



ESCALATION POLICY

RESOLUTION OF PROFESSIONAL DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when professionals in one agency feel that the actions, inactions or decisions of one agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Disagreements may relate to

- The nature and level of a child's needs;
- The nature and severity of risk to a child; and/or
- The most appropriate way to reduce the risk to a child;
- The tasks that would be responsible to the roles of particular professionals; and/or
- The appropriate sharing of information.

All professionals have a duty to challenge the practice of other professionals if they are concerned that this is placing one or more children at risk of harm.

At every stage of the process all decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, including the professional who raised the initial concern.

When the disagreement is resolved the agencies involved must agree a written statement of the outcome, including any consequent action to be taken.

If this process discloses gaps or weaknesses in the policies and procedures of Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board this must be brought to the attention of the chair of the Board.

Any professional who considers that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm must ensure that concerns are escalated **on the same working day**. In all other circumstances professionals should attempt to resolve disagreements within **one working week**.

Stage One – consulting the line manager

Any professional who feels that a decision made by another agency is inappropriate or unsafe should initially consult their manager/supervisor to clarify their thinking and to identify the desired outcome. This should be done on the same working day that the disagreement arises.

All managers/supervisors should be aware that some professionals may need support to pursue disagreements, particularly when there are significant differences in status or experience.

Stage Two – discussion between the professionals

The professionals who disagree should discuss the issues, identify the areas of agreement and disagreement and agree the extent to which the area of disagreement is relevant to the issue of risk to the child. Every effort should be made to resolve the disagreement at this level.

Stage Three – escalation to line manager

If the problem is not resolved at Stage Two the two professionals should each notify their manager/supervisor who will discuss the issues with the equivalent manager/supervisor in the other agency.

Stage Four – escalation to safeguarding leads or senior manager

If the problem is not resolved at Stage Three each manager/supervisor will report to their respective named or designated safeguarding lead or service manager. These two managers will attempt to resolve the disagreement.

Stage Four – mediation by a third party agency

Wherever possible operational disagreements must be resolved by the agencies directly involved in the case. When resolution cannot be achieved at Stage Four the case should be referred to the business coordinator of Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board, who will notify the chair of the Board. The chair will identify a Board member from an uninvolved agency to chair a meeting of senior managers with operational responsibility for the case. This meeting will provide a final opportunity to reach a decision.

The chair of this meeting will report back to the chair of the Safeguarding Children Board.