



Joint Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
0.1	Michelle Morris	July 2018	First draft following request at the May 2018 SAOB that LSAB's Escalation Policy be a joint tri-board policy following LSCB's equivalent policy.
0.2	Michelle Morris	October 2018	Following presentation at Partnership Board on 16.10.18. Changes requested: LSCB in Step 4 to amend to LSAB. Appendix 1 note.
1.2	Michelle Morris	February 2019	Approved as final version at LSAB Partnership Board on 12.02.19. following minor typo amendment.
1.3	David Culy	July 2022	DRAFT version after multi-agency T&F group
1.4	MM	05.10.22	Went to LSAB Partnership Board ON 29.09.22 for approval. Minor changes to titles requested.
2.1	MM	01.02.23	Request by Adult Care and Community Wellbeing to add a further step.
2.2	MM	12.04.23	Changes as above went to Partnership Board on 28.02.23 who disagreed with amendment and agreed to re-word step 4 to include director liaison.

Joint Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol

Scope of this protocol

This chapter importantly deals with how professionals and agencies working with adults, children, young people and families to resolve disagreements and disputes in a way that is timely and does not negatively impact on the day to day working with adults and their safeguarding. This policy is designed for use in the event of cross-agency disagreement. Disagreements between professionals within the same agency should consult their internal Escalation Protocol.

1. Purpose

This is a good practice multiagency protocol designed to provide a clear process and timescales by which people working with adults, children, young people and their families in Lincolnshire can provide professional challenge to colleagues from another agency and effectively escalate concerns regarding an adult, adults, children and young people (ACYP) in a timely manner.

2. Background

Partnership and accountability are cross cutting themes throughout Childrens and Adults legislation that underpin all safeguarding work as set out in the appropriate legislation and statutory guidance.

Good practice includes the expectation that there is professional and constructive challenge amongst colleagues within agencies and between agencies. Where a member of staff from any agency is concerned that concerns or agreed actions regarding an ACYP are not being addressed or acted upon in a timely and consistent manner, it is expected that the escalation protocol should be used to reach a satisfactory outcome that is in the best interests of the ACYP. Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring robust feedback and completion of recommendations or planned actions. Where these actions are not completed or not within timescales this should be explained at reviews and a new or alternative plan devised with timeframes.

3. Professional Disagreement

At various times during the joint involvement and management of a case, professional differences of opinion and judgement emerge. The following guidance is designed to assist agencies and their staff in resolving such differences. There are a range of situations in which professional disagreements arise, however they are most likely to arise as a result of differing views of threshold eligibility, a lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities, requirements for multi-agency meetings, and the need for action and communication.

Examples are:

- Disagreements over the handling of referrals between agencies can impact negatively on positive working relationships and consequently on the ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of ACYPs. There are differing views in respect of whether an ACYP meets the criteria for a safeguarding concern form;
- There is disagreement about the need for and attendance at a Strategy meeting;
- Disagreement in relation to the appropriate setting for an ACYP/you with multiple care and support needs;
- There is difference of opinion with regard to an ACYP's continuing care;
- Disagreements over the outcome of assessments;
- A professional is concerned about the action or inaction of another professional in relation to an ACYP;
- There is disagreement over the sharing of information and or provision of services by an agency;
- Disagreement in respect of the outcome of a medical examination;
- An agency is not in agreement with another agency's decision or reasoning to close a case;
- Issues of transition for example from Children's to Adult services
- Where one worker or agency considers another worker or agency has not completed an agreed action for no acceptable or understood reason;
- Other issues that may be of concern regarding the conduct of a case by another agency, such as the timeliness or priority given to tasks, etc.

At various times during the joint involvement or management of a case, professional differences of opinion and/or judgement emerge, the protocol will assist agencies and staff in resolving such differences.

