

# Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Escalation Policy



## The Resolution of Professional Inter-agency Disagreements about Safeguarding Children

## Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Disagreements are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need/thresholds
- Roles and responsibilities
- Decisions made at a Child Protection Conference or Core Group meeting
- Progressing plans
- Communication

All professionals have a duty to act assertively and proactively to ensure that a child's welfare is the paramount consideration in all professional activity.

Therefore all professionals must challenge the practice of other professionals where they are concerned that this practice is placing children at risk of harm.

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 the designated safeguarding lead in your agency should be informed immediately.

## Stages of the policy

Professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within a timescale that protects the child from harm.

### Stage One – involving your line manager

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a supervisor/manager to 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

The professional with concerns should raise the matter directly with the relevant practitioner. They should give clear evidence-based reasons for their disagreement. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be 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 support.

### Stage Three – escalate line manager to line manager

If the problem is not resolved at stage two the worker should contact their supervisor/manager within their own agency who should have a discussion with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency.

**Note:** see below guidance from pan-London procedure in relation to disagreements regarding the need for an Initial Child Protection Conference

## **Stage Four – escalate to named/designated safeguarding leads or senior operational manager.**

If the problem is not resolved at stage three the supervisor/manager reports to their respective operations manager or named/designated safeguarding representative. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

## **Stage Five – escalate to operational directors/assistant directors**

If the problem is not resolved at stage four, the operations manager or named/designated safeguarding representative reports to their respective operational directors/assistant directors who must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

## **Stage Six – resolution by Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) Chaired meeting.**

Operational issues must be resolved by the agencies directly involved in the case. When a resolution has not been achieved at stage five, the Chair of the GSCB 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 the decision is finalised.

The Chair of this meeting will then report on issues from this process to the GSCB MAC Group.

### **Initial Child Protection Conference Requests – Pan London Child Protection Procedures**

Where the Local Authority Children's Social Care have concluded that an Initial Child Protection Conference is not required but professionals in other agencies remain seriously concerned about the safety of a child, these professionals should immediately seek further discussion with the Children's Social Worker, their manager and/or the designated safeguarding professional lead. The concerns, discussion and any agreements made should be recorded in each agency's files.

If concerns remain, the professional should discuss with a designated / named / lead person or senior manager in their agency. If concerns remain, the agency may formally request that the Local Authority Children's Social Care convene an Initial Child Protection Conference. The Local Authority Children's Social Care should convene a conference where one or more professionals, supported by a senior manager / named or designated professional requests one.

If this approach fails to achieve agreement, the procedures for resolution of conflicts should be followed from **Stage 4** above.



## Important 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. 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 procedure this must be brought to the attention of the chair of the GSCB.

## Key Contacts

### Greenwich Children's Social Care

Multi-agency  
Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 020 8921 3172  
Out of Hours 020 8854 8888

**Safeguarding Co-ordinator for Schools** 020 8921 4438  
07805 704 113

**Early Help Manager Adults' Services** 020 8921 4590  
020 8921 2304

**Metropolitan Police**  
Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) 020 7230 3700

### Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group

Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children 020 3049 9001  
Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children 07880055383  
Named GP for Safeguarding Children 020 3049 9001

### Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

Named Nurse Safeguarding Children 020 8836 5370

### Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (including CAMHS)

Head of Safeguarding & Lead Named Nurse

01322 625009 / 07771 767102

Named Nurse Greenwich

020 8921 4420 / 07879 635510

Consultant Paediatrician & Named Doctor

020 8294 3144 or 020 8836 8621



### Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board

The Woolwich Centre,  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor 35 Wellington Street,  
Woolwich SE18 6HQ

Telephone 020 8921 4477

[www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk](http://www.greenwichsafeguardingchildren.org.uk)