

When is a Strategy Meeting held?

Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, there should be a strategy meeting. This should happen promptly (within three working days of the concerns being identified). If it is known that the child is at risk of immediate significant harm which requires a time critical response, the strategy meeting should take place straight away to determine what immediate safeguarding action needs to happen. The meeting should be used to determine the child's welfare and plan rapid future action. It can take place following a referral or when new information is received. Strategy meetings should ideally be face-to-face but telephone discussions (for example, by a conference call or virtual meeting) may be adequate in some circumstances.

What's the purpose of a strategy meeting?

- To share available and relevant information
- Agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation
- Decide whether enquiries under s47 of the Children Act 1989 should be undertaken

Where there are grounds to initiate an enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 need to consider:

- What further information is needed?
- What immediate and short-term SMART action is required?
- What information will be shared with the child's parents/carers/wider family?
- Is legal action required?

Who attends a Strategy Meeting?

All professionals who hold relevant information about the child, parent or carers should be invited and attend. Representatives from all relevant universal services should be included. A professional may need to be included in the strategy meeting who is not involved with the child, but who can contribute expertise relevant to the nature of the harm in the case. They should always involve a Social Worker and Manager (who convene it), Health Professional and Police and ensuring where relevant, the Exploitation, Missing or Youth Justice Services are invited to the strategy meeting. An appropriately qualified medical professional must be involved if there are significant medical issues or if a medical examination may be required, in cases of Child Sexual Abuse, Mountain Healthcare should be invited.

Information sharing

Checks with partner agencies are especially important to ascertain any historical concerns about the child or other children in the household/family which will enable a robust strategy meeting. Efforts should be made to triangulate all sources of information including where it is suspected that information from a family member may be malicious. Consideration should be given at the strategy meeting to the concerns expressed by anyone who has an insight into that child's daily lived experience.

Recording the Strategy Meeting

A strategy meeting should be written up and completed in full by the social worker, and minutes sent out to attendees. The record of the meeting should include action points (including contingency planning), clear rationale for decision making, timescales, and a mechanism for reviewing the completion of action points. There is also an expectation for agencies to take their own notes, particularly of the actions agreed.

Outcomes of the strategy meeting

The plan made at the strategy meeting should reflect the requirement to convene an initial child protection conference within 15 working days of the strategy meeting that decided to initiate section 47 enquiries. If the conclusion of the strategy meeting is that there is no cause to pursue the section 47 enquiries, then consideration should be given to continuing a multi-agency assessment to address the needs of the child.



Resources

- [West Midlands Regional Procedures – Strategy Meetings](#)
- [West Midlands Regional Procedures - Neglect](#)
- [West Midlands Regional Procedures - Physical Abuse](#)
- [West Midlands Regional Procedures - Sexual Abuse](#)
- [Working Together 2018](#)

