
Liaison Groups

This leaflet has been produced by CHIP+ and the Highland Council to explain what goes on at Multi-Agency Liaison Group meetings. It gives a broad outline of what is going to happen; staff involved with your child will be able to provide you with more details of what will go on at a meeting, and why a meeting has been called.

What is a Liaison Group for?

A Liaison Group is there to think about how best to meet the needs of specific children. Different professionals come together with a family to talk about how to support a child or young person through difficulties or through periods of change. There might be regular meetings, or a one-off meeting, depending on the child or young person's circumstances. The meeting may outline some of the issues for the child or young person, but will focus on strategies that might help them overcome or cope with their difficulties, or how they can best be supported through difficult times..

Liaison Groups also form part of the process for deciding what additional support needs the child may have and whether he or she meets the criteria for a Coordinated Support Plan. CHIP+ has a separate leaflet on this topic; contact us if you would like a copy.

Who will be at the Liaison Group?

A Liaison Group includes a range of staff from a number of professions who are involved with, or can give advice about your child. These might include school management, Guidance and Support for Learning; Educational Psychology; Health and Social Work. There may be others present as well; these will be representatives of groups or professionals who can provide useful advice to the meeting, or support to your child. If you want to know the role of a professional who has been invited to the meeting, contact your child's school, nursery or key person.

You will be invited to the Liaison Group. It is important that you come along to the meeting; you are the expert on your child, and your thoughts and knowledge are a vital part of the meeting. You can bring along a friend, family member, supporter or advocacy worker to the meeting if you don't want to go on your own.

Your child may be invited to the meeting too, depending on their age and understanding. Their views are still important even if they are not able to attend.

If there is any personal or family information you don't want shared at the meeting, please tell the chairperson as soon as possible.

What will happen at the meeting?

It's important that you understand what is going on at the meeting. If any of the professionals use terms you don't understand, or suggest things you think aren't going to work do speak up. At the same time, say if you think that something is a particularly good idea! You are part of the Liaison Group and your contribution is important.

The meeting may be 'solution focused'. This means that the child's strengths and skills should be highlighted. Positive coping strategies your child already has might be used as a way forward. It is not about dwelling on the past, or on any problems, but on looking for solutions to difficulties.

- At the beginning the Chair (or Facilitator) who will lead the meeting will introduce themselves. The other people present will introduce themselves, and explain what they do.
- A very brief outline of the difficulty is given. If there are a number of difficulties, there may be a short discussion as to what the main ones to look at in the meeting are.
- The focus of the meeting will be on possible solutions to the issues discussed. Everyone should participate in discussions on agreed actions.
- At the end of the meeting an Action Plan should be agreed. This is drawn up from the solutions and actions decided on in the meeting. It will list all the agreed actions, and who will carry them out.

There should also be a process in place so that you know how the actions decided in the meeting have been put into practice. This might be in the form of another Liaison Group meeting, or a meeting with school staff, or being updated by a professional who meets with your family regularly; the form it takes will depend on the circumstances.

If you have more questions about the Liaison Group, your first point of contact will be your child's school, nursery or key person. CHIP+ can supply more general information on education matters.