

A close-up photograph of a hand holding an orange and silver pen, poised to write on a document. The background is blurred, showing other people in a meeting setting.

Going
to a
Convenor's
Meeting

What is the Children's Convenor?

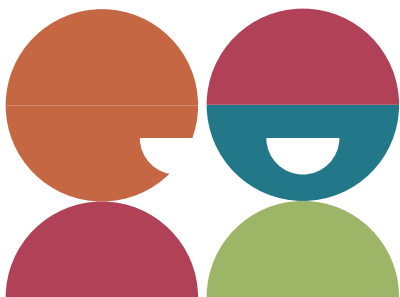
The Children's Convenor is responsible for investigating a referral where there is concern about a child under the age of 18. The Children's Convenor is assisted by a Deputy Convenor and three Assistant Convenors. Their titles are often shortened to Convenor.

What is a referral to the Convenor?

A referral is information received by the Convenor about a child because they need help to sort out some of the problems in their life. Anyone may refer a child to the Convenor. However, most referrals come from the police, the Committee for Health and Social Care and the School Attendance Service. A child may be referred for different reasons such as misusing drugs or alcohol; violent or destructive behaviour; failing to attend school without good reason; or being abused or neglected by the people who look after them.

What happens when the Children's Convenor receives a referral?

When a Convenor receives a referral, he or she will find out all they can about the child and their circumstances, so that they can help them. They might speak to a social worker or a teacher or the people who look after the young person at home. They may also ask a social worker or a teacher at the child's school to write a report about them and their family to give them the information they need to make the right decision. Once the Convenor has all the information they need, they may decide that the child is in need of assistance. They will write to the parents or carers of the young person and invite them to attend a Convenor's Meeting.



What is a Convenor's Meeting?

A Convenor's Meeting is a legal meeting that takes place with the parents or carers of the child. A friend or relative can be brought to the meeting to support you. You can also bring an Advocate to the meeting. You may be eligible for Legal Aid.

The purpose of the meeting is to decide whether the legal reasons for the referral are agreed by the child and their parents and carers.

Who will be at the Children's Convenor's Meeting?

- The Convenor;
- The child (depending on their age and understanding);
- You and any other person who has parental responsibility for your child;
- Any person you want to attend to support you;
- Any other person who has care of your child; and
- Any other person that the Convenor thinks might be able to assist.

What will happen at the Convenor's Meeting?

The Convenor will explain all about the legal process and will ask you if you agree or disagree with the reasons for the referral. Your child may also be asked if he/she accepts that these reasons are correct.

Depending on whether you agree or disagree with the reasons for referral, the Convenor will explain what happens next and answer any questions that you may have.



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