



Newham Local Safeguarding Children Board

Child Protection Strategy Meeting Protocol

For LSCB Use

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For Agency Use

Name of Agency	
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Version	Date	Author	Status	Comment
1.0			Final	
2.0			Final	

1. Introduction

Newham Local Safeguarding Children Board has drawn up this protocol as a result of requirements set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children, HM Government 2013*.

It relates to strategy meetings and discussions held when a Section 47 Child Protection inquiry is indicated.

Working Together 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, 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.

It further states:

A local authority social worker and their manager, health professionals and a police representative should, as a minimum, be involved in the strategy discussion. Other relevant professionals will depend on the nature of the individual case but may include:

- the professional or agency which made the referral;
- the child's school or nursery; and
- any health services the child or family members are receiving.
- housing

All attendees should be sufficiently senior to make decisions on behalf of their agencies.

2. Principles

- Wherever practicable, strategy meetings should be convened as they provide greater opportunity for debate, discussion and agreeing a shared approach.
- Central to decision making is sound professional judgment. Professionals should use their judgment and the input from partners to reach decisions about when a meeting would inform a strategy more effectively than a telephone discussion alone.
- In all circumstances, strategy discussions/meetings will include a minimum of CSC, Police, Health and Education.

- All key professionals involved in the case will feed into the strategy discussion/meeting.
- In some cases, professionals may be considering a referral to specialist services and it may be appropriate to invite specialist services to the strategy discussion/meeting, but professional judgment should be used to determine the appropriateness of this.

3. Process

CSC is the lead agency for strategy discussions and meetings, and is responsible for convening, chairing and recording the discussion/meeting. CSC will ensure the agreed record from the discussion/meeting is shared with professionals within 48 hours of the discussion/meeting. Agencies will then have a further 48 hours to respond to any errors, following which the record will be agreed as final. A copy of the Strategy Discussion Record can be found at Appendix 1.

4. Health Representation

There is a wide range of health services for children and for adults. Therefore it is important that the most relevant health professionals are invited who have a specific contribution to be made due to their knowledge of the child and family or their expertise relevant to the case.

Core Health representatives

- Health visitor representative for families with children under 5 and children across the age spectrum in that family.
- School Nurse representative for families of children 5 and over (only).
- GPs

If a child is in hospital there is an expectation that the core medical staff and named nurse for acute care are involved in the strategy meeting. In order to facilitate the appropriate medical staff to be at the meeting the expectation is that the meeting is held within the hospital.

Additional child health reps – this list is not exhaustive

- Child Development Centre (CDC)
- Therapists
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS/CFCS)

In the absence of any of the child health practitioners (apart from CAMHS) the Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children (Children's Community Health) will be involved.

Adult health services

- Adult mental health services
- Adult substance misuse services
- Adult physical health services
- Adult learning disability services

5. School Representation

All relevant schools should be invited to contribute to strategy discussions/meetings.

If necessary, the designated child protection lead for schools will be involved.

Inevitably, there will be times when strategy discussions/meetings will need to take place during school holidays. On these occasions, every effort should be made to ensure relevant information from schools is gathered to inform the strategy discussion/meeting.

6. Criteria for Strategy Discussions/Meetings

Strategy meetings/discussions should include all key criteria as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)* and the *Newham Local Assessment Protocol (2014)*.

7. Strategy Discussions

Where strategy discussions are held, these may involve 'conference calls' where facilities allow for this. However, it is agreed that in most circumstances, the discussion would entail a series of telephone discussions led by a suitably qualified Children's Social Care manager, and captured on a record that is shared and agreed by all agencies.

8. When a Strategy Meeting Must Be Held

When any of the following risks are indicated, a strategy meeting will always be convened, either instead of, or in addition to any strategy discussions that have taken place:

- Trafficking
- FGM
- Sexual Abuse/Exploitation
- Gangs/serious youth violence
- Witchcraft branding/spirit possession
- Non Accidental Injuries
- Parent or other adult in household with delusional belief about a child or children

- Honour-based violence
- Forced marriage
- Allegations against professionals who work with children

or:

- Where professionals are considering that an Initial Child Protection Conference is required;
- There has been a previous referral or CP plan within the last 3 months.

4. Audit of Implementation of this Protocol

Newham Safeguarding Children Board will periodically arrange for inter-agency audits to take place.