



South Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board

STRATEGY MEETING

A Multi-agency Practitioners Guide

February 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child/young person is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm there should be a strategy meeting involving Local authority Children and Families Social Care (including the Fostering Service if the child/young person is Looked After), Police, Health and other bodies, such as the referring agency. This might take the form of a multi-agency meeting or telephone calls and more than one meeting may be necessary.
- 1.2 A strategy meeting can take place following a referral or at any other time, including during the assessment process.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 Children and Families Social Care should convene a strategy meeting to determine the child/young person's welfare and plan rapid future action if there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

3. STRATEGY MEETING ATTENDEES

- 3.1 A Social Worker and their Manager, Health professionals and a Police representative should, as a minimum, be involved in the strategy meeting. Other relevant professionals will depend on the nature of the individual case by may include:
- The professional or agency which made the referral;
 - The child/young person's school or nursery; and
 - Any Health services the child/young person or family members are receiving.
- 3.2 All attendees should be sufficiently senior to make decisions on behalf of their agencies.

4. STRATEGY MEETING TASKS

- 4.1 The meeting should be used to:
- Share available information;
 - Agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation; and
 - Decide whether enquiries under [Section 47](#) of the Children Act 1989 should be undertaken
- 4.2 Where there are grounds to initiate an enquiry under [Section 47](#) of the Children Act 1989 decisions should be made as to:
- What further information is needed if an assessment is already underway and how it will be obtained and recorded;

- What immediate and short term action is required to support and safeguard the child/young person, and who will do what by when; and
 - Whether legal action is required to protect the child/young person
- 4.3 The timescale for the assessment to reach a decision on next steps should be based upon the needs of the individual child/young person, consistent with the local protocol and certainly no longer than **45 working days** from the point of referral into Children and Families Social Care.
- 4.4 Social Workers with their Managers should convene the strategy meeting and make sure it:
- Considers the child/young person's welfare and safety, and identifies the level of risk faced by the child/young person
 - Decides what information should be shared with the child and family (on the basis that information is not shared if this may jeopardise a Police investigation or place the child/young person at risk of significant harm);
 - Agrees what further action is required, and who will do what by when, where an Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is in place or the child/young person is the subject of Police Powers of Protection;
 - Records agreed decisions in accordance with local recording procedures; and
 - Follows up actions to make sure what was agreed gets done.
- 4.5 The Police should:
- Discuss the basis for any criminal investigation and any relevant processes that other agencies might need to know about, including the timing and methods of evidence gathering; and
 - Lead the criminal investigation (Children and Families Social Care have the lead for the Section 47 Enquiries and assessment of the child/young person's welfare) where joint enquiries take place.
- 4.6 Education should:
- Discuss agency involvement with the child, young person and their family;
 - Discuss any concerns or issues related to the child/young person's attendance/attainment/behaviour/health and wellbeing; and
 - Follow up any allocated actions within the timescale.
- 4.7 Health should:
- Discuss agency involvement with the child, young person and their family;
 - Discuss any concerns or issues related to the child/young person's health; and
 - Follow up any allocated actions within the agreed timescales.

4.8 Other:

- Discuss agencies involvement with the child/young person;
- Discuss any concerns issues related to the child/young person; and
- Follow up any actions within the agreed timescales.

5. POINTS TO REMEMBER / EXPECTATIONS

5.1 Points to remember when participating in a strategy meeting:

- Ensure that you have all of your agency's relevant information with you at the strategy meeting
- Be clear on the principles of information sharing
- Be clear on your role in any of the decisions made during the meetings and the expectations placed on you
- Ensure that you see the written record made of the meeting by the Chair and follow this up if you do not receive it within 5 working days following the strategy meeting
- Ensure you are informed of further enquiries and decisions made by the Local Authority

5.2 Expectations of professionals attending a strategy meeting

- Attendance at Strategy meetings
- The authority to make decisions on behalf of their organisation
- To challenge any areas of the decision making process that is felt to be detrimental to the welfare of the child/young person; impede the safeguarding processes; or do not comply with the STSCB Safeguarding Policies and Procedures or are in conflict with the majority view held by partners at the Strategy meeting
- Invoke the STSCB Escalation Police Protocol for the Resolution of Professional Disagreements between Workers relating to the Safety of the child/young person
- Ensure individual organisations/staff are compliant with the multi-agency guidance in relation to strategy meetings and have appropriate evidence to support this

6. USEFUL DOCUMENTS

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#): A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children March 2015

Action Following A Strategy Meeting

ed as: Not Protectively Marked

