

Guidance for convening a strategy discussion on open statutory cases **where there has been a safeguarding incident**

Cases requiring a strategy discussion include:

Physical injury- physical evidence and/or disclosure of concern about physical abuse

Sexual abuse- including CSE

Missing children- where missing for period of 24 hours or more than 3 days.

Fabricated/Induced illness - please refer to separate protocol

Incidents of domestic abuse

General principles

- The protocol applies to all open statutory cases, including child protection and CIN.
- The risk of significant harm is the paramount consideration, this includes physical abuse where an injury is not evidenced, but a child discloses significant historical episode or fear of it occurring.
- Extra vigilance is required for children who have communication difficulties. It is important to take action on signs of abuse even though not verbalised by the child.
- Decision making should be logged in the 'significant event' episode.
- The responsibility for setting up and organising the strategy meeting will be that of the open team.
- The Assessment Team's role is of consultant to the open team.
- Decisions on who is to chair and minute the strategy meetings should be made through discussion between the TM/ATM of Assessment and TM of open team.
- The completion of the S.47 enquiry is the responsibility of the open team, with oversight from the Assessment Team

Guidance

- Key worker of open team discusses concern with their Team Manager/ATM. 'Significant event on open case' episode is completed with details of the concern and explanation of why a strategy meeting is needed
- Team Manager/keyworker discusses the concern with the TM/ATM of the Assessment Team and a decision is made about the need for a strategy meeting. This should be recorded on the Sig Event episode which is progressed to Strategy Meeting and tasked to the Strategy Meeting Chair.
- There may be rare occasions when through discussion with the Assessment Team, the decision is made **not** to hold a strategy meeting. The reasons for this should be fully recorded in the 'significant events on an open case' episode and the episode progressed to no further action.
- If strategy discussion is agreed key worker contacts the Police Enquiry Centre (PEC) and invites TVP to the discussion. Key worker discusses the timing of the strategy meeting with the Assessment Team and books room/venue. Key worker invites other key professionals (always include education/health). If

professionals cannot attend, a report of current involvement and any identified risks should be requested.

- Where the incident involves possible allegations against a professional working with children or vulnerable adults the LADO service must be invited.
- Key worker and Team Manager of the open team attend the strategy meeting.
- Chairing and taking minutes for the strategy meeting is discussed between the Team Manager of the open team and the Team Manager/ATM of the Assessment Team. It is **not** always expected that the Assessment Team will chair the meeting or take the minutes. However, it **is** always expected that the Assessment Team will attend the strategy meeting to oversee the process, offer advice and provide an ABE trained worker if required.
- The strategy discussion should contain: the details of the incident, the information provided, any actions required (including immediate safety plans and medical exams) with timescales and names.
- Where a S.47 investigation is required, the TM/ATM of the open team should sign the episode off and send it to the TM/ATM from the Assessment Team for quality assurance and second sign off.,
- Uncompleted S.47 episodes should be reviewed on a weekly basis by the TM in the open team. Further consultation with the Assessment Team should be taken as required.
- It is the TM/ATM of the open team's responsibility to ensure that S.47 episodes are completed in time.