

ANNEX C: ESCALATING A CONCERN

Occasionally situations arise when officers within one agency feel that the decision made by an officer from another agency on a safeguarding case is not a safe decision. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- The need for action;
- Communication.

The safety of individual at risk 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 this person.

All officers 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.

Where you feel issues remain unresolved you should discuss the issues with your line manager who can agree to support a resolution process with the professionals concerned and / or with their line managers. This process must follow the stages 1 to 4 as detailed in the flow chart below. Consultation with the Named Safeguarding Officer and/or senior managers within each organisation can be used if this would be felt to assist resolution. Care should be taken to agree a way of managing conflict, which allows children, families or adults to understand the issues under discussion.

Each Safeguarding Board has a Senior Liaison Officer who can be contacted to assist as appropriate including via agency escalation pathway, negotiating / agreeing a way forward in the way described above. In addition, Senior Liaison Officers can advise that a case should be referred to the inter agency case review group for interagency consideration of the contentious matter. At this point the group may take recommendations for individual agencies to review performance or involvement, or for policy or procedural developments

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Escalating Concerns Flowchart

Stage one

Officer attempts to address professional concern or disagreement through discussion and/or meeting within one working day.

Is there agreement?

Resolved

- Check back to ensure there is shared understanding of the agreed actions
- Record agreed actions
- Check back to ensure agreed actions have been fully implemented

Stage Two

Unresolved

Officer reports professional concern or disagreement to line manager. Respective managers liaise within 24 hours to review available information and resolve if possible. Advice is sought from respective designated safeguarding leads if necessary.

Is there agreement?

Resolved

- Check back to ensure there is shared understanding of the agreed actions
- Immediately feed agreed actions back to operational staff
- Confirm actions in writing between agencies and, where appropriate, include a date to review them
- If necessary invoke the process for reviewing the child's Plan

Stage Three

Unresolved

The professional concern or disagreement is referred without delay through the line management structures of the respective agencies and senior managers seek to resolve.

Is there agreement?

Resolved

- Check back to ensure agreed actions have been fully implemented

Stage Four

Unresolved

The professional concern or disagreement is referred without delay through the line management structures of the respective agencies and senior managers seek to resolve.

<http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/local-content/4gjN/escalation-policy-resolution-of-professional-disagreements/?b=Worcestershire>

Is there agreement?

Resolved

- Outcome of discussion and agreed actions to be recorded in writing and consideration given to where the record of the meeting is to be held
- Immediately feed agreed actions back to operational staff
- Senior managers consider the need to review policies or procedures, or to address any compliance or professional competence issues
- Check back to ensure agreed actions have been fully implemented