

# Management Action Note 003

## Strategy Discussions/Meetings

### Context

We take a proportionate and partnership approach with families. Wherever possible work is undertaken on a Child in Need basis (s17). However, as per [Working Together 2018](#), whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a strategy meeting/discussion should be held. The process outlined in Working Together should be followed (Appendix 1).

Strategy discussions should ideally be face-to-face but telephone discussions (for example, by a conference call or virtual meeting) may be adequate in some circumstances.

Strategy meetings should be multi-agency as far as possible and should involve all key professionals known to, or involved with, the child and family. Local authority children's social care, health and the police should always attend. Where the child is in hospital, the appropriate clinician should also be included.

### Practice expectations:

1. Strategy meetings/discussions should be convened as soon as practicable bearing in mind the needs of the child and in most cases within **one working day** but must take place within **two working days** of child protection concerns being identified, except in the following circumstances:
  - For allegations/concerns indicating a serious risk of harm to the child (for example, serious physical injury or serious neglect) the strategy meeting/discussion should be held on the same day as the receipt of the referral.
  - For allegations of penetrative sexual abuse, the strategy meeting/discussion should be held on the same day as the receipt of the referral if this is required to ensure forensic evidence.
  - Where immediate action is required by either agency, the strategy meeting/discussion must be held within one working day.
  - In cases of organised abuse or allegations against staff or volunteers the strategy meeting/discussion should be held within one working day.
2. In any instance where it is known that a strategy meeting is unlikely to take place within the maximum two working days or has already not taken place within that timescale, whatever the reason, a 'Need to Know' form should be submitted (by the Team Manager) without delay and the matter escalated.
3. Where a strategy meeting cannot take place within one working day there should be a clear management note on the file detailing any safeguarding action required in the interim to ensure the safety of the child is considered and any necessary action taken, without delay and the reason for not having held a strategy meeting within one working day provided in the record of the strategy discussion.

4. Where there is evidence of actual harm, or an immediate risk of significant harm, the child should be seen **on the same day as the strategy discussion** and within no more than 5 working days in every other case.
5. Irrespective of whether the strategy meeting/discussion takes the form of a telephone discussion or face-to-face meeting, it is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that the decisions and agreed actions are fully recorded. All agencies attending should take notes of the actions agreed at the time of the meeting/discussion.

The chair should ensure that a copy of the record is made available to all those invited as soon as practicable.

The social worker should inform the referrer about what is happening as soon as possible.

6. Only those professionals who attend the meeting and participate in the discussion should be recorded as having attended. Those contributing reports but who are not present for the discussion are not considered to have attended.
7. If the conclusion of the strategy meeting/discussion 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 for any Early Help support services or to provide family support services to them as a 'child in need'.

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### Flow chart 4: Action following a strategy discussion

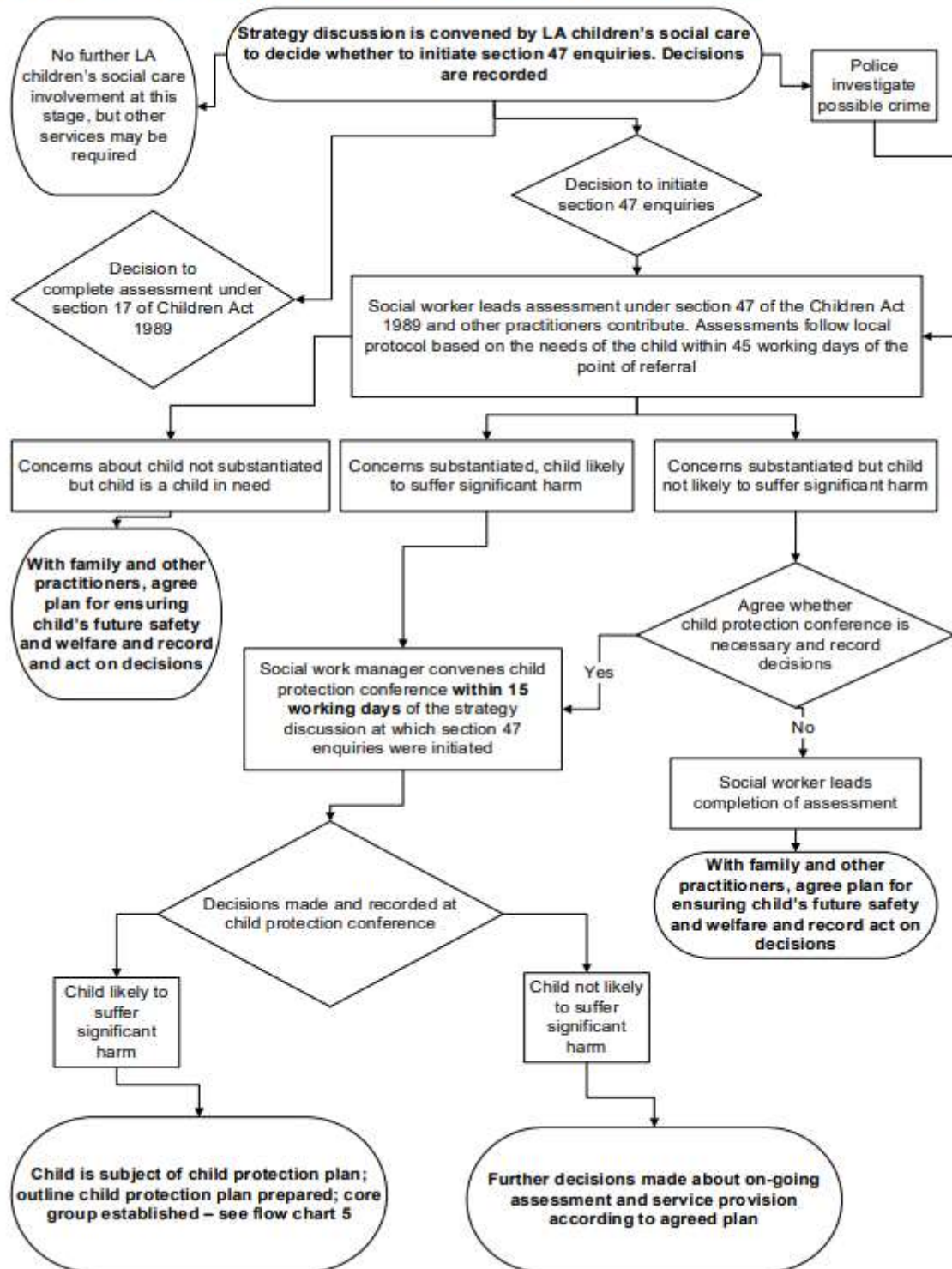


Figure 1 Working Together 2018