**Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership**

**Resolving professional differences / escalation procedure**

When professionals are working together in the complex business of safeguarding children there will inevitably be occasions when there are professional differences of opinion. Constructive challenge is an important component in positive partnership working, but where differences of opinion cannot be resolved quickly and easily, practitioners have a duty to take action to address professional disagreements in a way that is appropriate, timely and proportionate.

Learning from rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews highlights the importance of resolving professional differences of opinion to ensure that children and young people are not left at risk of harm. If sufficiently serious, and when disagreements are not able to be resolved, it is important that they are escalated formally and recorded. This process sets out the steps to be taken to address professional differences of opinion when the issue relates to the safeguarding needs of a child or young person.

It should not be confused with the process to be followed for making a referral to Children's Social Care when there is a child protection concern. A single agency may choose to escalate a professional disagreement with another agency or, if appropriate, more than one agency may choose to jointly escalate an issue.

Principles in practice:

* Challenge is positive and should always be focused on the desired outcome for the child and family.
* The safety and wellbeing of the child is always paramount.
* It is the responsibility of each individual professional and agency to progress challenge if they are not in agreement with the outcome of any aspect of assessment, planning or intervention (any level of need and support).
* Challenge should be restorative and relationship based. Language should therefore be respectful and where possible discussions with the relevant practitioners should take place first.
* Challenge and escalation should be resolved in a timely manner.
* Challenge must be evidenced based and recorded on the child’s file, including details or how the resolution improved outcomes for the child and/or family.

Ensure your safeguarding lead is consulted with throughout the escalation process. Please attempt to resolve any disagreements informally, before initiating the formal process.

This document **must be read alongside** the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual on [resolving professional differences / escalation policy](https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/resolving-professional-differences-escalation-policy?search=escalation)

# **Resolving professional differences / escalation policy procedure**

**Stage 3**

Formal escalation using agency hierarchy

**Stage 2**

[Escalate to your line](https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_resolv_prof_dis.html#LSCB) manager or lead for safeguarding. Your line manager should contact their equivalent in the other agency. Key points should be confirmed in writing after any discussion.

Line manager

[Disagreement raised](https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_resolv_prof_dis.html#LSCB) by practitioner/case worker either in writing or verbally (it is the preference to undertake this verbally so all viewpoints can be understood). Key points should be confirmed in writing after any discussion. Attempt to resolve as soon as possible. Inform the lead professional/ chair at this stage. The expectation should be to resolve difficulties at practitioner/case worker level between agencies.

Practitioner/Case Worker

Bury Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)

**Concerns/issues unresolved/case escalated.**

[Go straight to stage 3, in exceptional circumstances if resolution require](https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/professionals/policies-and-procedures/)s this level of response.

**Stage 4**

If stage 3 does not resolve the disagreement, the BSCP resolution notice (Appendix 1) should be used and sent to bsp@bury.gov.uk

The BSCP Business Manager will determine the appropriate course of action utilise the role of either the DSP Chair, the Independent Scrutineer, or the Safeguarding Executive to achieve resolution.

Formal escalation should proceed through the management hierarchies of the involved agencies. This should be incremental and not skip lines of responsibility within the individual agency, unless in exceptional circumstances. escalation is more productive when dealt with by peer colleagues.

Key points should be confirmed in writing after any discussion.

**Stage 1**

**Timescales**

Discuss with your designated lead for safeguarding at each stage.

Timescales should be agreed at each stage, ensuring the outcome for the child is dictating the agreed timescales. Each stage should not exceed 10 working days.

A clear record should be kept by everyone at all stages

**APPENDIX 1**

**Outcome resolution notice**

**THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE SENT/STORED SECURELY TO** **bsp@bury.gov.uk**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date of Notification** |  |
| **Name of Child/Young Person** |  |
| **D.O.B** |  |
| **Outcome Resolution Notice Referrer details:** |
| **Name** |  |
| **Role** |  |
| **Agency/Team** |  |
| **Contact Details** |  |
| **Designated safeguarding lead aware of this notice?** |  Yes / No  Name of safeguarding lead: |
| **Summary of disagreement** |
|  |
| **Evidence of the challenge that has taken place at stages 1, 2 & 3 and the outcome at each stage** |
|  |
| **Desired outcome for the child and / or family. Please include details of what it is you are requesting happens as a result of this challenge** |
|  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Date Outcome Resolved** | **Supporting Evidence**Embed written confirmation between parties about the agreed outcome |
| **Stage 3** |  |  |
| **Stage 4 (to be completed by Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit)** |  |  Final decision of: |

Once stage 4 has concluded, the escalation notice will be completed and a copy of the notice will be sent to the referrer informing them of the decision in writing.