

Escalation procedure for use in schools/early years settings

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/meeting. This should be co-ordinated and chaired by a children's social care manager. The priority in all cases is to take appropriate and timely action to protect the child and prevent further harm.

Timescales for escalation

Strategy discussions/meetings must take place within **one working day** of child protection concerns being identified, except in the following circumstances:

- Allegations/concerns indicating immediate risk of harm to the child (e.g. serious physical injury or serious neglect) - **On the same day as the receipt of the referral**
- Allegations of penetrative sexual abuse, if it is required to ensure forensic evidence - **On the same day as the receipt of the referral**
- Where concerns are particularly complex (e.g. fabricated/induced illness/organised abuse/child sexual exploitation). See also: [Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers who Work with Children Procedure](#) - **Within five working days of receipt of the referral**

After the strategy meeting

All minutes should be written up and distributed to attendees **within 24 hours** (an extended timescale may be agreed in exceptional circumstances).

If a Section 47 enquiry is to be initiated, and if the outcome of this enquiry is that an ICPC is needed, this must be held **within 15 working days**.

If there is no cause to pursue the Section 47 enquiry, then a single assessment will be undertaken, as for all children open to statutory children's services. This must be completed **within 45 working days of the referral**.

If you are aware of these timescales of strategy meetings not being adhered to, please escalate following the BWSCP escalation procedure below.

Step 1 - Contact the named social worker, team manager and BSO.TogetherForFamilies@brighterfuturesforchildren.org to state escalation. If a strategy meeting has not taken place within one working day, there should be a safety plan in place. Schools and EY providers need to know what the safety plan entails.

Step 2 - Email the service manager/head of service to state escalation after 48 hours of no strategy discussion.

Step 3 - Contact the director for children's social care and executive director of children's services if not resolved after 48 hours.