



## Resolution of Professional Disagreements in Work Relating to the Safety of Children

### Escalation Policy

#### Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from any agency on a safeguarding case is not in the best interests of the child. Differences of opinion could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to occur around:

- Levels of Need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Lack of action
- Communication

The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child. All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice.

This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they may have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional anxiety or disagreement that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of healthy challenge, professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

If there are significant concerns for the child well-being at any stage of this process the LSCB must be informed immediately (stage 3).

It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

#### Stages of the policy

- a) **Pre-escalation:** Professional to Professional,
- b) **Stage One:** Manager, Safeguarding Lead or Deputy
- c) **Stage Two:** Senior Manager: Safeguarding Lead or Deputy / Designated Professional and
- d) **Stage Three:** Refer to LSCB

## Stages of the policy

### a) Pre-escalation: Professional to Professional

It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult their Safeguarding lead or line manager to -

- clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem;
- be specific as to what the concern is about; and what they aim to achieve.
- evidence the nature and source of their concerns and keep a record of all discussions.

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the issue between the professionals where there is some disagreement/concern. Document for the service (agency) user file using the pro-forma (appendix one).

The professional with the concern should raise the matter with the relevant practitioner / decision maker verbally, confirmed in writing, providing clear evidence based reasons **within 2 working days** of that concern. If the receiving practitioner / decision maker has not responded to that concern within that timescale the concerned worker must follow up, seeking a response, before moving to stage one.

The receiving practitioner / decision maker **must** speak to the concerned professional attempting to find a mutually agreeable resolution via discussion or meeting **within 3 working days**

The matter must be resolved quicker if a delay would fail to protect the child from harm.

### b) Stage One: Manager - Safeguarding Lead or Deputy

If the issue is not resolved between the professionals within that timescale the practitioners should escalate to their respective line managers / safeguarding lead or deputy **within the same working day**.

Contact between line managers should seek a resolution **within a further 5 working days** or a timescale that protects the child from harm, whichever is less.

Where an acceptable resolution is reached the receiving line manager will confirm the agreed outcome of the concern and how any outstanding issues will be pursued. This must be documented, in writing to their counterpart outlining the issue **within a further 2 working days** who must then update the worker who first raised the initial concern and any other relevant personnel.

### c) Stage Two: Senior Manager - Safeguarding Lead or Deputy / Designated Professional

If the problem is not resolved at stage one the senior managers must, without delay, report to their respective operations/service manager or named/designated safeguarding representative. The two senior managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion **within a further 5 working days** or a timescale that protects the child from harm, whichever is less.

Where a resolution is reached the receiving senior manager will confirm the outcome which must be documented in writing to their counterpart raising the issue **within a further 2 working days**.

The organisations' Local Safeguarding Children's Board member and the LSCB Strategic Manager should be informed of an escalation at stage 2 and advised of any outcome using the pro-forma at Appendix Two.

**d) Stage Three:** Refer to LSCB

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct, or to convene a Resolution Panel **within a further 5 working days** or a timescale that protects the child from harm, whichever is less.

The panel must consist of LSCB representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences, where possible).

The panel will receive representations from those concerned in the professional differences and make a decision as to the next course of action, and the well-being of the child involved.

The decision(s) will be documented then cascaded down, via appropriate organisational management levels, to include the worker who first raised the initial concern.

LSCB mailbox: [LSCB@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@swindon.gov.uk)

LSCB Strategic Manager: [Sratcliff@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Sratcliff@swindon.gov.uk)

**NB.** The above email addresses must ***not*** be used for sending personal information over an external network. For secure messaging use -

LSCB secure mailbox: [LSCB@swindon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@swindon.gcsx.gov.uk)

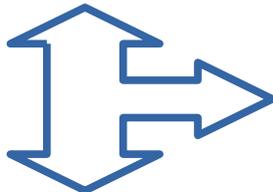


## Flowchart

### Concern or Disagreement arises with another agency

#### **Pre-escalation: Professional to Professional**

Mutually agreeable way forward sought between practitioners to resolve the concern **within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less)**



