

## Practitioner Guide to Strategy Discussions



This guidance has been written to assist in practice when undertaking strategy discussions. It is informed by:

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Strategy Discussions / Meetings \(Partnership Tri X\)](#)
- [Section 47 Enquiries \(Leeds Children's Procedures\)](#)
- [Child Protection Enquiries - Section 47 Children Act 1989 \(Partnership Tri X\)](#)

The key aims of the guidance are to ensure that:

*Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm there should be a strategy discussion involving local authority children's social care (including the residential or fostering service, if the child is looked-after), the police, health, and other bodies such as the referring agency. This might take the form of a multi-agency meeting or phone calls and more than one discussion may be necessary. A strategy discussion can take place following a referral or at any other time, including during the assessment process and when new information is received on an already open case.*

*(Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children - July 2018)*

### Best Practice

#### Who should be involved?

As a minimum: Police, Health and Children's Social Work Service need to be part of the discussion. Other relevant practitioners will depend on the nature of the individual situation. For children known to CSWS, it is good practice to involve other key professionals involved in the child's life, such as education.

***For children open to a social worker, the team manager or EDT worker out of hours must record the incident on a SIOC (Significant Information on an Open Case) episode and outcome this to a strategy discussion.***

#### What should be included?

- Reason for the strategy discussion
- Information sharing – relevant professionals need to share relevant information held by their agency
- Consideration of the needs of all children within the household; siblings and other children in contact with the alleged abuser/s
- A clear narrative for if a Child Protection Medical is required. Where it is agreed a medical is not required a rationale MUST be recorded
- Agree which professional will see the child, when and what will be discussed. Discuss whether factors such as the child's race, ethnicity, language, disability, or any other special needs should be considered and whether an interpreter will be required for the child and/or the family
- A clear decision needs to be recorded as to whether a Child and Family Assessment will be undertaken via S17 CA 1989 or a Section 47 Enquiry is required.
- If there is to be a Section 47 Enquiry there should be clear plan for gathering information, by whom and when and for what purpose

- Agree if the Section 47 Enquiry will be undertaken as a single agency or a joint enquiry with the Police
- Agree what action is required immediately and in the short term to safeguard the child including whether the child needs to be in a place of safety
- Agree who should be interviewed as part of criminal investigation, by whom, for what purpose and when
- Determine what information from the Strategy Discussion will be shared with the family, unless such information sharing may place a child at increased risk of harm or jeopardise any criminal investigation
- Agree the need for feedback to each agency (e.g. if single agency enquiries) and for further Strategy Discussions with clear timescales

## Recording a strategy discussion

- Record details of who is involved including full names and roles
- Record all children and adult's details, check that all agencies have the right details including race, ethnicity, identity, and any additional needs if known
- Record decision making with rationale
- At the conclusion of the Strategy Discussion, there should be recorded a list of action points, agreed roles and responsibilities, and timescales for those actions to be completed
- The record must be circulated to all parties within one working day

## Further strategy discussions

Where there is a need to review decisions taken at the initial strategy discussion a further strategy discussion should be held. For example, if it is agreed that a child protection medical should be undertaken but the parents/carers do not consent this should be discussed at a further strategy discussion.

About the Document			
Title	Practitioner Guidance for Strategy Discussions		
Purpose	To provide guidance on the Strategy Discussion process for Social Work practitioners and team managers		
Author & Role	Farrah Khan, Head of Quality & Practice Improvement		
Approved by	Farrah Khan	Date approved	22/03/2023
Frequency of Review	Annual		
Distribution	All Social Workers and Social Work Team Managers		