



# Strategy Meeting Protocol User Guide



## Introduction

This document provides guidance on how strategy meetings should be conducted in North Somerset.

This guide is for strategy meeting chairs and attendees, including multi-agency partners, referrers, and social care practitioners.

This guide includes a sample agenda for strategy meetings to ensure that the meeting discussion and decision-making complies with statutory requirements set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023<sup>1</sup>.

This guide is based on the NSSCP Strategy Meeting Protocol.

[NSSCP multi-agency strategy meetings protocol](#)

## Purpose of Strategy Meeting

The purpose of a strategy meeting is:

- To share relevant information within the context of the concern/s shared at the strategy meeting.
- To decide, based on information shared in relation to the presenting concern/s and any relevant historical information, whether the child/ren has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.
- To decide and agree whether investigation under s47 is warranted in response to likely or actual significant harm.
- To agree, if an investigation is warranted, on the actions and timescales for the investigation.
- To decide whether the investigation will be led by a single agency, or jointly by Police and Children's Social Care.
- To agree the conduct and timings of any criminal investigation in line with the s47 investigation, if required.
- To consider and agree any emergency protection if required
- To agree an appropriate safety plan to ensure the children's immediate safety whilst enquiries are undertaken.

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<sup>1</sup> [Working together to safeguard children 2023: statutory guidance](#)

## Timescales

The multi-agency working group has agreed that the following timescales be applied:

- **Critical incidents indicating a need for emergency protection;** within 4 hours
- **Referrals indicating recent incidents of alleged abuse;** within 1 working day
- **Referrals/concerns indicating chronic neglect and/or historical abuse;** within 3 working days

## Strategy Meeting

### Attendance

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 sets out the minimum requirements for a strategy meeting to take place: a Local Authority social worker, health practitioner, and Police representative should all be in attendance to ensure compliance with governing legislation.

Other agencies working with the child/ren and their family should be invited to attend:

- Referring agency
- School or Nursery
- Any health service child/ren are receiving including mental health
- Any health service parents/carers/adults in household are receiving, including mental health, and/or alcohol/substance misuse services
- Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) where concerns regarding possible sexual abuse have been raised
- Any domestic abuse services parents/carers/adults in household are receiving
- Any domestic abuse services received by young people over the age of 16
- Housing association services and housing providers

All attendees should be sufficiently senior to make decisions on behalf of their agencies, and sufficiently skilled and experienced to prepare for the strategy meeting, meaningfully engage with the meeting discussion, and critically assess information shared.

All partners attending are required to provide relevant historical and current information about the child/ren and family held by their agency, to share this at the meeting, to inform decision-making.

## Agenda

1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Roles &amp; responsibilities</li> <li>• Reason for attendance</li> </ul>	All attendees give their name, their professional role, summary of responsibilities, and nature of involvement, to ensure they have a clear reason for attendance.
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies/no shows</li> <li>• Check information provided</li> </ul>	Clarify those invited who are not in attendance. Clarify whether apologies given. Check that those not in attendance have provided information required for the meeting.
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of meeting</li> </ul>	Chair to set out purpose of meeting – to consider the presenting concerns about the child/ren & to decide, on the basis of information shared in relation to the concerns & any relevant historical information, whether investigation under s47 is warranted, and if it is, the actions to be undertaken within the investigation, by whom, and by when; also to consider whether criminal investigation required, and the timings of this.
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidentiality</li> </ul>	Advise that information shared at the meeting is confidential and not to be shared beyond its participants without prior agreement of the Chair.
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children &amp; family's details</li> </ul>	Basic details of all children & adults being considered at the meeting to be cross referenced across agencies to ensure accuracy – names, DOBs, ethnicity, and address. Parent's and children's NHS numbers where available, and for all mothers of unborn babies to be considered at strategy meeting Children's current Plan and/or legal status if applicable.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of presenting concerns/reason for meeting</li> </ul>	Summary to be provided by Social Worker/Team Manager who has requested/agreed the strategy meeting; where partner agency has raised the presenting concern, agency representative to also summarise their concerns if required. Attendees to be invited to ask clarifying questions.
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information -sharing in respect of each child and their parents/carers</li> </ul>	Social Worker to share any relevant historical and contextual information in respect of each child considered at the meeting. Social Worker to share any relevant historical and contextual information in relation to parents/cares, including any previous concerns, interventions offered, and their impact. Attendees to be invited to ask clarifying questions.

8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agencies information – sharing in respect of child/ren, parents/carers &amp; significant adults</li> </ul>	<p>Attending agencies to provide relevant information about the child/ren, parents/carers &amp; significant adults as set out on p5-6.</p> <p>Chair to share agencies information provided in writing for agencies who are not present at the meeting.</p> <p>Attendees to be invited to ask clarifying questions.</p>
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion to analyse information shared in the context of reason for the strategy meeting</li> </ul>	<p>Analysis of current &amp; relevant historical information led by Chair, to determine whether child/ren are experiencing or are likely to experience significant harm.</p>
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair's summary &amp; decision-making to include view on whether s47 investigation warranted</li> </ul>	<p>Chair to provide summary of concerns, analysis of risk, and a decision on whether s47 investigation is required.</p>
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate safety planning</li> </ul>	<p>Safety planning, including emergency protection measures if required, to be agreed, to ensure child/ren's immediate safety whilst investigation is undertaken.</p>
12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation actions</li> </ul>	<p>All actions within investigation to be undertaken to be agreed, setting out who will undertake each action, and by when.</p>
13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review</li> </ul>	<p>Date of review of investigation at mid-point to be agreed.</p>

## Recording

Strategy meetings are recorded using the Children Social Care LCS database, on which children's records are stored; the record of the strategy meeting must be shared with meeting participants within 3 working days of the meeting.

## Escalation

### Strategy decision-making; dissenting views

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 stipulates that the Local Authority holds responsibility for the decision on whether s47 enquires are warranted; as such, the Local Authority strategy meeting chair is the overall decision maker for whether an investigation will be undertaken in response to the concerns presented at the meeting.

Any dissenting views will be recorded in the strategy meeting record.

If a professional attending a strategy meeting is concerned that the meeting decision is not proportionate to the information shared/risks to the child/ren and wishes to challenge this, the professional must contact the responsible Head of Service for the child/ren considered at the meeting. Contact must be made within 24 hours of the meeting to ensure that agreed next steps are taken without delay.

If an agency does not attend or does not provide the information required for a strategy meeting to make a timely decision to safeguard a child, and/or the meeting is not quorate due to non-attendance, the chair must speak directly with the relevant agency's representative, their manager, or safeguarding lead, to seek to resolve this informally and without delay. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, and/or if the information/attendance gap may impact decision-making to safeguard a child, the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's Issue Resolution Policy provides a formal escalation route:

[NSSCP Issue Resolution Policy March 2025](#)