Practice Matters

Section 47 (S47) Assessment or Report for Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC)

What is a S47 Assessment or Report for ICPC?

The Section 47 Enquiry and Investigation, Assessment or Report to Initial Child Protection Conference workflow is the means by which the multi-agency information gathered during the Section 47 Enquiry is recorded. All Section 47 Investigations should be completed within a maximum of 15 working days; sooner if an Initial Child Protection Conference is required (which must be held within 15 working days of the Strategy Discussion/Meeting where the enquiries were initiated) as this is the social worker's report for the conference. This should be shared with the family at least 2 days before the conference.

Why complete a S47 Assessment or Report for ICPC?

The aim of a Section 47 Investigation is to understand the nature and impact of the risk(s) for the child(ren) involved, in order to decide whether and what type of action is needed to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm; this includes deciding whether an Initial Child Protection Conference is necessary or a Review Child Protection Conference needs to be brought forward if the child is already subject to a Child Protection Plan.

The Section 47 Enquiry and assessment must be led by a qualified social worker from Children' s Social Care, who will be responsible for its coordination and completion. The social worker must consult with other agencies involved with the child and family to obtain a fuller picture of the circumstances of all children in the household, identifying parenting strengths and any risk factors. Enquiries may also need to cover children in other households with whom any alleged offender may have had contact. All agencies consulted are responsible for providing information to assist.

How to complete a good S47 Assessment or Report for ICPC?

The scope and focus of the assessment/ Report will be that of a risk assessment and must :-

* Identify the cause for concern;
* Evaluate information from all sources and previous case records;
* Evaluate the strengths of the family;
* Evaluate the risks and safety factors to the child/ren
* Considers the ability of parents (including other adults in the home), wider family and social networks to safeguard and promote the child's welfare;
* Considers the child's need for protection;
* Considers how these risks can be managed.
* Reports to child protection conference must include a recommendation by the social worker in relation to the requirement of a protection plan alongside proposals in relation to visiting patterns and the plan moving forward.

It is important to ensure that both immediate risk assessment and long-term risk assessment are considered. Where the child's circumstances are about to change, the risk assessment must include an assessment of the safety of the new environment e.g. where a child is to be discharged from hospital to home the assessment must have established the safety of the home environment and implemented any support plan required to meet the child's needs.

The outcome of the Section 47 enquiries **must be made in consultation with the Child Protection Manager**. The assessment will be endorsed by the Team Manager and Child Protection Manager.