The following procedure is to be followed in response to parents’ complaints about a child protection conference. The statutory guidance on complaints is set out in the London Safeguarding Children Board, *London Child Protection Procedures, 5th edition*, 2013, Chapter 4. The process is also governed by the Local Authority Complaints Procedures under the Children Act 1989.

### Stage 1

- Complaints about aspects of the functioning, records and decisions taken in a Child Protection Conference are addressed to the conference chair by the child, parent and/or carer i.e. the complainant.
  
  **Timescale** – The complainant to write to the Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) within 20 working days of receipt of minutes

- The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) informs the Children’s Customer Care and Complaints Manager of the complaint.
  
  **Timescale** - On receipt of the complaint

- The Children’s Customer Care and Complaints Manager’s role is to monitor the process

- The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) reviews the complaint
  
  **Timescale** – The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) meets with complainant within 10 working days of receipt of complaint

- Whilst a complaint is being considered, the decision made by the conference stands

- The outcome of a complaint will either be that:
  
  - A conference is reconvened under a different chair
  
  - A review conference is brought forward, or

  - The status quo is confirmed along with a suitable explanation

- The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) responds to the complainant in writing
  
  **Timescale** - Within 10 working days of meeting with the complainant

Complaints about individual agencies, their performance and provision or non-provision of services are to be responded to in accordance with the relevant agency’s complaints procedure.

### Reconvened conference

- The Chair of a reconvened conference, either initial or review, must ensure that all present have seen or are briefed at the conference about the decisions reached regarding the complaint
  
  **Timescale** – The conference is reconvened within 15 working days of the date of the letter sent to the complainant notifying them of the decision to reconvene the conference

- A distinction must be made by the chair between the need to discuss the conclusions of the complaint and the task of the conference to consider the child/ren’s current circumstances
  
  **Timescale** – The minutes of the reconvened conference is sent to the complainant within 15 working days of conference

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied with outcome of the complaint and/or the reconvened conference.
**Timescale** – The complainant must write to the Children’s Customer Care and Complaints Manager specifying the reasons within 20 working days from the receipt of the complaint outcome letter or receipt of the reconvened conference minutes.

- If the complainant requires any special help in pursuing the complaint, it must be requested at this time.

**Stage 2:**

- The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) convenes an inter-agency panel made up of senior representatives from Islington Safeguarding Children’s Board (ISCB) member agencies, one of whom chairs the panel. The panel will consist of a minimum of 3 people. (The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) is not a panel member.)

- The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) provides the panel with information about the complaint and the process undertaken to address the complaint.

- The panel will hear, either directly or indirectly, from the complainant, the chair of the Child Protection Conference and any other relevant person.

- The panel considers whether the relevant inter-agency protocols and procedures have been observed correctly and whether the decision/functioning of the conference that is being complained about followed reasonably from the proper observation of the protocol(s)

**Timescale** - The panel will hear the complaint within 20 working days of the complainant’s request being received by the Children’s Customer Care and Complaints Manager.

- The decision of the panel will either be that:
  - A conference is reconvened under a different chair
  - A review conference is brought forward, or
  - The status quo is confirmed along with a suitable explanation

- The panel chair informs the complainant in writing of the panel’s decision

**Timescale** - Within 5 working days of the panel meeting

- This concludes Stage 2 and is the final stage of the Child Protection Complaints Procedure. There are no further internal processes for complaints where it is concluded that all relevant processes were followed and that the decisions made were reasonable

- A complainant who remains dissatisfied will be sent the contact information for the Local Government Ombudsman by the panel chair should they wish to pursue their complaint.

**Learning from complaints**

The Child Protection Manager (Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) will be responsible for implementing and learning lessons arising from issues of complaint raised.

The Children’s Customer Care and Complaints Manager will incorporate any lessons learnt in the statutory social care complaints Annual Report whilst managing appropriate levels of confidentiality.

**Contact details**

Lara Wood Lara.wood@islington.gov.uk Tel: 020 7527 7875
Deputy Operational Manager, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance - Child Protection
3 Elwood Street N5 1EB

Jennifer Watson Jennifer.watson@islington.gov.uk Tel: 020 7527 8048
Children’s Customer Care and Complaints Manager
3 Elwood Street N5 1EB

May 2014