



Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Multi-Agency Professional Challenge/Resolution Process

This process is to be used for all partner agencies excluding the Local Authority; there is a separate Resolution Process for use within the Local Authority and the two processes will run alongside to challenge issues appropriately.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 DSCP expects members of staff working directly with children and their families to share information appropriately in line with national and local guidance, and to work within the safeguarding procedures as agreed by the DSCP Executive.
- 1.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a responsibility shared by all agencies. Whilst the Local Authority is allocated a 'lead' role in coordinating responses to risk, or causes, of significant harm to children, effective intervention is dependent upon inter agency planning and multi- agency service responses.
- 1.3 Lack of information to conference or lack of sharing with parents can impact adversely on the child, resulting in poor and/delayed planning and intervention. This can potentially put a child at risk, impact on parental involvement, affect the efficiency of time of all the professionals, and impact upon effective conduct of the conference.
- 1.4 The process of challenge, where difficulties or disagreements arise between agencies, should be kept as simple as possible. The aim, where possible, is to resolve difficulties quickly and without delay at a professional practitioner level.
- 1.5 Each staff member is responsible for recording professional conversations and decision-making in line with internal agency or service setting case recording protocols and procedures.
- 1.6 Relationships between those involved need to be carefully managed in order to remain child-focussed, as challenge can cause tension. This can be managed by sensitive delivery of

information, open and effective communication and good working relationships between staff and managers at all levels and in all agencies.

2. Key Principles of the Challenge

- Share key information appropriately and often.
- Seek to resolve the issue quickly and efficiently at the right level.

3. When this process should not be used

A challenge should always be used in the child's best interests and the child must remain the focus. This process has been developed where an issue of poor practice impacts on the child. This process is not to be used to address a complaint with another professional – the appropriate complaints procedures should be used in these instances.

4. Areas and situations where Challenges may arise.

Where the Independent Review officer identifies an issue, for example:

- Reports not shared with the family within timescale for meeting.
- Lack of attendance at core groups.
- Lack of attendance at conference.
- Lack of report to conference.
- Professionals not completing agreed actions as part of the child's plan.

5. The Process of Challenge.

5.1 The process for challenge is a 5-stage process and should be completed in its entirety within 16 working days. It is expected that challenges will usually be resolved at Stage 1 or 2.

5.2 **Stage 1.** Where there is an identified issue there will be an informal discussion between the IRO and the professional within *1 working day*. The IRO will decide as to whether this can be resolved informally and if not will instigate Stage 2.

5.3 **Stage 2.** This stage will be used when there is a disagreement or lack of appropriate response at Stage 1. At this point the IRO will contact the relevant professional's Line Manager with their concerns (the professional's Line Manager should consider liaising with

their own Safeguarding Lead from within their agency). The IRO will complete the Compliance Challenge form and forward this to the line manager for their completion. If the issue is responded to and resolved within *3 working days*, the process will end at this stage.

5.4 **Stage 3** If the issue remains unresolved, or is reoccurring, then the IRO will escalate the matter to the DSCP Business Manager who will contact the Agency's Safeguarding Lead to discuss the concerns. If the issue is responded to and resolved within *7 working days*, the process will end at this stage. If the issue remains unresolved, or is reoccurring, the DSCP Business Manager to be informed by the IRO for consideration of escalation to the DSCP Executive.

5.5 The IRO is to copy in the Business Manager for QRT when sending these challenges. This will allow for data collection to identify if repeated forms are being sent to a particular agency and if performance does not improve. Where patterns are identified the IRO Service Manager would consider escalating the issue to the DSCP Business Manager to raise issues with the appropriate board member.

This process will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Compliance Challenge Form

Information

Family name	IRO
Professional	
Line Manager	Date form sent
	Date response required
Name of Safeguarding Lead	Date of escalation

Identified Issue.

Reports not sent to QRT within timescales to be shared with professional.	
Reports not shared with family within timescale for meeting	
Lack of attendance at core groups/care team meetings/conference	
Not completing or progressing an action in a plan that is causing delay	
Lack of report	
Other	

The IRO's concern and what we would like to see happening

Stage 2 - Line Managers Response (3 Working Days)
Stage 3 (5 Working Days) Record of the meeting, actions agreed and timescales.
Date of Meeting:
Stage 4 (7 Working Days) Record of the meeting, actions agreed and timescales.

Date of Meeting:
Stage 5 - Reasons for escalation to DSCP

Stage 2 Date Resolved/ Progressed
Stage 3 Date Resolved/ Progressed
Stage 4 Date Resolved/ Progressed
Stage 5 Date escalated

IRO signature

Compliance Challenge Process

Resolution