4. Core Principles

- All staff and agencies have a duty to take action to escalate concern if they believe there is a risk that relates to the immediate safety or wellbeing of an ACYP;
- All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their workers are supported and know how to appropriately escalate concerns and disagreements about an ACYP's well-being;
- When professional concerns/disagreements arise it increases the likelihood of detracting the focus away from that of safeguarding the ACYP. It is paramount that during any professional disagreement, the safeguarding and wellbeing of the ACYP at risk, as well as their wishes, feelings and desired outcomes remain the priority throughout. It is also for this reason that it is imperative that the matter is resolved in a timely manner.
- Where there is a disagreement about care arrangements, it is good practice for the ACYP to remain in the care setting until the escalation has occurred and has been resolved. However, in order to ensure the ACYP's needs can be fully met, and that an ACYP is not placed in an inappropriate setting for longer than is necessary, all Partners should ensure that priority is given to undertaking the relevant assessments; thereby facilitating facilitate safe, appropriate and timely discharge;
- At every point, all agencies' staff should ensure discussions and outcomes are recorded in the agencies records and in the ACYP's file;
- Care should be taken to agree a way of managing conflict, which allows ACYPs and families to understand the issues under discussion;
- This protocol is not designed to replace any agencies complaints processes and should not be used when there is a complaint about a specific professional in situations where the relevant organisation's complaints procedure or allegations procedure will apply;
- This protocol should be read and utilised alongside the agency's and LSAB procedures.

5. Professional Resolution & Escalation Protocol Flowchart

Escalation can be via telephone, face-to-face, email or a meeting. All escalation should be recorded in single agency records to ensure that the procedure is effective and transparent.

If you are unsure of who to contact for cross agency escalation, please contact your agency safeguarding lead.

Step 1

Direct Professional to Professional Discussion

Differences of opinion or judgement should be discussed amongst frontline professionals to attempt to achieve a shared understanding and agree a local resolution, in line with the plan, or to ensure a plan is developed if needed. Care should be taken to agree a way of managing conflict, which allows ACYPs and families to understand the issues under discussion. This must occur immediately with an acknowledgement and a mutually agreed plan of action should be developed detailing how this will be resolved, including clear timescales within 48 hours (2 working days) of the initial discussion.

Step 2

Direct Manager to Manager Discussion

If Step 1 does not resolve the issue, then each professional should discuss the issue with their line manager or safeguarding supervisor. The line manager should review the concerns and ensure that they are justified and meet the purpose of this protocol. The line manager should then liaise with the other professional's line manager in an attempt to reach a resolution. Consultation with senior managers within each organisation can be used if this would be felt to assist resolution. The discussion between managers must occur within 5 working days of step 1, with a mutually agreed plan of action developed including clear timescales.

Step 3

Direct SLO or equivalent to SLO or equivalent Discussion

If Step 1 and 2 do not reach a mutually agreeable resolution then the agencies' Senior Liaison Officer or equivalent (SLOE) should be contacted immediately to liaise with the other agency's SLOE or assist as appropriate to resolve the conflict. A mutually agreeable plan of action including timescales should be in place within 48 hours (2 working days). LSAB and LSCP SLO contact details are available within Appendix 2.

Step 4

a) Urgent resolution required- LSAB or LSCP Independent Chaired Meeting

If the Senior Liaison Officer's or equivalent cannot resolve the issue that is causing conflict between professionals and agencies then a meeting should be convened with an independent chair selected from the LSAB or LSCP partner organisations, in consultation with the Director, where appropriate, who holds safeguarding responsibility for each respective agency, if needed. The meeting will be a forum where the agencies can discuss the case and conflict issue in a chaired and minuted meeting, with resolution being agreed and recorded. The meeting should take place asap with a date set within 1 working day of step 3.

b) Non-urgent and / or lessons learned

Senior Liaison Officers can advise that the learning points from a non-urgent case should be referred to the LSAB or LSCP Significant incident Review Group for interagency consideration. At this point the group may make recommendations for individual agencies to review performance and/or involvement, or for LSAB policy and procedural review and development and within the LSCP review via PPET.

Outside of Working Hours

All statutory agencies have an on-call manager and director system. Where escalation requires urgent resolution and it is outside of Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm staff are advised to use the on-call process.