

Learning arising from Audit Sub Groups, February / March 2016
Multi-agency audit of 8 Somerset Strategy Discussions

Issue identified	ASG recommendation
A strategy discussion can be requested by any agency who has reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. This audit has shown that whilst agencies are making referrals to children social care with concerns about children, they are not explicitly requesting strategy discussions.	The LSCB should communicate with all agencies to reiterate that they can do request that a strategy is held. This message could be reinforced in training, and/or included in newsletters.
The notes of the strategy did not clearly reflect who had been involved.	The notes of the strategy need to take into account wider conversations with professionals which may have taken place by telephone or email, outside of the main meeting. The strategy document should clearly record who has had input into the discussions and the concerns of all agencies. This will ensure that other agencies, who will receive the strategy document but not the case notes, are aware of all the risks to the child/ren and their work to protect the children is fully informed. If agencies have been contacted but have no safeguarding concerns about a particular child, this should also be recorded.
In a case involving a young baby, their voice / experience was not evident.	The notes of the strategy need to be clear about the child's experience, particularly if the child is non-vocal.
The audit found that other agencies are not always updated about the case. This is a particular problem when follow-up strategies are cancelled.	Managers should consider adding a simple action to strategies to ensure other agencies kept up to date. This could be as simple as "CSC will update all agencies involved on outcomes/actions taken by (date)".
The groups audited two EDT strategies, and found inaccuracies in both.	It is recommended that a specific audit of EDT-led strategies takes place, to ensure they are now consistently being correctly recorded.
In one case a school had photographed marks (possible injuries) on a child	If this is still deemed to be inappropriate ask EWS to consider re-circulating digital images policy to schools.