



Windsor and Maidenhead
**LOCAL SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN BOARD**

Resolving Professional Disagreements about Safeguarding Children (Escalation Policy)

1. Context

1.1 Safeguarding children and promoting their welfare is a responsibility shared by all organisations which often requires collaboration. This includes appropriate information sharing and working to multi-agency agreed decisions/plans. Occasionally situations arise when workers within one organisation may believe or consider that the actions, inactions or decisions of another do not adequately safeguard a child. Disagreements are most likely to arise around;

- decisions about levels of need or whether a child or family has met the thresholds for a service
- the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved
- the actions or lack of action in progressing plans
- the quantity or quality of communication between individuals and/or organisations

1.2 Professionals in all agencies including schools have a duty to act proactively and assertively to ensure that a child's welfare is the paramount consideration. The Windsor & Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) recognises that good practice will sometimes include constructive challenge between workers. Therefore, when a professional disagrees with the practice of another professional on the grounds of the child's welfare they should work with the colleague to first seek to understand the rationale for the decision. However, if concern still exists for the child's safety and wellbeing the professional concerned should challenge the practice using this policy.

1.3 All agencies are committed to working together to safeguard children. Consequently the assumption should, in the first instance, focus on understanding the decision. Only where disagreement continues should the escalation policy be implemented. Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected, however...

.....if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm the designated safeguarding lead in your agency should be informed immediately. The designated safeguarding lead will inform RBWM Head of Early Help and the LSCB Business Manager of the concerns.

2. STAGES OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 Professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within **ONE WORKING WEEK** or a timescale that effectively protects the child from harm, whichever is shortest.

Stage One – involving your line manager

- 2.2 Any worker who considers that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a supervisor/manager and discuss their concerns. They should clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem, to be specific as to what the disagreement is about, and to identify the desired outcome.

Stage Two – involving the worker from other agency/service

- 2.3 The professionals in disagreement should seek to resolve the dispute through discussion. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be either a telephone conversation or a face to face meeting. There may be instances where disparity in perceived status or experience may inhibit the ability of some workers to resolve the disagreement without some support.

Stage Three – escalate line manager to line manager

- 2.4 If the problem is not resolved at Stage Two the worker should contact their supervisor/manager within their own agency. The supervisor should have a discussion with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency.

Stage Four – escalate to named/designated safeguarding leads or senior operational manager (see table attached at Appendix 1)

- 2.5 If the problem is not resolved at Stage Three the supervisor/manager reports to their respective operations manager or named/designated safeguarding representative. At this point, the safeguarding boards business unit should be notified (using the LSCB mailbox – LSCB@rbwm.gov.uk) that an issue has been escalated so that it can be reported to the LSCB. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Stage Five – resolution by Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Chaired meeting

- 2.6 Operational issues must be resolved by the agencies identified as directly involved in the case. When a resolution has not been achieved at Stage Four, the Chair of the LSCB should be approached to identify a Board member from an uninvolved agency to Chair a meeting of the most senior managers with operational responsibility for the case. This meeting will review the issues at hand and provide a final opportunity for the involved agencies to ensure that there is a full understanding of the issues before a decision is finalised. The Chair of this meeting will then report on issues arising from this process to the Serious Case Review Subgroup of the LSCB.

Important Additional Notes

- At all stages of the process actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, including the worker who raised the initial concern. This must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.
- If the process highlights gaps in policies and procedures this must be brought to the attention of the Chair of the LSCB.

Appendix 1 - Stage Four – Named/designated safeguarding leads or senior operational manager

Agency / Organisation	Position
Local Authority (including both Children's and Adults Services)	Managing Director Alison Alexander - Alison.Alexander@RBWM.gov.uk Tel: 01628 796673
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust	Locality Director Children, Young People & Family Services Jayne Reynolds - Jayne.Reynolds@berkshire.nhs.uk Tel: 0300 365 1234
Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group	Associate Director of Nursing – Safeguarding & Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children Debbie Hartrick - debbie.hartrick@nhs.net Tel: 01753 638621
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	Frimley Park Hospital- Named Nurse/Midwife for Safeguarding Children Fran Franks – francine.franks@fhft.nhs.uk Tel: 01276 522559 Wexham Park Hospital- Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children Elaine Welch - Elaine.Welch@fhft.nhs.uk Tel: 01753634609
CAFCASS	Head of Service Kevin Gibbs - Kevin.Gibbs@CAFCASS.GSI.GOV.UK Tel: 0844 3534332
Colleges	Relevant College's Principal
Schools	Relevant School's Head Teacher
Thames Valley Police	Windsor and Maidenhead LPA Commander Superintendent Bhupinder Rai - Bhupinder.Rai@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk Tel: 01628 645695
National Probation Service	Assistant Chief Officer, Berkshire Local Delivery Unit Nicola Webb – Nicola.Webb@probation.gsi.gov.uk Tel: 01869 255300
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Slough & RBWM Safer Community Co-ordinator Elizabeth Warren - warrene@rbfrs.co.uk Tel: 0118 945 2888
South Central Ambulance Service	Assistant Director of Patient Care Dave Sherwood – dave.sherwood@scas.nhs.uk Tel: 01869 365000
Voluntary Sector Organisations	Relevant organisation's Chief Executive