



**Medway  
Safeguarding  
Children Board**  
Safeguarding Medway's  
children together



# **Medway Safeguarding Children Board**

## **Resolving Professional Differences – Escalation Policy**

**VERSION 2 – June 2016**

[www.mscb.org.uk](http://www.mscb.org.uk)



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Generally there is a good working relationship between agencies, but occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Disagreements are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need/ thresholds
- Roles and responsibilities
- Progressing plans
- Communication

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. All professionals have a duty to act assertively and proactively to ensure that a child's welfare is the paramount consideration in all professional activity.

Therefore all professionals must challenge the practice of other professionals where they are concerned that this practice is placing children at risk of harm.

This policy sets out clear routes to escalate professional concerns where the actions, inactions or decisions of another agency may be getting in the way of keeping a child safe.

## **2. WHEN TO USE THE ESCALATION POLICY**

Where a professional disagrees with a decision or response from any agency regarding a safeguarding or welfare concern they must firstly consult with their line manager to clarify thinking and the desired outcome. Initial attempts should be made to resolve the matter professional to professional.

If the professionals are unable to resolve differences through discussion and/or meeting within a time scale, which is acceptable to both of them, their disagreement must be addressed by more experienced / more senior staff using the Formal Escalation Process.

Issues that need to be escalated include:

- Disagreements over handling of concerns reported to Children's Social Care e.g. the referral is not considered to satisfy eligibility criteria for assessment; professional differences of opinion about the level of risk;
- When an agency does not agree with the decision made by Children's Social Care not to convene a child protection conference or the findings of the child and family assessment are not reflective;
- Concerns or disagreements over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in the implementation of a child protection plan or child in need plan, including core group meetings;
- Disagreement over the accuracy of minutes of multi agency meetings or other records that do not accurately reflect professional discussions e.g. Child Protection Conferences minutes, Core Group meeting minutes etc.;
- Core group meetings not taking place within timescales or where there is persistent non-attendance by core group professionals;

- There has been insufficient progress made in respect of the agreed objectives of the child protection plan and no contingency action has been taken.
- Concerns or disagreements over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or other multi agency process such as Team Around the Family (TAF)

### **3. STAGES OF THE ESCALATION PROCESS**

#### **Stage 1 – Escalate to Team Manager**

If professionals are unable to reach agreement about the way forward in an individual case then their disagreement must be addressed by more senior staff.

A team manager must contact the equivalent team manager from the other agency to discuss and seek resolution.

This may be a detective sergeant in the police; a senior health visitor/ nurse/ GP; social work team manager. If the young person is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) should also be informed.

A response is required within 5 working days.

If agreement cannot be reached following discussion between the above managers it will go to stage 2.

#### **Stage 2 – Escalate to Designated Safeguarding Leads/ Service Managers**

If the problem is not resolved at stage 1, the team manager must escalate to their Service manager or Designated Safeguarding lead to liaise with their equivalent. Those senior managers must attempt to resolve the differences through discussion.

This may be a Children's Social Care Operational Manager/ Head of Service; Detective Chief Inspector for safeguarding; designated teacher; named GP or other designated professional. If the young person is subject to a Child Protection Plan, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) should also be informed.

A response is required within 5 working days.

If agreement cannot be reached following discussions between the above managers it will go to Stage 3.

#### **Stage 3 – Escalate to Assistant/ Deputy Directors**

If the problem is not resolved at stage 2, the Service Manager/ Designated Safeguarding Leads must escalate to the agency Assistant Director/ Deputy Director/ Headteacher or equivalent.

A copy of the Stage 3 Escalation Alert Form should be completed and sent to the Assistant Director/ Deputy Director/ Headteacher/ Detective Superintendent Head of Safeguarding or equivalent. A response is required within 5 working days. A copy of the Stage 3 Escalation Form should also be sent to the MSCB at

[mscb@medway.gov.uk](mailto:mscb@medway.gov.uk)

If agreement cannot be reached following discussion between the above Assistant/ Deputy Directors it will go to stage 4.

#### **Stage 4 – Involving the Medway Safeguarding Children Board**

Where the Escalation Policy has been instigated to stage 3 but has not been satisfactory resolved, the MSCB Notifications and referrals for case reviews process will be used.

In accordance with the Notifications and referrals for case reviews to the MSCB, a notification form must be completed and sent to the MSCB Learning Lessons Subgroup Chair, via the MSCB support team [mscb@medway.gov.uk](mailto:mscb@medway.gov.uk) . The notification should usually be completed by the safeguarding lead. The MSCB will request reports via Learning Lessons subgroup members from any agency involved in the first instance as appropriate and ask that they present their response at the next Learning Lessons subgroup.

The MSCB Independent Chair will also be informed.

