



Escalation Procedure Resolution of Professional Disagreements in Work Relating to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk

Completed: December 2015

Date Adopted: April 2016

History of most recent Policy Changes – **Must be completed**

Date	Page	Change	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation etc)
MAY 2016	3	Of wording: If unresolved, the problem should be referred to the worker's own line manager who will discuss with their opposite number in the other agency. Support will be given by the agency Safeguarding Lead for this process.	BSAB April 2016
MARCH 2017	3, 4 and 5	Following a BSAB audit, references to the use of the Monitoring Form have been moved from Stage 3 to Stage 1. The Monitoring Form has been embedded in to the document and clarification has been added regarding who is responsible for submitting the Monitoring Form to the BSAB.	BSAB March 2017

Escalation Procedure

Purpose

To provide a clear mechanism for the resolution of professional disputes in order to ensure a timely resolution that ensures that the needs of adults at risk are met. The procedure is intended to augment the guidance provided by the Bristol Multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures and provides local procedures to be followed in accordance with this guidance.

1. General principles

- 1.1 Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard adults at risk.
- 1.2 Professional disagreement is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.
- 1.3 Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around thresholds, roles and responsibilities, the need for action and communication.
- 1.4 It is important to:
 - avoid professional disputes that put adults at risk or obscure the focus of the adult;
 - resolve difficulties (within and) between agencies quickly and openly;
 - identify problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures.
- 1.5 The safety of individual adult/s that focus on the adult/s are the paramount considerations in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be escalated with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the adult.
- 1.6 Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies.
- 1.7 Effective working together depends on resolving disagreements to the satisfaction of workers and agencies; and a belief in a genuine partnership.
- 1.8 Professional disputes are reduced by clarity about roles and responsibilities and airing and sharing problems in networking forums.
- 1.9 The process resolution should be as simple as possible.
- 1.10 The aim should be to resolve difficulties at practitioner/fieldworker level between agencies.
- 1.11 Attempts at problem resolution may leave one worker/agency believing that the adult/s remains at risk of abuse/neglect. This person/agency has responsibility for communicating such concerns through agreed channels.

2. Procedure

2.1 The following stages are likely to be involved:

Stage 1 – Identifying the concern

- Recognition that there is a disagreement over a significant issue, which impacts on the safety and welfare of an adult at risk;
- Identification of the problem, and clarity about the disagreement and what you aim to achieve;
- These two stages could involve consulting a colleague to clarify thinking.
- Disagreements between professionals should be recorded in the adult's case file using the 'Monitoring Form' once stage 1 is initiated.

Stage 2 – Discussing the concern between individuals

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem. This should normally be between the people who disagree, unless the adult is at immediate risk. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

Stage 3 – Raising concern between line management

If unresolved, the problem should be referred to the worker's own line manager who will discuss with their opposite number in the other agency. Support will be given by the agency Safeguarding Lead for this process. Disagreements at all meetings e.g. Strategy Meetings should be recorded by each respective agency.

If the problem remains unresolved, the line manager will refer 'up the line' (see flow chart).

Stage 4 – Referring concern to Service Manager Safeguarding Adults

If the matter cannot be resolved, contact must be made with the Service Manager Safeguarding Adults who will attempt to resolve the situation.

Stage 5 – Refer concern to Chair of Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB)

If the matter is still unresolved, consideration will be given to referring the matter to the Chair of BSAB who will consider whether the matter can be resolved through mediation or should be considered by a BSAB Resolution Panel.

Mediation will be offered as soon as possible bearing in mind the impact on the adult. The decision reached in mediation is final and binding on the agencies concerned.

In more complex matters a BSAB Resolution Panel (BSAB Executive subgroup) will meet. The Panel must consist of representatives of three agencies who are members of BSAB, to include those agencies involved in the dispute. The Panel will receive representation from those concerned in the dispute and make a decision as to the next course of action.

The decision of the Panel is final and binding of all agencies involved.

3. Further notes

A report of disputes that have been reported and findings of Panels will be made to the BSAB on an annual basis.

