

# Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership Board



## Liverpool Safeguarding Escalation Policy

### Resolving Inter-Agency Professional Disagreement

**‘Effective Escalation Supports Effective Safeguarding’**

# LSCPb Resolution & Escalation Procedure

*'Risks to children are increased when inter-agency dispute resolution and escalation processes are weak and ineffective'*

LSCB Practice Learning Review (Jan 2018)

**'Escalation is.... an effective mechanism for resolving professional disagreement.'**

**Escalation is not.... a negative action or criticism.**

## Resolution

When working with children and their families professional disagreement can be positive, as challenge allows for review and can foster creative ways of working, however, disagreements can impact negatively on positive working relationships and consequently on the ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Disagreements always require resolution.

## What is Escalation?

Escalation is a process of formally challenging a decision made by another professional, group or organisation. Escalation procedures ensure that all professionals have a quick and straightforward means of resolving professional differences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

## Escalation - Principles

Effective working together depends on an open approach, clarity of roles and responsibilities and genuine, and honest, relationships between agencies. Escalation is a means of resolving professional differences and is an integral part of joint working to safeguard children.

Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPb) encourages effective challenge to support effective safeguarding. All agencies across the partnership have agreed to work in a culture of genuine partnership working and have committed to the following principles;

- **The safety and wellbeing of individual children and young people is the paramount consideration in any effective challenge and escalation.**
- Effective challenge is a positive action.
- Practitioners should take responsibility for their own cases and actions;
- Any disagreements between agencies should be resolved as simply and quickly as possible;
- Practitioners should respect the views of others, whatever their level of experience, the role they fulfil or agency they represent.
- Practitioners and managers should always be prepared to review decisions and plans with an open mind;
- Working together effectively depends on resolving disagreements to the satisfaction of workers and agencies, with a genuine commitment to partnership working.

Differing opinions could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise when considering:

- levels of need and intervention,
- lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities,
- The need for action and communication.

**Examples**, where the concerns about the child should prompt action, are given below. This list is not exhaustive.

- Dispute at the point of referral due to differing opinions about thresholds.
- Concern about the action / inaction of another professional in relation to a child or family member.
- Disagreement about decision making and a course of action to be taken, for example whether there should be a Child Protection Case Conference or, whether a case should be closed.
- Dissent at / arising from a Child Protection Case Conference. Dissent arising from the implementation of a CP Plan.
- Disagreement over information sharing.
- Disagreement over an assessment and differences around professional analysis and joint decision making.
- Disagreement over the provision of services.
- Concern there is drift or unreasonable delay in a case.
- Concerned about the operation of child protection procedures.

**WHEN ANY PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERS A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM, THEN THE INDIVIDUAL MUST ENSURE THEIR CONCERNS ARE ESCALATED ON THE SAME WORKING DAY USING ESTABLISHED SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES.**

Where professionals consider that the practice, or the decision making of other professionals is placing children at risk of harm, they **must** be assertive act swiftly and ensure that they challenge any relevant professionals in line with this policy.

- The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional activity.
- Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected.

**This procedure is not designed to replace complaint processes established within individual partner agencies.**

# Resolving Professional Disagreements Process and Timescales

## Stage 4 - Escalation to LSCP board members

A member of the LSCP Board will be identified and may seek to resolve issues directly with relevant senior managers, or convene a resolution panel. The board member will make a recommendation of the most appropriate way to proceed, and communicate this **within 5 days of the notification**.

**Timescale Stage 4: to be concluded by day 23.**

## Stage 3 - Escalation to LSCP safeguarding representative

Following escalation to LSCPB safeguarding representative, a meeting between respective LSCP representatives should be convened to seek resolution.

Appendix 2: Report to LSCP: multi agency resolution Stages 3 and 4 should be completed and referred to the LSCP co-ordinator.

**Organisation safeguarding representative should collate cases escalated to them and forward for LSCP monitoring.**

Record agreed outcome, if unresolved, escalate to stage 4, and record the escalation.

