



Strategy Discussion and Strategy Meetings

These local procedures complement the [Pan Cheshire Safeguarding procedures](#) which must be read and followed by all agencies.

The procedures on strategy discussions and s47 can be located here:

https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/halton/p_ch_protection_enq.html

The Pan-Cheshire procedures clearly outline the process in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) in determining s47 enquiries, in what circumstances to consider a strategy discussion and the role and function of strategy discussions/meetings

Timescales

Strategy Discussions/Meetings should be convened as soon as possible bearing in mind the needs of the child, however locally determined timescales will be established to dictate how soon after child protection concerns have been identified the discussion/meeting will occur, except in the following circumstances:

- For allegations/concerns indicating immediate risk of harm to the child (e.g. serious physical injury or serious neglect) the Strategy Discussion/Meeting should be held on the **same day** as the receipt of the referral;
- For allegations of penetrative sexual abuse, the Strategy Discussion/Meeting should be held on the **same day** as the receipt of the referral, if it is required to ensure forensic evidence;
- Where the concerns are particularly complex (e.g. fabricated/induced illness/ organised abuse/ child sexual exploitation or allegations against staff) the Strategy Discussion/Meeting must be held in accordance with locally determined timescales, but sooner if there is a need to provide immediate protection to a child.

Where there is a need for a strategy discussion in line with the Pan-Cheshire procedures but no immediate harm is evident, there is still a requirement to ensure that children are safeguarded and protected in a timely way. For all other such cases, the social care manager should ensure a strategy discussion takes no place no longer than **3 days** after making the request.

Discussion or meeting?

In complex cases, where more than one agency will be involved and are a key part of the planning, these should be referred to a strategy meetings.

Review strategy discussions/meeting

These should only be held in exceptional cases. Where the actions have been agreed in the initial strategy meeting have been agreed, then the progress and completion of these actions should be tracked via the usual multi-agency meetings in Children in Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP) and Children in Care (CIC).

Only if new information comes to light during the process of the s47 investigation or during ongoing work than would have an impact on the current plan in safeguarding should you convene a new strategy discussion/meeting.

Missing

In line with the procedures, missing episodes are responded to under the trigger meeting process – please do not request strategy discussions under this process and adhere to the pathway in the Pan–Cheshire missing procedures.

Exploitation

A screening tool must be completed in line with the Pan-Cheshire exploitation operating protocol. All cases with a rating of **HIGH** should have a strategy discussion/meeting to inform any decision to initiate s47 enquires or if a child is a child in need. Risks should subsequently integrated into and managed under the appropriate level of need planning framework.

Escalation

If any partner does not adhere to the timescales specified or contribute as outlined in the Pan-Cheshire procedures, then social care are expected to use the Safeguarding Partnership Escalation Procedure as the convenor of the discussion/meeting.

If social care do not arrange or convene a strategy discussion in line with these procedures, then partners are expected to use the Escalation procedure.