**Preparing for multi-agency meetings (including Core Groups, Child in Need Family Support and Early Help Assessment Plan meetings.)**

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) make vital contributions to multi-agency meetings. Attendance at meetings is key so the professionals involved gain a holistic picture of the child to make robust decisions about the needs of the child and the family and about actions moving forward.

It is paramount that the views of the child are gained and shared (with consent), with professionals and parents. Children may well be invited to attend all or some of the meeting so they can express their views themselves.

The DSL needs to be professionally curious about what the child is saying but also about what their behaviour could be telling them. All behaviour tells a story. It is important to think about if there is an underlying safeguarding reason for the child’s behaviour. These views should be shared at meetings.

Below is a table of information which could be shared at multi-agency meetings. The list is not exhaustive and therefore is a guide for DSLs to use when preparing for meetings. It is important that the DSL asks staff who work with the child closely to contribute their views, i.e. speaking to the class teacher, form tutor, pastoral worker before the meeting take place.

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| Have any concerns been raised since the process started or since the last meeting? | * If yes, are these having an impact on the child’s overall educational achievement? |
| Views of the child | * Ensure you have gathered the views of the child before a meeting and that these are shared so the child’s voice is heard. * Is it appropriate for the child to attend all or some of the meeting? * Is there any ongoing pastoral work being undertaken with the child? * If so, how is the child engaging with these sessions? * If appropriate, (and with the child’s consent), share some of the discussions from the pastoral work. |
| Attainment and progress | * Is the child working at, above or below expectations? * Are they making good progress? |
| Attendance and punctuality | * Current percentage * Number of late marks * How does this compare to last academic year? * Are the absences authorised or unauthorised? * Are there Fast Track procedures in place? * What about internal truancy? Does the child go missing during the day? * If attendance and punctuality is poor are there any patterns or trends? |
| Behaviour | * Describe the child’s behaviour. * Do they have a Behaviour Plan? * Are they needing to be ‘held’ to be kept safe? * If so, how frequency? * Have they had any exclusions? If so, how many and what for? * If there are concerns regarding the child’s behaviour, what are the underlying causes for this? * **Is there a potential ‘safeguarding cause’ for the behaviour?** * Has the child been diagnosed with a specific condition or illness? * If so, are they on medication for this? Is the medication being given as it has been prescribed? |
| Special Educational Needs / Disability | * Is the child on the SEND register? * If so, what for? * What support is the setting giving to the child? * Is this recorded somewhere in the form of targets and reviewed at regular intervals? * Has the child been assessed by an Educational Psychologist? * What were the recommendations from this assessment? * When is the next EHCP or statement review? * Describe how the targets from this document are progressing. |
| Social and emotional issues and general wellbeing | * Does the child have friends? * Describe their relationship with staff. * Has there been any recent changes to their presentation- positive or negative? * Does the child have the correct uniform / PE kit / equipment for lessons? |
| Engagement from parents and carers | * Attendance at parents evening * Attendance at Multi-Agency meetings? * Engagement at Multi-Agency meetings? * If appropriate – on time for collection? * Do requests/queries from the setting get followed up- i.e. phone call home for PE kit to be brought in. |
| Any actions for the setting from the last meeting | * If yes, have they been completed or how are they progressing? |

**Section 47 Strategy Discussions**

This note has been compiled with the help of colleagues in the Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CADS) to provide support for educational professionals who may be asked to participate alongside Children’s Services, the police and health colleagues in a child protection (s47) strategy discussion.

A Child Protection (s47) strategy discussion will be held as soon as possible after the safeguarding concern has been raised with CADS and it has been assessed as appearing to meet threshold level 4. In any case the discussion will take place within 24 hours. The original referrer will usually be asked to take part in the discussion and for educational provisions this will mean participating via a telephone conference call. A police officer of Detective Sergeant Rank within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), a social care locality Team Manager or Practice Consultant, and a health representative either from MASH or from a specific locality will all usually take part.

General advice:

If you are the original referrer to CADS, then it is likely you will have much of the information to hand. If you were not the referrer then a call will come through to the setting informing that a strategy discussion will be taking place. Due to the priority of this discussion it is likely that settings will not have a great deal of notice, therefore gathering information promptly will be vital. This means you will be able to take part in the strategy discussion confidently. You should find the actual process of taking part in a strategy meeting a collaborative and supportive experience with everyone acting entirely in the interests of safeguarding children.

Preparing for the strategy discussion:

It will be essential to have access to the safeguarding file/record and chronology to hand (if such exists) complete with all the information regarding the current concern (if you were the original referrer.)

Consider the following questions when thinking about gathering other information for the discussion

**If you were the referrer:**

The current concern:

* What is the current safeguarding concern? Be specific and clear and have the most up-to-date information to hand.
* Use the Signs of Safety (if appropriate and time allows) to ‘marshal your thoughts’ and enable you to highlight your concern with a clear focus on the impact on the child.
* Gather accompanying evidence in support of that concern and be specific; have dates and times to hand of when things happened.
* If possible, it would be beneficial to have the member of staff present for the strategy discussion to whom the disclosure was made. If this is not possible, make sure you have the full details.

Previous concerns:

* Have there been any previous concerns? What were they?
* Has there been any previous social care, Family Support involvement or a EHAP led by universal services?
* What interventions worked well; what didn’t work as well?
* Are there any ongoing other investigations that you are aware of?

Child’s voice:

* What are the child’s wishes and feelings in relation to this concern?
* What have they said (specifically)?
* What were the circumstances?
* How were wishes and feelings disclosed?

**If you were not the referrer:**

Ensure you have had a look through the child’s safeguarding record to remind yourself of any key issues, concerns or other professionals working with the family.

**Other key information:**

The child:

When did the child join your setting?

Was there a safeguarding handover from the child’s previous setting?

What were the issues previously?

Does the child have any Special Educational Needs or a disability?

Does the child have a diagnosis of anything? Are they on any medication for this?

Do they have an EHCP?

What is their current attendance percentage?

If absence is a factor in this referral, what are the *safeguarding* concerns in connection with that absence?

What about truancy? Does the child go missing during the day?

Is their attainment in line with national expectations?

Are they making good progress in their learning?

How does the child usually present to you and colleagues?

Have there been any recent changes in their presentation, appearance or behaviour?

How would you describe the child’s engagement at your setting?

Have you noticed any recent changes to this?

How well does the child communicate?

Would they be able to understand adults asking questions?

Do they require an interpreter?

Are they able to provide a free narrative of the event?

Does the child engage well with their peers?

Do they have positive friendships?

The parents or carers:

Who are the parents or carers?

Have names, addresses and telephone numbers available.

What is the child’s relationship like with their parent(s) or carer(s)?

Think about how do they interact with them on collection and dropping off?

What is your setting’s relationship with the parent(s) or carer(s)?

How well do they interact with you?

Do they respond to any requests/queries from the setting?

Do they attend parents’ evenings?

Have they been offered any support in the past or about this concern?

How have they reacted to any offers of support?

**At the end of the call:**

If it is not made clear during the strategy discussion, remember to ask the following:

What is the final decision?

What is the plan moving forward?

Are there any specific actions for the setting?

Does the child need to be kept at the setting until the police / social worker arrive?

**Ensure that you obtain contact details for the social worker or other professional who will be undertaking follow-up work.**