**Timescale Stage 3: to be concluded by day 16. Inform LSCP of resolution.**

## Stage 2 - Escalation to organisation safeguarding representative

Organisation safeguarding representative should provide advice and guidance for line manager escalation or discuss directly unresolved concerns with their counterpart in the other agency. If resolution is achieved, record the agreed outcome.

**Organisation safeguarding representative should collate cases escalated to them and forward for LSCP monitoring.**

Record agreed outcome, if unresolved, escalate to stage 3, and record the escalation.

**Timescale Stage 2: to be concluded by day 9. Record agreed Outcome or escalation.**

## Stage 1 - Attempt Resolution / Escalate to Line Manager

When concern regarding practice or decision making by a professional / agency arises, initial attempts should be made between workers / professionals to resolve the issues.

If resolution is achieved, the agreed outcome must be recorded. If unresolved, escalate to line manager.

Line manager discusses concerns or matters unresolved with their counterpart in the other agency. (Line managers should consider a professionals meeting if necessary).

Record agreed outcome, if unresolved escalate to stage 2, and record the escalation.

## Timescale Stage 1: Day 1-2

Take action within 24 hours of concern arising – record outcome or escalation. Act immediately if harm is known or suspected

If unresolved  
escalate

If unresolved  
escalate

If unresolved  
escalate

## LSCP Resolution & Escalation Procedure – Supporting Notes

**RECORD:** Where professionals escalate a matter of concern, internally to a line manager or externally to a safeguarding representative, details of matters escalated must always be recorded on a child or young person's case records.

### Stage 1. Attempt Resolution.

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. Initial attempts should be made between workers to resolve the issues through discussion. This discussion must take place as soon as is possible. This can be a telephone conversation or face to face meeting. The agreed outcome of discussions or actions must be recorded using the \*Escalation Summary Log (\*See Appendix 1) and on the child's case file. If matters remain unresolved this also must be recorded on the Escalation Summary Log and escalated to a Line Manager.

### Escalate to Line Manager.

Where matters are escalated to a line manager concerns, or matters unresolved, should be discussed with their counterpart in the other agency. 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. **Line Managers must always consider convening a professionals meeting if necessary.** The outcome of discussions, matters resolved or actions agreed must be recorded. Line managers must complete the \*Escalation Summary Log (See Appendix 1) and detail matters agreed on the child's case file. If matters remain unresolved this must also be recorded and escalated to Stage 2 and the organisation safeguarding representative. (Day 1 -2).

**\*(Where a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) or a Child Looked After (CLA) the Independent Reviewing Officer must also be notified.)**

### Stage 2. Escalation to Organisation Safeguarding Representative

Where matters are escalated to an organisation safeguarding representative advice or guidance should be given for line manager escalation or the organisation safeguarding representative should discuss concerns, or matters unresolved, with their counterpart in the other agency. The outcome of discussions, matters resolved or actions agreed must be recorded. (To be concluded by Day 9)

**\*Organisation safeguarding representatives must collate detail of cases escalated to them using the \*Escalation Summary Log (See Appendix 1) for referral to Matt Carey, LSCP Team for monitoring.**

If matters remain unresolved detail of dispute must be recorded and escalated to Stage 3 and the respective LSCP representative.

**NOTE: \*Where a safeguarding representative, having appropriately reviewed the LSCP levels of need guidance with children's services, consider a child to be at immediate risk of significant harm, appropriate escalation to service managers within children's services can be made. For children not deemed to be at immediate risk of significant harm stage 3 procedures should be followed.**

Where matters are escalated to Stage 3: Report to LSCP: Multi-Agency Resolution Levels 3 and 4 (See Appendix 2) must be completed and referred to the LSCP Quality Assurance and Performance Management Officer, Matt Carey, [matthew.carey@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.carey@liverpool.gov.uk)

### Stage 3: Escalation to LSCP Safeguarding Representative.

Respective LSCP safeguarding representatives should endeavour to resolve matters at this stage. *(Please contact Jacqui Taylor, LSCP Safeguarding Coordinator [jacquelyn.taylor@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:jacquelyn.taylor@liverpool.gov.uk) 0151 233 0493 for details of your agency's LSCP representative).* If matters remain unresolved a meeting must be convened between the LSCP agency representatives together with a partnership representative who will undertake a mediation role. *(The LSCP Safeguarding Coordinator should be contacted who will liaise with the LSCP Board to identify the partnership representative.)* Where LSCP representatives are unable to resolve matters through this process, the matter must be escalated to the LSCP Board. (To be concluded by Day 16)

