



Escalation Policy

**Resolution of professional
disagreements in work relating
to the safety of children**

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Ratified by Somerset LSCB July 2009
Reviewed by Matthew Turner May 2012
Reviewed by APP March 2013



Escalation Policy

This policy was developed in line with the guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2006 (see 3.29, 5.78), to develop quick and straightforward means of resolving professional differences of view in specific cases, in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people. Subsequent revisions reflect Working Together 2013 and the South West Child Protection Procedures. Effective working together depends on resolving disagreements to the satisfaction of workers and agencies, and a belief in a genuine partnership.

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1. Potential areas of disagreement

- 1.1. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional cooperation and joint working to safeguard children.
- 1.2. Professional disagreement is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.
- 1.3. At no time must professional disagreement detract from ensuring the child is safeguarded. The child's welfare and safety must remain paramount throughout.
- 1.4. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around thresholds, roles and responsibilities, the need for action and communication. Examples are given below although this list is not exhaustive.
 - A referral is not considered to meet eligibility criteria for assessment by Children's Social Care, for example, several low level concerns
 - Children's Social Care conclude that further information should be sought by the referrer before a referral is progressed
 - There is disagreement as to whether child protection procedures should be invoked
 - Children's Social Care and the Police place different interpretations on the need for single/joint agency response.
 - There is disagreement about the need to convene an Initial Child Protection Conference
 - There is disagreement over the sharing of information and/or provision of services
 - Disagreements over the outcome of any assessment and whether the appropriate plan is in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child
- 1.5. The aim should be to resolve difficulties at practitioner/fieldworker level between agencies.

1.6. Attempts at problem resolution may leave one worker/agency believing that the child/ren remain at risk of significant harm. This person/agency has responsibility for communicating such concerns through agreed channels.

2. Resolving disagreements

2.1. Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem. This should normally be between the people who disagree, unless the child is at immediate risk.

2.2. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported. In these circumstances, a third party should be consulted.

2.3. If unresolved, the problem should be referred to the worker's own line manager, who will discuss with their opposite number in the other agency. Some examples are given below:

- Social Worker – Team Leader
- Health Visitor - Locality Safeguarding Children Nurse and the Locality Lead for the HV's geographical area
- Midwife - Supervisor of Midwives and Named Midwife and /or Named Nurse Safeguarding Children Acute Trust
- GP – Clinical Commissioning Group Named Doctor and/or Designated Nurse/Doctor Safeguarding Children
- Paediatric Staff - Sister and/or Named Nurse Safeguarding Children for Acute Trust
- Hospital Doctor - Named Doctor and /or Named Nurse Safeguarding Children Acute Trust
- Community Mental Health Team - Named Professional Mental Health Trust
- Teacher – School's Designated Child Protection lead - Headteacher
- Head teacher is the senior manager in school and will be the lead to the point of referral to the Safeguarding Children Board Co-ordinator. The Headteacher may seek advice from the Education Child Protection Advisor

2.4. Additionally, advice may be sought directly from the Designated Professional or Named Professional.

2.5. If the problem remains unresolved, the line manager will refer 'up the line' (see flowchart).

2.6. A clear record should be kept at all stages, by all parties. 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.

3. Where professional disagreements remain

3.1. If professional disagreements remain unresolved, the matter must be referred to the LSCB representative for each agency involved.

