

Escalation procedure

This page provides a guide around how to escalate concerns that you may have if you feel that issues are not being dealt with satisfactorily and you need to resolve professional disagreements in your work relating to the safety of children.

Please note that this is a general guide and you should refer to the specific escalation policy of the safeguarding board where you are working.

Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers in one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need 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 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 have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a. avoiding professional disputes 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 professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the

child is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage however if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

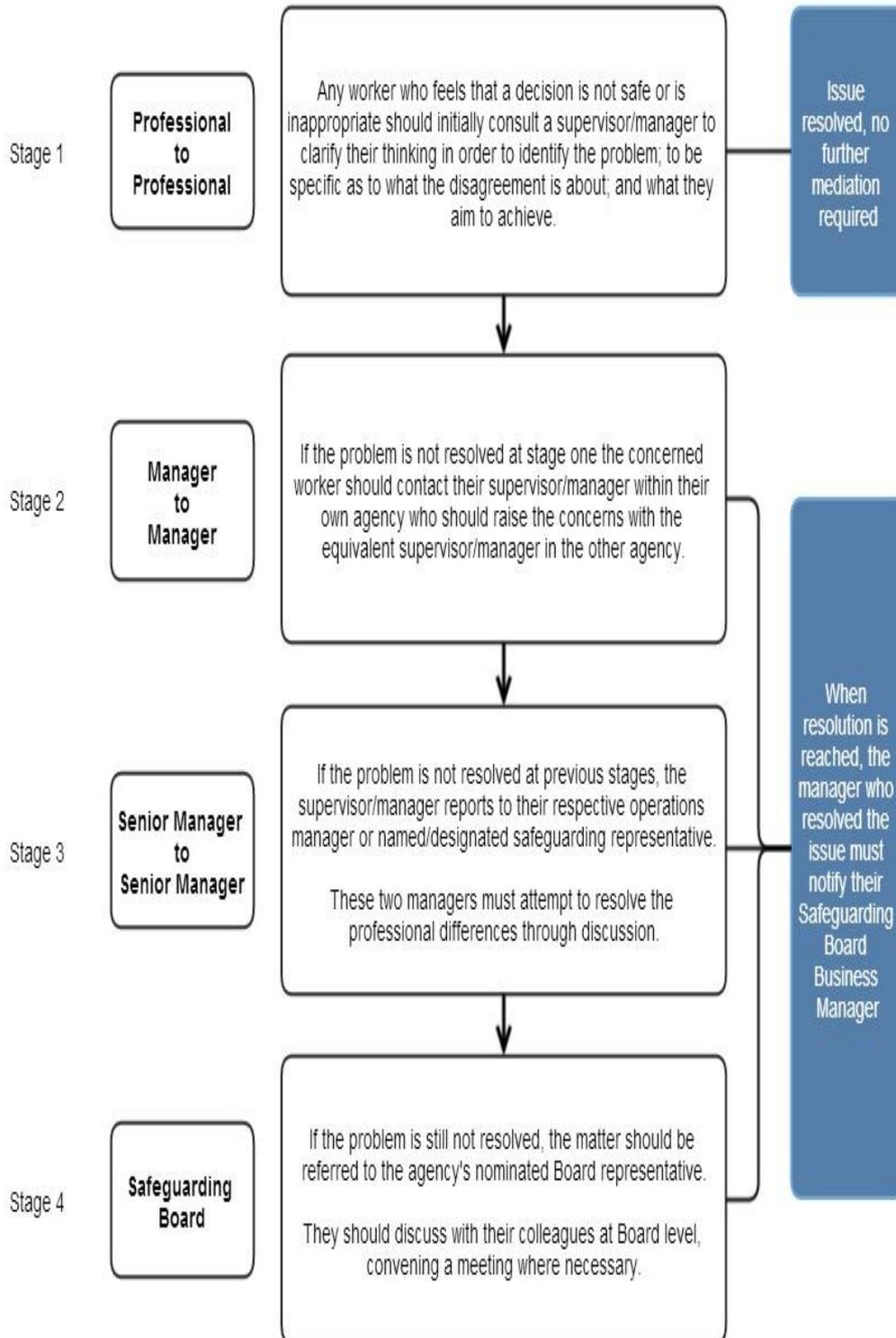
If the disagreement is between you and your manager then you should consider using your agency's whistle-blowing process.

Stages of the policy

The procedure is set out in the flowchart below, copies of which are available as a PDF document at the bottom of the page.

It is important that as a practitioner you are involved at each stage of the process, as you will be able to provide the detail around the issues and know the case well enough to ensure a proper discussion takes place.

If you consider a child is at imminent risk of harm and another agency disagrees you should use discretion as to which stage is initiated after consulting with your line manager or safeguarding lead.



Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

If the Board convenes a Resolution Panel, 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, resolving the professional differences concerned.

Timescales

Some matters may be resolved very quickly, and this will be determined locally by the complexity of the issues. In all cases, the matter will be resolved as speedily as possible, and the primary focus will be on ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child concerned is assured whilst discussions take place.

Additional notes

At all stages of the process actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

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