### Stage 4: Escalation to LSCP Board members

If it has not been possible to resolve professional differences following review by the LSCP safeguarding representative, matters should be referred by the concerned agency to the LSCP Board members. A member of the LSCP Board will be identified and may seek to resolve issues directly with relevant senior managers or convene a resolution panel. The agency raising the dispute must email details to the LSCP Safeguarding Coordinator Jacqui Taylor: [Jacquelyn.taylor@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:Jacquelyn.taylor@liverpool.gov.uk)

The identified LSCP Board member or panel, as necessary, will consider written representations, from those involved in the dispute, and will resolve the professional differences concerned. (To be concluded by day 23)

**Appendix 1: \*AGENCY ESCALATION SUMMARY LOG**

**A summary of cases escalated for resolution should be collated and retained by all organisations.**

**(For completion by Line Manager - Stage 1 / Line Manager & Safeguarding Representative – Stage 2)**

Agency / School: (INSERT)

<b>**Agency / School &amp; Escalation Number</b>	<b>Child Name / DOB / Age</b>	<b>Concern</b>	<b>Level of Need</b>	<b>Summary of Professional Disagreement</b>	<b>Actions Undertaken Towards Resolution</b>	<b>Outcome of Resolution</b>

\*LSCPБ will collate agency summaries for LSCPБ monitoring purposes. Summaries to be returned as requested to: [matthew.carey@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.carey@liverpool.gov.uk)

\*\*Agency / School Escalation number is that allocated to identify the case by the agency or school.

## Appendix 2. Report to LSCPB: Multi-Agency Resolution: Escalation Stages 3 and 4

(\*Multi-Agency Conflicts resolved at Stages 3 and 4 must be reported to the LSCPB Team)

Name of Child / young Person:	
Date of Birth:	
Address:	

Name and email of Professional Escalating concern:
Role and Agency:
Name(s) of other professionals involved: <i>(Including LSCP Board Members where appropriate)</i> Role and Agency:

Please indicate level of need:	Early Help:		S17:		S47:	
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Brief details of inter-agency disagreement <i>(including agreed outcomes)</i>

Date of discussion/ Meeting re disagreement:		
Methodology used to resolve conflict:		
Disagreement resolved at:	Level3:	Level 4:

Please indicate lessons learned from this disagreement resolution (e.g. Individual agency review of procedure, requirement for staff training, further understanding of LSCPB Levels of Need);

Please identify any further actions taken by your agency following the resolution of this issue:		
Actions taken:	By whom:	Date completed:

Form completed by:
Date:

*To be completed by LSCPB Quality Assurance and Performance Management Officer, Matt Carey.*

Date received by LSCPB QA & PM Officer:	Date:
Outcome / Issues notified to LSCP Board:	Date:

Completed reports should be referred to [Matthew.Carey@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:Matthew.Carey@liverpool.gov.uk)



## LSCPB Resolution & Escalation: Agency Representation

LSCPB Resolution & Escalation Policy	Action	School	Health	Children's Services	Merseyside Police
<b>Stage 1</b>	Attempt resolution	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Front line staff	Front line staff / social worker	Front line staff
	Escalate to line manager	Designated Safeguarding Lead / Head Teacher	Safeguarding Specialist Practitioner	Team Manager	Detective Sergeant (PVPU)
<b>Stage 2</b>	Escalate to agency safeguarding representative	Senior School Improvement Officer Safeguarding (SIL)	Named Nurse	Service Manager (Careline / Assessment / Safeguarding Unit / Permanence)	Detective Inspector (PVPU)
<b>Stage 3</b>	LSCPB Representative	LSCPB Representative	Designated Nurse	Assistant Director Children's Services	Detective Chief Inspector / Superintendent
<b>Stage 4</b> Escalation to LSCP Board members	Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (LSCPB) members				