



# **Escalation Procedure**

## **Resolution of Professional Disagreements in Work Relating to the Safety of Children**

**Version 6**

**Reviewed 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

## Document Control

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## Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewer	Change Made
1	/	/	Document created
2	16/02/2012	BSCB JSBU	Pages 3-4, clarification of when to use monitoring form as highlighted in audit
3	01/08/2016	BSCB JSBU	Revised flowchart as part of annual review
4	23/04/2018	BSCB PPO and Business Manager	Revised wording and stages with inclusion of timeframes
5	12/03/2020	KBSP Business Unit	Rebranding to KBSP
6	21/12/2022	KBSP PPO	Full review

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## Introduction

The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP) recognises that when working together to safeguard children and young people there may be times when practitioners have differences of opinion or concerns about the professional practice of others. If you feel that a practitioner, or an agency, is not acting in the best interests of a child or young person, you have a responsibility to respectfully challenge and escalate your concern if a resolution is not achieved.

Difference of opinion, or concerns about practice between practitioners and agencies can arise at any stage in the safeguarding process. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure practitioners and partner agencies have a simple way to resolve any concerns they may have to safeguard children and young people. This procedure also augments the guidance provided by the Southwest Child Protection Procedures ([www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)).

## Principles

When trying to resolve a difference of professional opinion or concern about practice, practitioners should consider:

- The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person to be paramount and any unresolved issues should be escalated with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.
- The child or young person and their family should be at the centre of all professional discussions.
- That the right conversations are had, with the right people, at the right time and any challenges should be resolved in a timely manner
- The concerns, actions, responses and outcomes should be recorded

## Escalation and Recording Responsibilities

All partnership agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported, and know how to appropriately challenge, escalate and resolve intra-agency concerns regarding a child or young person's safeguarding needs. All partner agencies should have a recording system that can demonstrate the use of this procedure from stage 1 to stage 4 and formally report any stage 3 escalations to the KBSP. The KBSP will maintain a record of all stage 3 and 4 escalations and their resolutions and outcomes as part of the KBSP Quality Assurance Framework. Learning from relevant escalation cases will be shared and any relevant policies and procedures amended as a result of this.

Disagreements between practitioners should always be recorded in the child or young person's case file.

## Procedures

The following stages set out the steps that should be taken to resolve a professional disagreement. Disagreements should be resolved urgently and may require quicker escalation through the stages to senior management depending on the risk to the child or young person. The timescales given are a guide to assist in timely communication and resolution and these should be discussed and set at all stages. Delay can be used as a reason to escalate concerns to the next stage if agencies are failing to respond and prioritise resolution. Should the case require longer investigation at any stage, the receiving organisation should express this clearly and set out their intended timetable for resolution in collaboration with the escalating agency.

### **Stage 1 – Supervisor/ Line or Team Manager formally raising the concern with the equivalent Supervisor/ Team Manager in the other agency**

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem between practitioners. If the disagreement is not resolved professionals should contact their supervisor/line manager/team manager within their own agency. It is then the responsibility of the supervisor/line/manager/team manager to discuss the concerns with the equivalent supervisor/line manager/team manager in the other agency and take steps to resolve the issue. Disagreements or dissent at meetings e.g. Strategy discussions should be recorded by each respective agency. A response must be received from the organisation who receives the escalation within a maximum timescale of 24 hours of escalation (1 working day).

Please note: If the escalating organisation does not receive a response or requires a quicker response due to child safety concerns, it is their responsibility to make all reasonable proactive contact with the organisation to ascertain the availability of the relevant supervisor/line manager/team manager within the organisation.

### **Stage 2 – Raising concern between Service Manager/ Designated Safeguarding Lead**

If the problem is not resolved at stage one, the supervisor/line manager/team manager of each agency should report to their senior manager or the named designated safeguarding lead. They will liaise with the equivalent representative in the other agency who will attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Disagreements at meetings e.g. Strategy meetings should be recorded by each respective agency. If the escalating organisation does not receive a response or requires a quicker response due to child safety concerns, it is their responsibility to make all reasonable

proactive contact with the organisation to ascertain their availability manager or designated safeguarding lead within the organisation. A response must be received within a maximum timescale of 48 hours of escalation (2 working days).

### **Stage 3 – Referring concern to KBSP Keeping Children Safe (KCS) Delivery Group Member and KBSP Business Manager informed of escalation**

If the matter cannot be resolved, contact must be made with the relevant agency's Keeping Children Safe Delivery Group (KCS) Member. If the KCS member is unknown, you can contact the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Business Manager for these details by emailing [KBSP@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:KBSP@bristol.gov.uk). The Business Manager must also be informed of all Stage 3 escalations and will respond within a maximum timescale of 5 working days from receipt of the escalation.

### **Stage 4 – Refer concern to Chair of KBSP Keeping Children Safe (KCS) Delivery Group Member and KBSP Executive**

If the matter remains unresolved, consideration will be given to referring the matter to the Chair of KBSP Keeping Children Safe (KCS) Delivery Group who will consider whether the matter can be resolved through mediation. Mediation will be offered as soon as possible bearing in mind the impact on the child or young person. The decision reached in mediation is final and binding on the agencies concerned.

In more complex matters the matter maybe escalated to the KBSP Executive which will form a panel consisting of representatives of three statutory agencies (Local Authority, Police and Health) and will include those agencies involved in the dispute. The Executive panel will receive representation from those concerned in the dispute and decide as to the next course of action. The decision of the Executive panel is final and binding on all agencies involved. Receipt must be acknowledged within 48 hours (2 working days) setting out a timescale for resolution.

A flowchart for the escalation of concerns can be found at Appendix 1 of this document.

## Appendix 1 – Flowchart: Escalation Procedure for Professionals with Child Protection or Child Welfare Concerns

<p>A professional is unhappy with decision or response from another professional following referral/ contact.</p>
<p>The professional raises this with the professional to resolve it. If not resolved proceed to stage 1.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 1:</b> Professional discusses with line or team manager in their own agency who raises concern with their equivalent in the other agency. A response must be received within 24 hours of escalation (1 working day).</p>
<p>If resolved, the concerned professional is advised of outcome and exit this process. If not proceed to stage 2.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 2:</b> Concern discussed with relevant service manager/ lead for safeguarding who will liaise with their equivalent in the other agency who will seek to resolve the issue. A response must be received within 48 hours (2 working days). If resolved, inform concerned professional and exit process. If not, escalate to stage 3.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 3:</b> Stage 2 lead inform KBSP KCS Delivery Group representative who attempts to resolve the issue with the other agency equivalent. The KBSP Business Manager must also be informed and the issue formally recorded. A response must be received within 5 working days. If resolved, inform concerned professional and exit this process.</p>
<p><b>STAGE 4:</b> The KBSP Business Manager will formally record the issue and inform the Chair of the KBSP KCS Delivery Group who will mediate or request the KBSP Executive to convene a resolution panel to address the issue and provide a final binding decision. A response must be received within 48 hours (2 working days) setting out a timescale for resolution.</p>