

Virtual Conference Model Guidance (LBHF)

We recognise that it may prove difficult/challenging for parents to be involved in a whole virtual conference, particularly ICPC's when they may not know participants. However, our trials have identified that parents can feel outside, and possibly excluded from the process if not fully involved in the discussion with professionals.

We have therefore decided that parents be given the option of participating fully in a whole virtual conference process or having a 3-part conference, where the parents will only meet with the CPA.

If parents choose to be involved in a whole virtual conference the SW and Chair will need to undertake preparation work with the parents. During the conference the Chair will need to manage the discussion very tightly to ensure parents know who's talking, and also have space to respond/share their views. All participants will need to state who they are each time they talk.

The virtual conference model applies to both ICPC's and RCPC's

The virtual conference process.

Important - to facilitate an effective virtual conference,

- The **SW and professionals** will need to ensure that they have shared their reports/concerns with the family in advance of the conference **Not on the day**,
- **Professionals** will need to send their reports to the SW, Chair and other professionals, in advance of the conference.
- **SW** to provide the CPA and Conference Coordinator with the **parents telephone number and email address when confirming the invitation list**
- Where appropriate children should be invited to participate in the conference. **Referrals to the Children's Advocate should continue.** The Children's Advocate will hold a virtual meeting with children and feedback at the conference

Both models

Pre conference

- SW and CPA will have a discussion about the case and current assessment/analysis so that the CPA is fully apprised of the current situation
- SW will have video or audio meeting with family about the conference and their assessment and ensure they have shared their report.
- CPA will have a video or audio meeting with the parents and where appropriate, the child/ren, in advance of the conference to prepare them
- CPA will advise parents that plans and minutes will be sent password protected and that the password will be sent by text. CPA to confirm the parents mobile number and email address.

The 3-Part Conference

The conference

- CPA will have a video or audio meeting with the parents prior to the meeting with professionals, talk through the assessment/analysis as outlined in the SW report and professional reports – SOS format - and discuss safety planning. CPA will engage the parents in thinking about safety planning and what they think this might look like.
- CPA will hold a virtual meeting which will include the SW and professionals only. They will confirm the concerns - SOS format – and agree a safety plan, taking into account the parent's views/suggestions. Conference Coordinator will join the meeting virtually and take minutes.

Post conference

- CPA and SW to have a video or audio meeting with the parents and confirm the safety plan. Conference Coordinator will also join the meeting to take notes, including the parent's views.

Parents involved in the whole virtual conference

The conference

- The CPA will hold a video or audio pre-meeting with the parents, just prior to the start of the conference, to ensure they are fully prepared
- CPA will hold a virtual conference, which will include the parents, SW and professionals. They will discuss the concerns and agree a safety plan, taking into account the parent's views/suggestions. Conference Coordinator will join the meeting virtually and take minutes.

Post conference

- CPA and SW to hold a video or audio meeting with the parents to ensure they have understood everything, that their views have been heard and to confirm the safety plan.

Both models

Getting the plan out

- The plan will be sent to professionals in the usual way, via secure email.
- The plan and minutes will be drawn up as a word document, with all identifying detail removed, such as names and address, and replaced with initials only. This will need to be password protected and sent to parents by email.
- **All sensitive information in the minutes (for DV cases) will be redacted for both parents to ensure that we do not increase risks to victims who may be living with perpetrators. SW and CPA's to advise victims of this**

Contingency

If a virtual conference is unable to proceed due the unavailability of professionals and parents, the following will take place:

- SW and CPA to discuss the case, concerns, safety plans, and for RCPC's the progress of plans and any new risks and information. SW and CPA will create/update the safety plan. Conference Coordinator will be part of this virtual meeting, take notes and write up plan.
- SW and CPA to try and hold a video or audio meeting with the parents to discuss current assessment/analysis and safety plan
- Safety plan to be circulated to parents and professionals as above

Issues to consider

- Video conference calls are not suitable for large meetings and the connections can be unreliable.
Audio conference calling is more reliable.
- Not all parents will have Whatsapp on their phones
SW will need to ensure parents can download the app
- Parents may not have enough data/money on their phones or be able to afford to top up their phones
Parents will need to be provided with top up cards or be given financial support to enable them to participate in a virtual conference