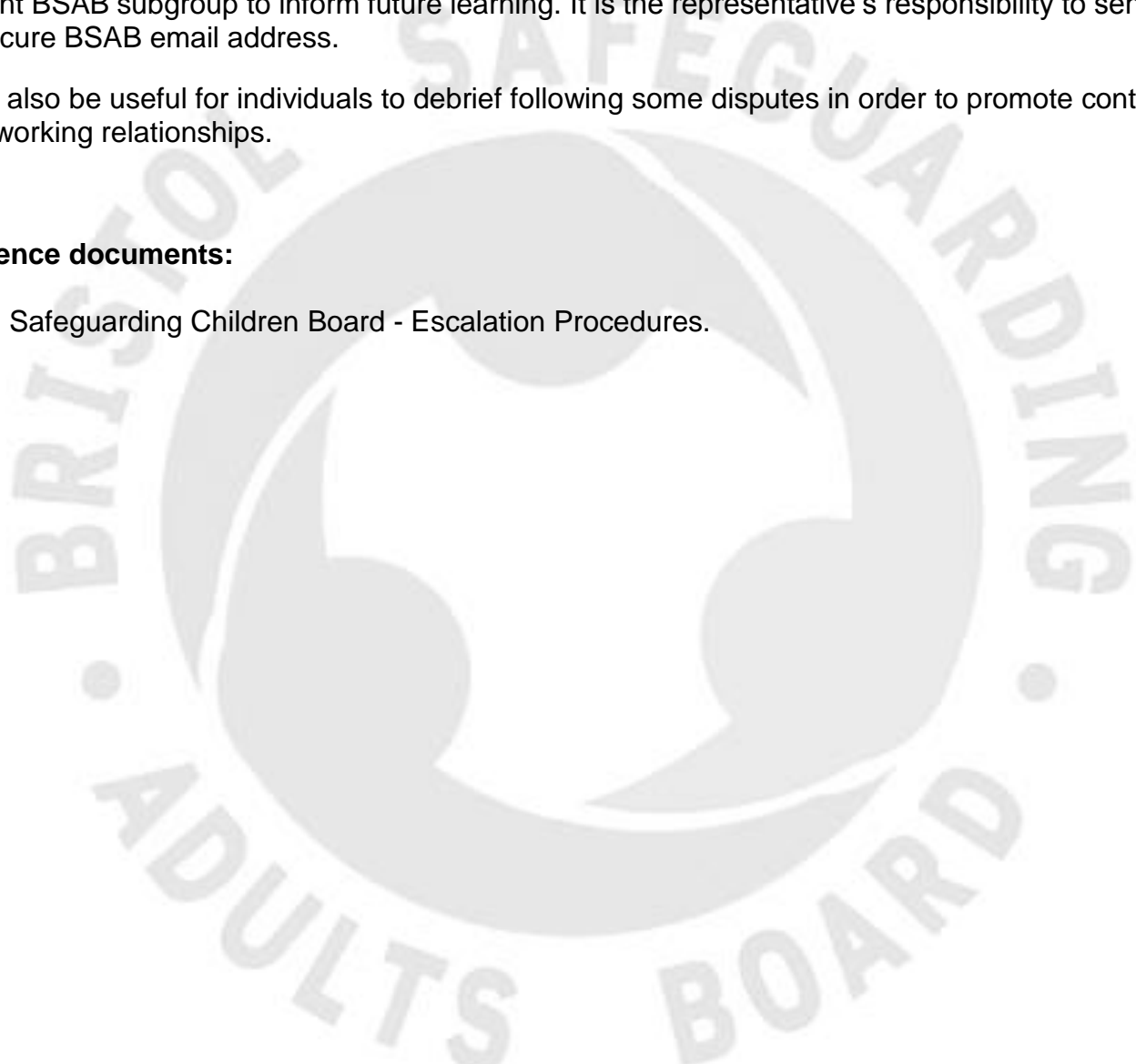
A clear record should be kept at all stages, by all parties. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

Once **Stage 1** is reached the monitoring form should be completed to detail the issues requiring resolution and recording the agreed outcome. When the issue is resolved, any general issues should be identified and referred to the agency's representative on the BSAB for consideration by the relevant BSAB subgroup to inform future learning. It is the representative's responsibility to send it to the secure BSAB email address.

