

APPENDIX 4

Procedures for convening pre birth Child Protection Conferences

4.1 Introduction

In exceptional circumstances there may be enough concern about future risk to an unborn child to warrant the calling of a pre-birth Case Conference to consider the need for the registration of that child at birth. Any such Conference should be treated as an Initial Conference. Parents should be invited, as should midwifery services and all agencies involved with the family.

4.2 Timing of Pre-birth Conferences

Conferences should not normally be held before six months gestation and should normally have been held by the time the mother reaches the last month of her pregnancy.

If workers have been aware of concerns about a family, an assessment should have been undertaken and a Strategy Meeting held before a Conference is called. A clear and significant risk must be identified before a Conference is called.

Where there is concern about a family with significant learning or physical difficulties and it seems likely that support will be needed to enable them to care for their child once it is born, consideration needs to be given to an early Conference (perhaps before six months gestation). This should follow a multi-agency assessment, which would enable a plan to be established prior to the birth. It is important to ensure that workers and other agencies involved with the parents are invited to be involved in the assessment and Conference processes and are enabled to understand the Child Protection issues.

Conferences should be considered in the following circumstances:

Where there is a likelihood of significant harm arising from child abuse or neglect and one or more of the following circumstances apply:

- Schedule 1 Offender living in the household (or a known regular visitor)
- History of domestic violence
- Parent with learning difficulties
- Parent with mental health problems
- Parent with a history of chaotic drug use
- Other children living away from home, either with family members, in Local Authority accommodation or having been placed for adoption

- Other children on the register or removed from the care of either parent
- Unexplained death of a previous child where there was a Child Protection concern
- History of chaotic child care
- Mother under 16 years old
- Previous Conferences in similar circumstances
- History of self-harm