

# One minute guide

## Strategy Meeting



March 2022

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer **significant harm**, Children's Social Care should convene a strategy discussion to determine the child's welfare and plan rapid future action if there is reasonable cause

The first step is to gather information and seek clarity as to **what has happened**.

In the Triage Hub the Children and Family advisor will contact you (the refer, child's setting) to understand **what has happened**. Unless the initial conversation was with you then they may have enough information. If they are concerned that a child is at **immediate risk of significant harm** a **Strategy Meeting** will take place.

The purpose of the **Strategy Meeting** is to determine risk whilst sharing available information on the family dispensing with consent if it is reasonable, proportionate and relevant and to decide whether section 47 enquiries should be carried out and if so by children's social care or jointly with police and whether immediate safeguarding is necessary.

***Is the harm attributable to the parents/ carers?***

*What is the evidence that significant harm or impairment is **likely to continue**? Describe the harm/impairment and **consider persistency and severity**, not only the significant harm/impairment already experienced.*

*What **protective factors** are in place, or could be utilised within the family (including extended family) to reduce the likelihood of the child(ren) suffering significant harm?*

*What **other interventions could be effective** at reducing the likelihood of the child(ren) suffering significant harm?*

*What are **the views of the child(rens), parents/carers**, and partner agencies? What does **the history and family context** tell us in the present and future about a family's ability to manage risk or whether there is the likelihood of ongoing significant harm?*

## **Key things to consider and prepare for the meeting.**

- Child start date at your setting
- Do you have any **green forms** following disclosures or concerns relating to the child.
- The child's attendance record along with incident and accident records.
- What is parental engagement like?
- Health and development needs, *Is the child reaching their full potential of peers of a similar age and developmental ability?*
- Have there been any previous concerns or worries and what support has been provided so far

## **Family members are not invited to attend strategy meetings.**

However, unless a decision has been made that sharing information after the strategy discussion would place a child at greater risk of harm, any information that has been shared by professionals during a strategy discussion will be shared with appropriate family members.

## **The meeting**

All information will be offered by each professional attending the meeting and in addition any reports that need to be considered.

### **Key question**

**Given what we know do we consider that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant and ongoing harm? Without doing something is this child at risk of harm.**

You will then be asked to comment on whether you believe the child/ren to be at risk of significant harm.

- If any criminal investigation needs to be undertaken
- If any immediate safeguarding measures need to be put in place
- If a Section 47 enquiry needs to be started, either by Children's Services, by the Police or by both working together.

### **What can we all do to protect the child?**

#### **Short term**

How can we make the child safe?

#### **Medical**

If there is an unexplained injury to a child or disclosure of assault, there may be a medical at a local hospital to understand the cause of the injury.

#### **Achieving best evidence (ABE)**

Where there is consideration of a criminal action then the decision will also be taken to support the gathering of further evidence.

## Outcomes

Should the collective decision of the strategy meeting be that a **Section 47** enquiry is necessary, Children's Services will visit the family/child/young person within 24 hours to ensure a plan of safety working with family in a restorative way.

### Possible Outcomes of a **Section 47** enquiry

- If following information gathering, there is evidence that any of the concerns which have been raised can be substantiated and a child/children are considered to be at risk of significant harm, it is likely that Children's Services will recommend that an Initial **Child Protection Conference** takes place.
- If it is assessed that it would be helpful for a family to be offered additional support, Children's Services are likely to continue their assessment using the **Child In Need** guidelines. This enables Children's Services to work with a family to develop a Child In Need plan. (This might also be called a **CIN plan** or a **S17**).
- Once the support needs have been identified, Children's Services will make a referral to the most appropriate service or organisation. This support does not have to come directly from Children's Services.

## Key contacts and for more information

**Police 999**

**Children and Families Front Door 01926 414144**

[Working Together 2018](#) is the key guidance for all services support children and families

You can find out information about Warwickshire children's social work from:

<https://www.safeguardingwarwickshire.co.uk/>