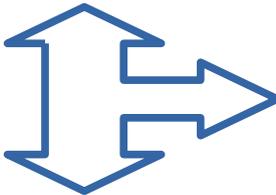
#### **Issue Resolved**

Resolution must be documented **within 2 working days**

**Unresolved**

#### **Stage 1: Manager, Safeguarding Lead or Deputy**

Concern or difficulty should be escalated to Line Managers/Safeguarding Lead or Deputy to resolve the issues **within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less)**

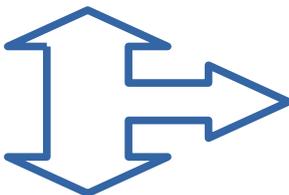


#### **Issue Resolved**

Resolution must be documented **within 2 working days**

**Unresolved**

**Stage 2: Senior Manager: Safeguarding Lead or Deputy / Designated Professional**  
Concern or difficulty to be referred to the relevant Senior Manager, Safeguarding Lead or Deputy / Designated Professional without delay to resolve the issues **within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less)**



#### **Issue Resolved**

Resolution outcome in writing to referring practitioner / agency **within 2 working days**

**Unresolved**

#### **Stage 3: Refer to LSCB**

Issue to be referred to the LSCB Chair via the LSCB Strategic Manager for the LSCB Chair to make recommendations, seek to resolve the issue direct, or convene a Resolution Panel **within a further 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less)**. The result will be documented and cascaded down, via appropriate organisational management levels, to include the worker who first raised the initial concern.



Escalation process recording and resolution on service user file.

<b>Name of child / young person:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>DOB:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>Address:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>Name of Practitioner, Role and Agency:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>Brief details re: inter agency disagreement:</b>	
Click here to enter text.	

**Was this disagreement resolved to at the pre-escalation level of LSCB Escalation Policy?**

*Delete as applicable:* **Yes / No**

**If so how was a resolution agreed?**

Click here to enter text.

**Was this disagreement responded to at Level 1 of LSCB Escalation Policy?**

*Delete as applicable:* **Yes / No**

**If so how was a resolution agreed?**

Click here to enter text.

**If not, who was the individual (at Level 1 of the LSCB Escalation Policy) within your agency that you referred the disagreement to?**

Click here to enter text.

**What was the outcome of this inter agency discussion at Level 2 of the LSCB Escalation Policy?**

Click here to enter text.

**Was the conflict referred to your agency Board representative at Level 3 of the LSCB Escalation Policy? If so, what was the resolution?**

Click here to enter text.

**How long did it take for the issue to be resolved from the point of initial escalation?**

Click here to enter text.

**Please direct a copy your completed form to:**

(Internal) LSCB mailbox: [LSCB@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@swindon.gov.uk)

(External secure) LSCB mailbox: [LSCB@swindon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@swindon.gcsx.gov.uk)

(Internal) LSCB Strategic Manager: [Sratcliff@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Sratcliff@swindon.gov.uk)



### Escalation Level Two / Three Only

Pro-forma for reporting inter-agency stage two disagreements which have been resolved at agencies LSCB member level to LSCB.

<b>Name of child / young person:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>DOB:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>Address:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>Name of Board Members, Roles and Agencies involved:</b>	Click here to enter text.
<b>Brief details re: inter agency disagreement:</b>	
Click here to enter text.	

**Methodology used to resolve the complaint**

Click here to enter text.

**Does this case give rise to any lessons learned?**

*Delete as applicable:* **Yes / No**

**If yes, please detail**

Click here to enter text.

**Do these lessons learned indicate the need for the following:- (please mark Yes or No for each of issues below)**

**Yes      No**

**A requirement for staff training**

**Development of a new LSCB Protocol**

**Further discussion at a particular LSCB Sub Group**

**Further discussion at the LSCB Board**

**How long did it take for the issue to be resolved from the point of initial escalation?**

Click here to enter text

**Please direct your completed form to:**

(Internal) LSCB mailbox: [LSCB@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@swindon.gov.uk)

(External secure) LSCB mailbox: [LSCB@swindon.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@swindon.gcsx.gov.uk)

(Internal) LSCB Strategic Manager: [Sratcliff@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Sratcliff@swindon.gov.uk)