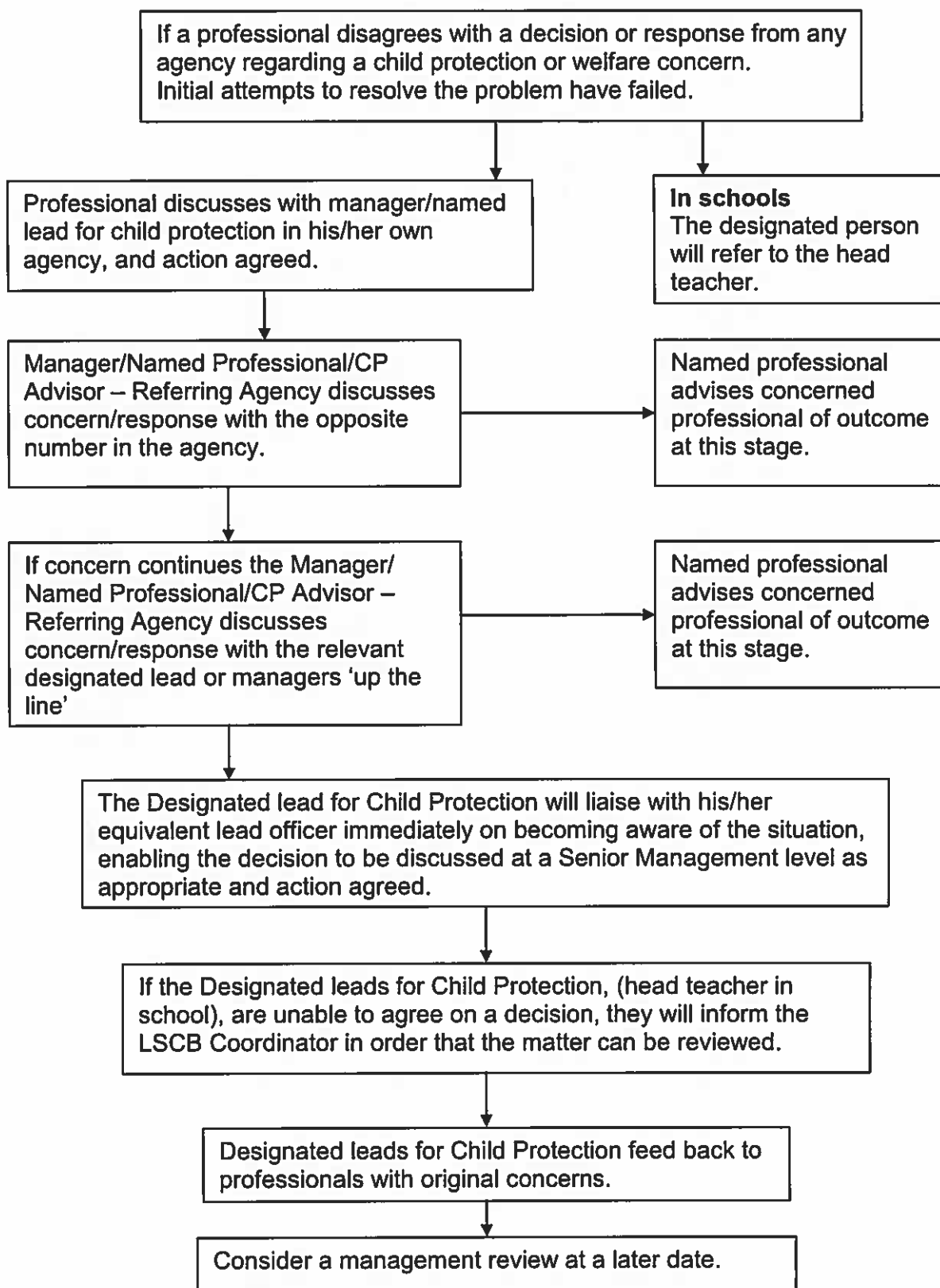
3.2. In the unlikely event that the issue is not resolved by the steps described above and/or the discussions raise significant policy issues; it should be referred to the

Safeguarding Children Board Coordinator who will determine a course of action including reporting to the LSCB Chair, as per flowchart.

4. Following use of escalation policy

- 4.1. It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.
- 4.2. When the issue is resolved, any general issues should be identified and referred to the agency's representative on the LSCB for consideration by the relevant LSCB subgroup to inform future learning.
- 4.3. In all cases where it has not been possible to resolve differences and/or where there may be lessons to be learned for future practice, consideration should be given to holding a management review or significant events audit, which could be under the Serious Case Review Procedures.

Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board
Escalation Policy for Professionals with Child Protection or Child Welfare Concerns
5. Flowchart



At all stages actions/decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel.



