



STRATEGY DISCUSSION – GUIDANCE

When should a Strategy Discussion be held?

A strategy discussion should be held whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. This may take place at the point of referral or at any other time that concerns arise.

Depending on the nature of concerns and urgency, a strategy discussion may be undertaken via an actual meeting or over the telephone. However, when a telephone strategy discussion has taken place, consideration should always be given to whether a follow up, face to face strategy meeting should also be convened at a later date. This is particularly important if a key agency with information about the child was not involved in the original discussion.

A strategy discussion should be held as soon as possible following receipt of the information that indicates that the child is likely to be suffering significant harm. This would normally be within 24 hours of the information being received.

Who should attend a Strategy Discussion?

At a minimum the following people should be at a strategy discussion:

- The Children's Services Trust Consultant Social worker.
- A police representative
- A health representative

However, all agencies who are likely to have information about

the child should also be invited to a face to face strategy meeting. This may include:

- The referrer of the concerns which have led to the strategy meeting
- Engage and/or young people's services
- CAMHS
- Youth Offending Team
- Turning point

All participants should be sufficiently senior as to be able to make decisions on behalf of their agencies.

If an agency is unable to attend a meeting in person, consider using conference calls/telephone calls with speaker phone, particularly when that agency is likely to have significant information.

What should be discussed at the meeting?

- Clarify the nature of the allegation or suspicion of abuse and / or neglect;
- Consider concern in relation to home, community and work situations of child and any alleged abuser;
- Share and evaluate information, including background history.

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Outcome of strategy meeting

As part of the strategy meeting, all agencies should discuss and agree:

- Whether a Section 47 enquiry is required;
- If a Section 47 enquiry is required, whether this is a single agency enquiry (social care only) or a joint enquiry (Social Care and the police);
- Agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation as part of a joint section 47 Enquiry;
- Allocate tasks if any immediate protective action is required;
- When, how and who will undertake interviews with child(ren) and if a video will be used (consider gender of interviewer, especially in relation to sexual abuse);
- When and how the parents / carers will be informed of the concerns and the planned action including a decision about what information should be shared with the child and family (on the basis that information will not be shared if doing so jeopardises a police investigation or places the child at risk of significant harm;
- The need for any paediatric or specialist assessment (health should perform necessary medical tests, examinations, observations and provide specialist assessments and ensure the child receives appropriate treatment if required);

- Agree what other actions may be needed to protect the child or provide interim services and support, including securing the safe discharge of a child in hospital with a Discharge Plan;
- Timescales, agency and individual responsible for agreed actions, including the timing of police investigations;
- Mechanism / date for reviewing completion of agreed actions / monitoring progress of enquiry e.g. further Strategy Discussions.

Actions following the Strategy Discussion

All Strategy Discussions should be recorded in writing and shared with the participants within one working day of the meeting taking place. It is the responsibility of the chair of the meeting to ensure that the actions and discussions are fully recorded and distributed.

Further information:

For further information please see:

Working together to safeguard Children (2015) (Page 36):

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf