



Pan-Cheshire Multi-Agency Escalation Procedure

*- for resolving inter-agency
professional challenges when
working with children and families*

Date of Ratification	January 2013
Date of Review	February 2016
Review due	March 2018

INTRODUCTION

When working with practitioners from other agencies there will at times be differences of opinion or concerns about professional practice in relation to a child, young person or family. Throughout our work the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is the primary concern, and professional disagreements must not obstruct this.

If you feel that a practitioner or an agency is not acting in the best interests of the child, young person or family, you have a responsibility to respectfully challenge the practitioner or agency, and escalate that concern if resolution is not achieved.

All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported and know how to appropriately escalate and resolve intra-agency and inter-agency concerns and challenges about a child or young person's wellbeing and the response to their safeguarding needs.

This procedure is not designed to replace the statutory complaints processes established within individual partner agencies.

PRINCIPLES TO SUPPORT RESOLUTION

It is important that practitioners feel empowered and supported within their agencies to challenge aspects of practice that they do not feel are in the best interests of the child or young person. When trying to resolve a difference of professional opinion or concern about practice practitioners should work within the following principles:

- ✓ The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount, and should they be considered to be at significant risk the Contact and Referral Team should be contacted.
- ✓ Keeping the child, young person and their family at the centre of all professional discussions.
- ✓ Ensuring that the right conversations are had with the right people at the right time, taking place face to face where possible.
- ✓ Challenges must be resolved in a timely manner.
- ✓ Concerns, actions, responses and outcomes must be recorded.

CONTEXT

Difference of opinion or concerns about practice between practitioners and agencies can arise at any stage in the safeguarding process and between any of the agencies involved. This procedure is to ensure partner agencies have a quick and straightforward means of resolving any concerns, in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

Effective working together depends on resolving different professional perspectives to the satisfaction of workers and agencies, and a belief in a genuine partnership and joint working to safeguard children. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional cooperation and joint working to safeguard children. Professional challenge can be positive, it demonstrates that professionals are willing to consider different perspectives and escalate matters that they do not feel will result in positive outcomes for the child or young person. It is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.

Each agency should have a recording system that can demonstrate use of the Escalation Procedure from Step 1-3. Alongside an entry in the child's record, agencies should be able to report to the LSCB the outcomes of escalations at Steps 2 & 3. The LSCB will maintain a record of all escalations and outcomes at Step 4, but may request from time to time information from its partners about the outcomes of escalations at Steps 2 and 3.

PROFESSIONALS RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS – STEP ONE

Most disagreements can be resolved between professionals by having a conversation about the reasons for the difference of opinions and without having to escalate the matter further. If resolution is reached at **STEP 1** the LSCB does not need to be informed. However the matter should be recorded within each agencies child's record. When concerns arise, the worker should attempt to raise the issue with the other agency **within one working day**. If the matter remains unresolved it is the individual's responsibility to notify the Safeguarding Lead/Line Manager who should address the matter on behalf of their staff member.

SAFEGUARDING LEADS/LINE MANAGERS – STEP TWO

The respective parties must identify explicitly what the problem is and have absolute clarity about the nature of the professional challenge and what the respective workers aim to achieve. Please contact the LSCB Business Manager (details in Appendix 4 below) if you require contact details for the Safeguarding Lead in the organisation you are raising the escalation with.

LSCB BOARD MEMBERS – STEP THREE

If Safeguarding Leads, Team Managers (or equivalent) are unable to resolve the concerns they should be escalated by a Senior Manager to the LSCB Board representative who will arrange a meeting to seek resolution. Please follow the links below to find details of Board members within the respective LSCBs of [Cheshire West](#) ; [Cheshire East](#); Halton and Warrington.

LSCB CHAIR – STEP FOUR

If concerns persist following Step 3 the matter must be raised, via the form at Appendix A, to the LSCB Business Manager. They will in turn notify the Chair. The LSCB Chair will seek written representation initially, and may request a meeting with those involved at all levels of service delivery to seek their views and solutions to the concerns raised. The LSCB Chair will make a recommendation on the most appropriate way to proceed and this will be communicated to all involved within 5 working days of the issue being brought to their attention.

It is recognised that within Voluntary, Charity and Faith sector organisations the designated/named safeguarding professional may be the same worker as the professional identifying the concern in Step 1. The escalation procedure and timeframes outlined within this document should nevertheless be adhered to.

PAN CHESHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ESCALATION PROCESS

STEP 4: The LSCB Chair will seek written representation, and may request a meeting with those involved. The LSCB Chair will make a recommendation on the most appropriate way to proceed and communicate this within 5 days of notification.

STEP 4 (NO LATER THAN DAY 16 – TO BE CONCLUDED BY DAY 21).

STEP 3: The Senior Manager will escalate to the **LSCB Board Representative** who will arrange a meeting to seek resolution. If agreement cannot be achieved the matter should be brought to the attention of the **LSCB Business Manager (using the form at Appendix A)** who will refer the matter to the LSCB Chair

STEP 3 (NO LATER THAN DAY 9 – TO BE CONCLUDED NO LATER THAN DAY 14)

STEP 2: The **Line Manager/Safeguarding Lead** should discuss the concerns/response with their opposite manager in the other agency. If resolution cannot be achieved professionals must notify their **Senior Managers** (or in the case of schools the Chair of Governors alongside the Head)

STEP 2 (NO LATER THAN DAY 3- TO BE CONCLUDED BY DAY 9)

STEP 1: When concern regarding practice or decision-making by a professional/agency arises initial attempts should be made **between workers** to resolve the issue. If resolution cannot be achieved professionals must escalate to the **safeguarding lead and/or team manager** in their organisation.

STEP 1 (DAY 1) – TAKE ACTION WITHIN 24 HOURS OF CONCERN ARISING
(act immediately if there is significant harm).

At all steps of the process decisions should be taken in a timely way and shared with the relevant professional who is involved with the service user(s).

Details of the disagreement, the decisions taken, and the outcomes must be recorded on the child's file. Parents and carers should also be informed of the escalation and outcome (unless doing so would place the child at risk of significant harm).

Senior Managers should ensure there is a system in place within agencies to evidence and report on all escalations at steps 2 – 4.

