

What is a Family Conference?

A family conference is a meeting involving the young person and members of his/her family, the victim and relevant others. It is ordered by the Court (under the Children Act 2001, (as amended)) and run by Young Persons Probation. At the meeting the young person's offence will be discussed with regard to its effect on the victim, the community and on the young person's family.

The conference will explore ways that the young person takes responsibility for his/her behaviour, for the consequences and where possible to put things right by making good the damage. It also aims to come up with an agreed plan which will help the young person to avoid getting into trouble in the future.

Young Persons
PROBATION

Family Conference

A guide to
the **family**
conference

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Who attends the Family Conference?

The young person who has admitted responsibility for their offence, members of their family, other persons who may be involved with the young person, ie a teacher, social worker or sports coach.

Who arranges the Family Conference?

A Probation Officer will prepare everyone involved for the Family Conference.

Where does it take place?

The family conference usually takes place in a special room in the Probation Office or in some circumstances in a different venue.

What actually happens at the Family Conference?

The meeting is divided into four sections:

- 1 Information Giving**
Introductions are made, the format of the meeting is outlined and the process of information sharing begins.
- 2 Restoration**
This section of the meeting allows the victim to express how the offence has affected them. It also facilitates the young person to account for their behaviour and to make amends.
- 3 Family Time**
The young person and his/her family then meet privately to draft an 'Action Plan', which will be designed to make amends and help the young person stay out of trouble.
- 4 Action Plan**
The draft 'Action Plan' is then brought back into the group for discussion, agreement and submission to the Court for approval.

The meeting shouldn't go on for any longer than two hours.

What happens next?

Following its submission to Court, the Action Plan is overseen by the family of the young person, other identified individuals and supervised by the Probation Officer.

On completion the case is returned to Court for a final decision. If the action plan has not been completed the Court will deal with the case in another way.

