



Pan Cheshire Procedure for Multi-agency Professional Challenge and Escalation

Contents

Introduction

Principles to Support Resolution

Context

Step 1: Professionals resolving disagreements (Day 1)

Step 2: Line Manager/ Safeguarding Leads (No later than day 3)

Step 3: Safeguarding Partnership representative (no later than day 9)

Step 4: Statutory Partners (No later than day 16)

Appendix A - Form for submitting professional challenge cases for escalation and resolution to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership

Introduction

When working with practitioners from other agencies, at times there will be differences of opinion or concerns about professional practice in relation to a child, young person or family. Throughout our work the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is always the primary concern, and professional disagreements must not obstruct this.

If you feel that a practitioner, or an agency, is not acting in the best interests of the child, young person or family, you have a responsibility to respectfully challenge the practitioner, or agency, and escalate that concern if resolution is not achieved.

All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported, and know how to appropriately challenge, escalate and resolve intra-agency concerns and challenges about a child or young person's wellbeing and the response to their safeguarding needs.

This procedure is not designed to replace the statutory complaints processes established within partner agencies.

Principles to Support Resolution

It is important that practitioners feel empowered and supported within their agencies to challenge aspects of practice that they do not feel are in the best interests of the child or young person. When trying to resolve a difference of professional opinion or concern about practice, practitioners should work within the following principles:

- ✓ The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount, and should they be considered at significant risk the local authority children's social care front door should be contacted.
- ✓ The child, young person and their family at the centre of all professional discussions.
- ✓ Ensure that the right conversations are had, with the right people, at the right time, taking place face to face where possible.
- ✓ Challenges must be resolved in a timely manner.
- ✓ Concerns, actions, responses and outcomes must be recorded.

Context

Difference of opinion, or concerns about practice between practitioners and agencies can arise at any stage in the safeguarding process, and between any of the agencies involved. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure partner agencies have a quick and straightforward means of resolving any concerns, in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

Effective working together depends on resolving different professional perspectives to the satisfaction of workers and agencies, and a belief in a genuine partnership and joint working to safeguard children. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional cooperation and joint working to safeguard children. Professional challenge can be positive, it demonstrates that professionals are willing to consider different perspectives and escalate matters that they do not feel will result in positive outcomes for the child or young person. It becomes dysfunctional only if not resolved in a constructive and timely way.

Each agency should have a recording system that can demonstrate the use of the professional challenge and escalation procedure from step 1 to step 3. Alongside an entry in the child's record, agencies should be able to report to the local Safeguarding Partnership the outcomes of escalations at step 2 and 3. The local Safeguarding Partnership will maintain a record of all escalations and outcomes at step 4, but may request information from partners about the outcomes of escalations at steps 2 and 3 as part of their quality assurance framework.

Step 1: Professionals resolving disagreements (Day 1)

Most disagreements can be resolved between professionals by having a conversation about the reasons for the difference of opinion and without having to escalate the matter further. If resolution is reached at step 1 the local Safeguarding Partnership does not need to be informed. The matter

should be recorded within each agency on the child's record. When concerns arise, the worker must raise the issue with the other agency **within one working day**. If the matter remains unresolved, it is the individual's responsibility to notify their line manager/ designated/ named safeguarding lead who will move to step 2.

Step 2: Line Manager/ Safeguarding Leads (No later than day 3)

The respective parties must identify explicitly what the problem is, and have absolute clarity about the nature of the professional challenge and what the practitioners aim to achieve. This challenge and the outcome should be recorded, and this information should be available to the safeguarding partnership if requested. The outcome of the challenge should also be fed back to the practitioner who raised the concern.

This step should be concluded no later than day 9.

Should you need details on who the safeguarding lead is within another agency, please contact your local Safeguarding Partnership manager.

It is recognised that within the Third Sector, the designated/named safeguarding professional may be the same worker as the professional identifying the concern in step 1. The escalation procedure should nevertheless be adhered to.

Step 3: Safeguarding Partnership representative (no later than day 9)

If safeguarding leads/line managers are unable to resolve the concerns, they must be escalated by a senior manager (or in the case of schools, the Chair of Governors alongside the Head Teacher) to the Safeguarding Partnership representative. They will then seek resolution with their equivalent and the challenge and the outcome should be recorded. The outcome of the challenge should also be fed back to the practitioner who raised the concern.

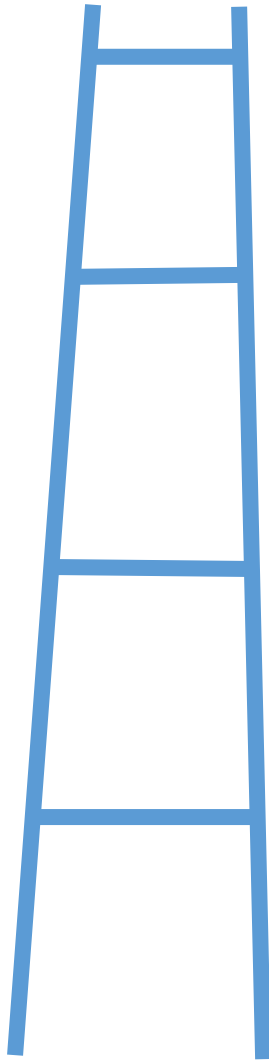
This step should be concluded no later than day 14.

Should you need details on who is a Safeguarding Partnership representative, please contact your local Safeguarding Partnership manager.

Step 4: Statutory Partners (No later than day 16)

In cases where the Safeguarding Partnership representatives are unable to resolve the concern, it should be escalated to the Statutory Partners of the local Safeguarding Partnership. Written representation will be requested and a meeting may be called. A recommendation will be made based on the most appropriate action and resolution for the dispute. The form included as Appendix A should be used for submitting the appropriate information to the Safeguarding Partnership.

This step should be concluded no later than day 21.



Step 4: Days 16 to 21

Statutory partners will ask for written representation and may request a meeting with the involved parties. A recommendation will be made based on the most appropriate action and resolution for the dispute.

Step 3: Days 9 to 14

The Senior Manager will escalate the issue to their Safeguarding Partnership representative, who will arrange to seek resolution. They may request a meeting with the involved parties.

If an agreement can't be achieved the issue should be brought to the Safeguarding Partnership Manager and the escalation will move to step 4.

Step 2: Days 3 to 9

The line manager or named/ designated safeguarding lead should discuss the concerns with their opposite manager in the other agency. If a resolution can't be achieved, the professionals must notify their senior manager and the escalation will move to step 3.

Step 1: Day 1

When concerns arise, initial attempts should be made between workers to resolve the issue. This is step 1.

If a resolution can't be reached, professionals must escalate the issue to their line manager or the named/ designated safeguarding lead in their organisation. This is when the escalation moves to step 2.

Appendix A - Form for submitting professional challenge cases for escalation and resolution to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (trix please link to document in new files folder)