**APPENDIX ONE – ESCALATION FORMS**

**Stage 3 Escalation Form**

**Date of Alert:**

**From:**

**To: Assistant/ Deputy Director**

Response expected within 5 working days

**Name of Child:**

**DOB:**

**Practitioner:**

**Service:**

**Line Manager:**

**Summary of concern(s) remaining from Stage 2**

**Requested Action**

**Response by Assistant/ Deputy Director**

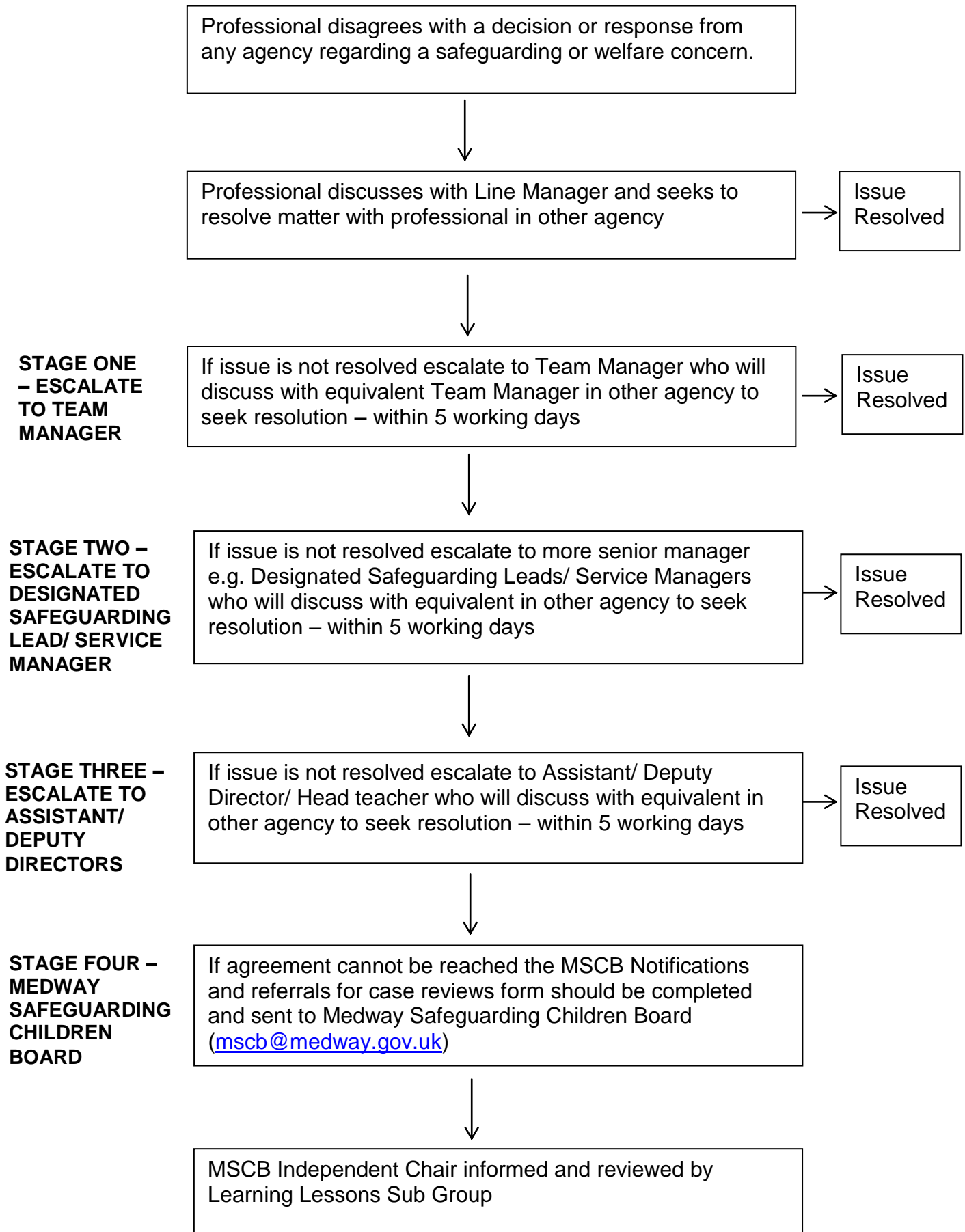
**Date:**

**Resolution of Alert (recorded by Assistant/ Deputy Director)**

***If not resolved to progress to Stage 4***

**Date:**

## APPENDIX TWO – ESCALATION POLICY FLOWCHART



**APPENDIX THREE – Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CADS) and Child in Need (CIN)/ Child Protection (CP) Manager Contacts**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>	<b>Telephone</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>			
Head of Service – CADS, CIN/ CP	Roisin Madden	<a href="mailto:roisin.madden@medway.gov.uk">roisin.madden@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 7302
<b>Operational Managers</b>			
CADS Operational Manager	Kelly Cogger	<a href="mailto:kelly.cogger@medway.gov.uk">kelly.cogger@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 5618
CIN & CP Operational Manager	Collette Visagie	<a href="mailto:collette.visagie@medway.gov.uk">collette.visagie@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 8664
<b>CADS Team Managers</b>			
CADS Team Manager – Assessment Team A	Susan Akinyele	<a href="mailto:susan.akinyele@medway.gov.uk">susan.akinyele@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 8682
CADS Team Manager – Assessment Team B	Sarah Featherstone	<a href="mailto:sarah.featherstone@medway.gov.uk">sarah.featherstone@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 4173
CADS Team Manager – Assessment Team C	Colin Heppenstall	<a href="mailto:colin.heppenstall@medway.gov.uk">colin.heppenstall@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 7331
CADS Team Manager – Assessment Team D	Lesley Page	<a href="mailto:Lesley.page@medway.gov.uk">Lesley.page@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 5731
CADS Team Manager – Advice Team	Sarah Ferguson	<a href="mailto:Sarah.ferguson@medway.gov.uk">Sarah.ferguson@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 8556
CADS Team Manager – SMART	Sarah Bullen	<a href="mailto:sarah.bullen@medway.gov.uk">sarah.bullen@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 4460
<b>CIN &amp; CP Team Managers</b>			
CIN & CP Team Manager – Team C	Annastacia Tsalong	<a href="mailto:Annastacia.tsalong@medway.gov.uk">Annastacia.tsalong@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 5641
CIN & CP Team Manager – Team D	Iva Kosoko	<a href="mailto:iva.kosovo@medway.gov.uk">iva.kosovo@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 7307
CIN & CP Team Manager – Team E	Diana Millwood	<a href="mailto:Diana.millwood@medway.gov.uk">Diana.millwood@medway.gov.uk</a>	Ex 4002