

October 2018

## Strategy Meetings/S47 Enquiries

### What is it?

Working Together Guidance 2018 states:

*'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.'*

### Timing of Strategy Discussion/Meeting

Initial Strategy Discussions and any follow up discussions should **generally be held within 3 working days**, but see exceptions below.

In the following circumstances, **a Strategy Discussion must be held on the day of the referral:**

- Allegations / concerns indicating a serious risk to the child (e.g. serious physical injury or serious neglect);
- Allegations of recent penetrative Sexual Abuse (to ensure forensic evidence).

### Who should attend?

**A Local Authority Social Worker, Health Practitioners and a Police representative should, as a minimum, be involved in the strategy discussion.**

Other relevant practitioners will depend on the nature of the individual case but may include:

- The practitioner or agency which made the referral
- The child's school or nursery
- Any health or care services the child or family members are receiving

All attendees should be sufficiently senior to make decisions on behalf of their organisation and agencies. Members of the strategy meeting will be expected to share relevant information from their agency, contribute to decision making around whether a

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child is likely to be at risk of significant harm and further actions/ safety planning that may be required to safeguard the child.

**It is expected that agencies will challenge each other if the strategy meeting is not quorate, particularly if there is no health representative. Where an urgent strategy meeting is required within 24 hours the health representative in the front door can be contacted to provide information and will usually be available to contribute via video link or telephone - [Checs@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Checs@cheshireeast.gov.uk)**

## Strategy Discussion tasks

- share available information
- agree the conduct and timing of any criminal investigation
- decide whether enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 must be undertaken

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 the child, and who will do what by when
- whether legal action is required

## Signs Of Safety

In Cheshire East we have adopted the Signs of Safety Model. The Strategy Discussion will be aligned with this approach:

- What's Working Well
- What are we worried about
- What needs to happen (by whom and when)
- Danger Statements
- Safety Goals / contingency (is legal action required)

The actions from the strategy meeting will be shared by Children's Social Care with involved agencies within **24 hours** of the meeting/ discussion taking place.

The timescale for the assessment to reach a decision on next steps should be based upon the needs of the individual child, consistent with the local protocol and no longer than **35 working days** from the point of referral into local authority children's social care. If Section 47 enquiries are initiated and the outcome is an Initial Child Protection Conference, this should take place within **15 working days** of the commencement of the date of the Strategy Meeting that the Section 47 enquiries commenced.

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## Process for Arranging Strategy Meetings to enable relevant health practitioners' attendance:

### Decision made to call a Strategy Meeting



#### **Urgent Strategy Meeting** [within 24 hrs ]

Children's Social Care to contact all relevant agencies to request attendance. This will be a minimum of 3 agencies, Children's Social Care, Police and Health.

#### **Health Rep**

Nurse Specialist in the Integrated Front Door (CHECS) can be contacted to request attendance on 01270686996 or 07769913854

[Checs@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Checs@cheshireeast.gov.uk)

#### **Non-Urgent Meeting** [ Min notice 48 hrs]

Children's Social Care to invite the relevant agencies. If Health Practitioner not known CSC to contact Nurse Specialist IFD for advice. The Health Practitioner will prioritise their attendance. If they are unable to attend a report would be provided to the meeting containing relevant health information.

Individual agencies to update their own records and complete any agreed actions following strategy meeting. Minutes to be sent to partner agencies by Children's Social Care including agencies who were invited but did not attend.

NB: Any concerns or allegations that meet the threshold for a LADO referral; invite to be sent to LADO

# One Minute Guide

## Cheshire East Health Agencies Contact Details:

Wirral 0-19 Cheshire East [Health visitors & School Nurses]	 Base Contact Details Cheshire East.docx
Cheshire & Wirral Partnership	 Copy of Safeguarding Team C
Macclesfield Safeguarding Team	 East Cheshire Safeguarding.docx
Mid Cheshire Hospital Trust [Leighton Inc. Midwives]	 Mid Cheshire Hospital Trust.docx

## Request for Strategy Meeting document:



Strategy Meeting  
Request.doc

## Link the LSCB Policies and Procedures:

[http://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/cheshire\\_east/contents.html](http://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/cheshire_east/contents.html)