GSCP Escalation and Challenge Protocol

# Introduction

The purpose of this Protocol is to ensure a prompt, sensitive and professional response to the management of escalating issues and constructively challenging agencies regarding their practice in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Gateshead.

# Who can raise issues using the GSCP Escalation and Challenge Protocol?

All professionals have a responsibility to escalate issues and challenge other professionals where they are concerned about the welfare of a child. This Protocol should be followed by professionals to ensure a speedy resolution to the issues. The GSCP Independent Chair will consider the issue and determine what level of response, as detailed below, is required.

# Criteria

There is a presumption that any issues referred for a possible GSCP Escalation and Challenge will satisfy one of the following criteria:

* A long term issue that has not been resolved despite sustained attempts
* A practice that puts children at risk or causes the child to suffer significant harm
* A failure to act in the best interests of the child

# Procedure for escalating issues via this protocol

The following is the process for escalating issues to another professional, however it must be noted that the issue may be of such significance and concern that it may immediately go to Stage 3.

All escalations and challenges made via this Protocol should be recorded on the child’s file, in line with your agency’s recording policy, until Stage 3 when the pro-forma should be used.

When a professional has a concern which satisfies the criteria above, they should address their concern with the other professional involved in the first instance. If this challenge does not address the concern the professional is required to escalate their concern via the following pathway:

# Stage 1 - Immediate Resolution

The relevant professional should elevate the concern to their Line Manager. The Line Manager will contact their counterpart (the Receiving Manager) in the other agency to raise the concerns. The Receiving Manager must respond in writing within 5 working days regarding what action is to be taken. The Referring Manager must acknowledge the response and confirm if they are satisfied with it as soon as is practicable. If they are not satisfied and believe the concern remains, they will implement Stage 2 of this Protocol.

# Stage 2 – Resolution by Senior Manager

The Referring Manager will escalate the concerns and the action taken to date to their Senior Manager who will refer the issues to a Senior Manager in the receiving agency. The Receiving

Senior Manager will investigate the concerns and the action taken and respond to the Referring Senior Manager within 5 working days.

The Referring Senior Manager will acknowledge the response and confirm if they are satisfied with it and the action taken. If they are not satisfied, they will implement Stage 3 of the Protocol.

# Stage 3 – Resolution by Head of Service (or equivalent)

At Stage 3 the Head of Service (or equivalent) will pass the information to the relevant Head of Service with a copy to their Designated/Named or Lead Professional in the Referring Agency. The Receiving Head of Service has 3 working days to acknowledge the issue has been received and outline what action will be taken.

The Receiving Agency Head of Service has a further 5 working days to respond to the Referring Agency. The Referrer then has 3 working days to consider the information and advise if they are satisfied with the action taken and the outcome. If the Referrer remains concerned with the action taken, this will be passed to the GSCP Business Manager to be addressed at Stage 4.

# Stage 4 - Formal Consideration by GSCP

Upon receipt of the information:

1. The GSCP Business Manager discuss with the GSCP Independent Scrutineer, as appropriate, to determine how the issue should be addressed. This may be a direct approach to the Agency by referring the issue to be addressed by the agency or for discussion at the GSCP.
2. The GSCP Business Manager will acknowledge receipt of the issue and inform the referrer of the planned action within 3 working days of receipt of the issue being raised
3. The GSCP Business Manager will ensure that all issues and subsequent actions will be recorded on the GSCP Escalation Challenge spreadsheet. This will ensure an accurate record of all challenges and the outcomes is held and any themes will be considered on a 6 monthly basis by the GSCP Board.

Where the escalated concerns have not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage 3 all information regarding the Escalation and Challenge and the response(s) should be escalated to the GSCP Business Manager.

# Quality Assurance

Issues referred via this Protocol will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis by the GSCP Performance and Quality Assurance Group which reports to the GSCP.

**LADO ESCALATION PROCESS**

This process applies situations where an allegation has been made under the Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers Who Work With Children procedure.

On occasions professionals involved in making a consultation may not agree with the outcome of the consultation. In these instances, they should escalate their concerns to the service lead for the Safeguarding Children’s Unit for further scrutiny. In the event that the service lead for the Safeguarding Children’s Unit has made the decision the matter should be escalated to the Head of Service, who will review the information and decision making.

In the event that the referrer still does not agree with the decision they should escalate the matter to the Safeguarding Children Partnership via the Business Manager.

If any of the professionals are unhappy regarding the manner in which the LADO meeting has been chaired and the decision made within the meeting, the same escalation procedure should be followed.

The complaint will be investigated by the appropriate person and an outcome shared within 10 working days of the initial complaint. Any further escalation should be made within 7 working days of the receipt of the outcome.