It may also be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

Reference documents:

Bristol Safeguarding Children Board - Escalation Procedures.



Flowchart: Resolution of Professional Disagreements in work relating to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk

Stage 1
Complete Monitoring Form

Professional is unhappy with a decision or response from any agency following a referral

Stage 2

Professional discusses with manager/named lead for safeguarding adults in his or her own agency

Manager/professional/Safeguarding Lead referring agency discusses concern/response with their opposite number in the agency.

Notes and Key:
At all stages decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel (See Monitoring form to be used from stage 1).

Stage 3

Has the disagreement been resolved to both agencies satisfaction?
Yes
No

Concerned professional advised of outcome by named professional.
Exit Process.

The Manager/professional/Safeguarding Lead referring agency discusses concern with relevant manager

Designated lead for Safeguarding Adults will liaise with his/her equivalent lead officer once notified to enable the situation to be addressed at a senior management level as appropriate and action agreed

Stage 4

Has the disagreement been resolved to both agencies' satisfaction?
Yes
No

If concerns continue the designated lead for Safeguarding Adults will inform the Service Manager Safeguarding Adults who will consider whether the decision should be reviewed.

Stage 5

Has the disagreement been resolved to both agencies' satisfaction?
Yes
No

If concerns continue Service Manager Safeguarding Adults will refer the situation to the Chair of BSAB who will either provide mediation or in more complex situations convene a BSAB Resolution Panel to resolve the situation and inform those involved of the final binding decision.



Appendix 1

Escalation Procedure – Monitoring Form

Form to record decisions and to monitor the effectiveness of the Escalation Policy

Occasionally disputes arise within and between agencies that require a mechanism to ensure timely resolution and the needs of adults at risk are met. Problem resolution is an integral part of working together effectively. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage, and resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure that the safety of the adult is paramount and the adult is our focus. If there is an immediate risk, discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

This form to be used at **stage one, two and three** of the Escalation Policy.

Checklist

- Have you consulted a manager/named lead for Safeguarding Adults, to seek advice about resolving your concern?
- Have you made clear initial attempts to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level?
- Did the manager/named lead for safeguarding adults raise the concerns with relevant manager or their equivalent lead officer in the other agency?
- If this did not resolve the concerns, has the Manager/Professional/Designated Safeguarding representatives attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion?
- If this did not resolve the concerns, has the Manager/Professional/Designated Safeguarding representatives addressed the concerns at a senior manager level?
- If concerns continue, has the Designated Lead for Safeguarding Adults informed the Service manager for Safeguarding Adults?
- If unresolved is the Service Manager for Safeguarding Adults referring the concerns to the Independent Chair of BSAB for mediation?

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Action: A copy of this form is to be held on the Adult at Risk's file and all agencies involved in resolution of professional difficulties. Please send a copy to the BSAB Business Unit on completion to bsab@bristol.gcsx.gov.uk via secure email only (pnn, gsi,nhs.net or gsx) or telephone 0117 3576257 to arrange secure transfer of the data.

Adult at Risk Name	Click here to enter text.	
Summary of reason for dispute – include views of all agencies concerned.	Click here to enter text.	
Agreed outcomes or actions if satisfactorily resolved – includes escalation to next stage if unresolved	Click here to enter text.	
Signature of manager challenging Sign	Print Name Click here to enter text.
		Role Click here to enter text.
		Agency Click here to enter text.
		Date Click here to enter text.
Signature of challenged manger Sign	Print Name Click here to enter text.
		Role Click here to enter text.
		Agency Click here to enter text.
		Date Click here to enter text.
Stage at which resolution achieved.	Click here to enter text.	
How effective was the Escalation Procedure in resolving the issue?	Click here to enter text.	
Any Further comments	Click here to enter text.	