**Child Protection Conference Professional Dissent Process**

This dissent process is for professionals only and should not be confused with the rights of parents and children to complain about the service they have received from the Local Authority or any other agency working with their family.

The dissent process is separate from the HSSCP professional challenge, escalation and dispute process[,](https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_escalation.html) which forms part of the local safeguarding children procedures.

It is imperative that agencies work together to safeguard children. However, there may be occasions where an agency representative has concerns about the outcome of a Child Protection Conference.

If this is the case, **these concerns must be raised within the conference meeting**, where you will be given the opportunity to explore your thoughts and opinions based on the information that you have in respect of the family and what you have heard during the meeting. **If, after you have heard all the information you remain concerned about the outcome**, **it is important that you make your views known openly**.

All professionals should be clear about the distinction between disagreeing with the outcome of a Child Protection Conference and making a professional judgement to uphold that decision and formally dissenting; this is the process by which you ask for your view of dissent to be formally recorded in the minutes and taken further, in line with the formal dissent process.

To dissent means that a professional disagrees so strongly with the conference decision that they cannot have their professional name attributed to the decision.

Dissent can only be expressed within a child protection conference; dissent cannot be made by professionals who have not attended the conference or after the conference has ended.

# Dissent Process

The Reviewing Officer who chairs the conference will ensure that all who attend have the opportunity to share their views and discuss what is working well for the child and family and what people are worried about to support the decision making of the conference.

There may be occasions during a Child Protection Conference when after hearing all the information shared at Conference professionals do not agree with the outcome of the meeting and feel that threshold has or has not been met for a child or children to be subject to a Protection Plan.

It is important that all dissents are properly considered and there is a transparent process within which concerns can be escalated. All dissents will be recorded formally within the Decisions Outcome and Recommendations forms and the Child Protection minutes.

All professionals who have dissented at a Child Protection Conference will need to discuss their reasons with their line manager and safeguarding lead, prior to formal written dissents being submitted.

The reasons for the dissent must be put in writing and sent to the relevant IRO Service Manager/Head of Service as soon as possible but no later than 5 working days from the Child Protection Conference – See ***Appendix 1: Dissent Form.***

The referral will then be passed onto the nominated representatives of the Quality, Learning and Practice group. A meeting will be held within 5 working days of receipt of the dissent form, the reports and minutes from the conference will be reviewed and a decision will be made to either confirm the Conference outcome or to request the Conference be reconvened with a different chair. Professionals and family will be informed of the outcome.

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**Child Protection Conference takes place**

**Outcome leads to formal dissent**

**Discussion with agency**

**manager/safeguarding**

Details of grounds for dissent sent to IRO S.Manager/HOS within 5 working days

Dissent shared with

 nominated reps of the quality, learning and practice group and

meeting set up within

5 working days

Meeting held

-

dissent reviewed

**Outcome notified to family & professionals**

Conference decision

upheld

Conference is

reconvened

Decision not reached

(

escalated

)

Chair of

conference

notified

Appendix 1: Dissent Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Professional:  | Role and Agency:  |
| Agency address:  |  |
| Telephone number and email address:  |  |
| Name and contact details of professional’s manager:  |  |
| Name of Child or Children and DOB:  | Date of Child Protection Conference:  |
| • Was the child made subject to a Child Protection plan?  |  Yes  No   |
| • Have you discussed this dissent with your line manager and safeguarding lead?  |  Yes  No   |
| **Rationale for Dissent:**  |  |
| Signature:  | Date:  |