



## COMPLEX STRATEGY MEETINGS – PRACTICE GUIDE

### 1 Why hold a complex strategy meeting?

The Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board (BBSCB) procedures define complex abuse as follows:

“Complex and organised abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of abused children “.

Therefore, where any professional identifies that there is complex or organised abuse, a complex investigation should be managed through a series of complex strategy meetings.

### 2 How to manage a complex investigation

2.1 The complex strategy meeting must be chaired by a Head of Service or the Assistant Director.

2.2 All identified professionals should be invited to attend the first meeting (note that this may be a significantly large group). The first and subsequent meetings may identify more links and therefore additional professionals should be invited to subsequent meetings. It should be noted that professionals from other local authority areas may need to be engaged in this process.

2.3 A complex investigation is likely to necessitate 3 or more complex strategy meetings.

2.4 The BBSCB procedures set out the expectations of the strategy meeting as follows:

The Strategy discussion/meeting must carefully note:

- An assessment of the information known to date:
  - The children named;
  - The children who may be in current contact with possible abusers;
  - Children who were, but no longer are, in contact with possible abusers;
  - Possible victims who are now adults.
- Decide what further information is required at this stage;
- Arrange for its gathering
- Establish if / to what extent complex abuse has been uncovered;
- Undertake an initial mapping exercise to determine the scale of the investigation and possible individuals implicated as well as prepare:

- Witnesses to be interviewed prior to the interviews of children;
  - Multiple and simultaneous interviews.
  - Consider a plan including resource implications, for investigation to be presented to senior management in each Local Authority area;
  - Consider any immediate protective action required
- 2.5 The Complex Strategy investigation will set out to identify any children who may be linked or at risk of abuse. The complex strategy meetings where appropriate will advise that individual assessments/strategy meetings/s.47 investigations will take place and the outcomes will be reported to the subsequent complex strategy meeting.
- 2.6 The Complex Strategy investigation will also identify any police action that may be taken.
- 2.7 In the early stages the Complex Strategy investigation will commission more information gathering to assist with the mapping exercise/s.
- 2.8 The Complex Strategy investigation will also consider and determine any other actions which may disrupt harmful activities, e.g. where staff are involved, disciplinary action, or where licensed operations are involved, suspension of licences or contracts, pending further enquiries.
- 2.9 The Chair of the Complex Strategy Investigation will need to make considerable enquiries and gather and present mapping information, between strategy meetings (unless an alternative resource can be identified to support this work).
- 2.10 Currently the BBSCB procedures state that consideration must be given to the appointment of a Strategic Management Group who should draw up a Terms of Reference for and take strategic lead for any complex investigations. In cases of significant complexity his strategic group should then be operationally supported by an investigation management group.
- 2.11 Additionally the procedures state that an end of investigation enquiry report should be made to the BBSCB evaluating lessons learnt and making any relevant recommendations to the BBSCB.
- 2.12 The link to the BBSCB procedures is as follows:  
[http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_org\\_complex\\_abuse.html](http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_org_complex_abuse.html)

### **3 Mapping**

- 3.1 There are a range of ways to map information. Where there are a number of families with believed links to each other, then a series of genograms should be produced and made available to the Complex Strategy Meetings.

3.2 Additionally it can be useful to set out in a grid, the associations between children and adults, locations and concerns, for example as follows:

<b>Child and age</b>	<b>Professionals involved</b>	<b>Adult associates</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Safeguarding events/issues</b>
Jane Smith (14)	Such and such school  Social worker, Andy Murray	John Jones (d.o.b) – previous offences for GBH and DV call outs. (Father of Angie Smith)  Patrick Green (d.o.b) – wife (Jessie Green) runs local playgroup	Local park	Sexual Assault (May 2016)
Rose Brown (10)	PRU	Johnny  Paddy	Industrial Estate	Grooming activity – buying sweets
Angie Jones (13)	PRU	John Jones (father). Angie lives with mother, Annette Jones and step-father, Alan Murdock.	Helps out at local play group.	Sexualised behaviour at school.

3.3. This can be cross referenced by a further map by males/adults as follows:

<b>John Jones (AKA Johnny)</b>	<b>Patrick Green (AKA Paddy)</b>	<b>Alan Murdock</b>	<b>Annette Jones</b>	<b>Jessica Green (AKA Jessie)</b>
Rose Brown	Rose Brown	Angie Jones	Angie Jones	Patrick Green
Jane Smith	Jane Smith	Annette Jones	John Jones	
Angie Jones			Alan Murdock	Angie Jones

A similar map can be drawn up against key locations.

3.4 During the course of the investigation, these maps can be used to identify further information needed and further young people who may need to be assessed and safeguarded. Therefore they should be developed throughout the course of the investigation.

#### **4 Recording**

All meetings should be minuted and agreed actions made clear with clear timescales attached to each action.

Minutes should be distributed by secure means within 5 working days of the meeting.

The minutes of each meeting, together with the mapping exercises should be uploaded into the, 'non-disclosure' part of the documents section on Azeus, on each child's file. This should be done by the social worker for each child.

5. **Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

Information discussed and gathered during the course of this process may at times be sensitive. It is important therefore that at the outset of each meeting the Chair must make it clear that the information being shared and discussed is highly confidential and should not be shared unless agreed by the Chair.

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