or child arises during the child protection conference it must be noted and an attempt made by the Chair to resolve it with the complainant.
- 2.2 If this initial attempt to resolve matters fails, the complainant should be made aware of the conference complaints process and be invited to write to the conference Chair within 28 days of receiving the minutes of the conference.

3 STAGE 1 - EXPLORATION BY CONFERENCE CHAIR

- 3.1 The conference Chair should share the letter of complaint with the Head of the Quality Assurance Service and the Local Authority Complaints Officer.
- 3.2 Complaints made outside the 28 day time limit may, in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the conference Chair, be accepted.
- 3.3 The conference Chair should meet with the complainant (who may bring a friend or relative) within five working days of receipt of the complaint to:
- ensure the complainant sufficiently understands the child protection process
 - clarify the grounds for and nature of the complaint
 - establish the outcome desired by the complainant
 - ensure the complainant understands the scope and relevance of this complaints process in respect of their own circumstances
 - gather relevant information.
- 3.4 The meeting with the complainant should be minuted.
- 3.5 Within a further five working days, the conference Chair should provide a written response to the complainant which includes notes of the outcome of their meeting. This letter should also include information about how to make a formal complaint under Camden's Complaints System if they are still dissatisfied and wish to take their complaint further; details are available at: [Complaints - Camden Council](#)
- 3.6 This letter should be copied to:
- The Head of the Quality Assurance Service: Adele.Ellis@camden.gov.uk
 - The Director of Children's Safeguarding and Family Help: Rashida.Baig@camden.gov.uk
 - The Children's Complaints Unit: ([Complaints@camden.gov.uk](#))

4 STAGE 2: THE CSCP COMPLAINTS PANEL

- 4.1 The complainant has 28 days in which to accept or reject the Chair's decision on their complaint.
- 4.2 If they are not satisfied they must make a formal complaint in writing to the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership ([Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership CSCP](#)) who will make arrangement to convene a multi-agency Complaints Panel within 28 days if Stage 1 processes have not been successful.
- 4.3 The Complaints Panel will consist of partners engaged in the Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership. It is not a standing group but is convened when necessary.
- 4.4 The panel will not include any member with either present or previous direct line management responsibility for the case in question.
- 4.5 The panel should comprise a minimum of 3 members of the CSCP, and should include representatives from the 3 safeguarding partners, Children Safeguarding and Family Help, Camden Police and a safeguarding lead from Health Services.

The CSCP Development Officer will liaise with the complainant, coordinate and minute all meetings.

- 4.6 The CSCP Development Officer will ensure that the panel is provided with:
- A formal request to convene
 - A copy of the relevant conference minutes and the reports that were made available to the conference
 - Stage 1 meeting notes and correspondence
 - Names, addresses and telephone numbers of the conference Chair, all other professionals involved and the family concerned.
- 4.7 The panel will consider whether:
- Relevant multi-agency protocols and procedures have been correctly observed, and
 - If any decision in dispute follows reasonably from the processes employed and information presented.
- 4.8 The panel will:
- Consider the written material
 - Meet with (i) the complainant (who is entitled to bring a friend to support them), (ii) the Chair of the relevant child protection conference and (iii) any other relevant persons
 - Meetings will be minuted and circulated to those attending.
- 4.9 When all interviews have been completed the Panel will meet to:
- Reach a decision
 - Agree the content of their decision letter to the complainant.
- 4.10 The panel should aim to put their conclusions in writing to the complainant within 5 working days of the meeting. However, this is dependent on the availability of the conference Chair and other relevant persons to meet with the Panel and any delay should be explained to the complainant.
- 4.11 The letter should:
- Confirm membership of the panel
 - State the decision reached by the panel, with concise information about how it was reached.
- 4.12 The panel should recommend that a conference is re-convened under a different Chair if it concludes that:
- Procedures/protocols relating to the conference were not correctly followed, or
 - They were correctly followed, but the decision of the conference was unreasonable.
- 4.13 If the panel concludes that the procedures/ protocols were correctly followed and the decision/s reached were reasonable, it must confirm that the conclusions of the original conference stand and will be routinely reviewed when the review conference is held.
- 4.14 The panel should also consider any specific concerns that it feels should be brought to the attention of the agencies involved in the case; it can also make recommendations on practice or procedures to any CSCP partner agency.

- 4.15 A written note of the Panel decisions and panel minutes should be copied to the Children's Complaints Unit.

5 THE RECONVENED CONFERENCE

- 5.1 The Chair of the re-convened conference (initial or review) must ensure that those present have either seen or are briefed at the conference about the decisions reached by the CSCP's Complaints Panel.
- 5.2 The Chair must also make clear the distinction between the need to discuss the conclusions of the Complaints Panel and the task of the conference, which is to consider the child/ren's current circumstances.

6 FURTHER CHALLENGES

- 6.1 No further internal processes exist in those cases where the panel concludes that all relevant processes were followed and that the decisions which were made were reasonable.
- 6.2 A complainant who nonetheless remains dissatisfied may wish to pursue her/his grievances via the Local Government Ombudsman or Judicial Review.
- 6.3 In what are likely to be a very rare case, where a re-convened conference has been recommended, held and the complainant does not accept the outcome, the same panel may be asked to re-convene and review any remaining and clearly specified concerns.

7 LIMITATIONS

- 7.1 The CSCP complaints procedure cannot address matters that are currently the subject of legal proceedings