



# **Escalating Procedure Resolution of Professional Disagreements in work relating to the safeguarding of adults at risk**



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**Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership**

**Escalation Procedure – Resolution of Professional Disagreements in Work relating to the  
Safeguarding of Adults at Risk**

## Document Control

<b>Title of document:</b>	Escalation Procedure - Resolution of Professional Disagreements in Work relating to the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk
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## Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewer	Change Made
V2	May 2016	BSAB	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.
V3	March 2017	BSAB	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 into the document and clarification has been added regarding who is responsible for submitting the Monitoring Form to the BSAB.
V4	January 2018	PISG sub group	Timeframes added after revision by PISG group. Amendments made to wording. Accepted by PISG Group, no amendments to wording apart from within working day.
V5	July 2020	JSBU PPO	Review of full policy. Accuracy of required timescales checked. References to BASB replaced with BKAS in line with new local arrangements. Final stage 5 escalation to Chair of KAS changed to reflect new KBSP arrangements. KAS chair will refer more complex cases to BSAB Executive resolution panel changed to KBSP Executive resolution panel.

## 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 being on 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 however if an adult is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, disagreements should be resolved urgently. The timescales given are a maximum but should depend on your assessment of the immediacy of the risk. Timescales apply for Safeguarding only NOT for case management which should be resolved promptly in line with the assessed level of concern.

### Stage 1 – Identifying the concern – Worker to Worker

- 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 points could involve consulting a colleague to clarify thinking. It is every professional's responsibility to 'problem solve' at the earliest stage.

Disagreements between professionals should be recorded in the adult's case file.

A response must be received within **24 hours (1 working day)**

### Stage 2 – Discussing the concern with a Supervisor/Team Manager who will then raise and discuss the concern with the equivalent Supervisor/Team Manager in the other agency

If the problem is not resolved at stage one, both workers should contact their supervisor/team manager within their own agency. They should then raise the concerns with the equivalent supervisor/team manager in the other agency.

A response must be received within a maximum timescale of **24 hours of escalation (1 working day)**.

### Stage 3 – Raising a concern between Senior Manager/Named / Designated Safeguarding Representative to Senior Manager/Named / Designated Safeguarding Representative

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

Disagreements at all meetings e.g. Strategy Meetings should be recorded by each respective agency.

A response must be received within a maximum timescale of **48 hours of escalation (2 working days)**.

## **Stage 4 – Referring a concern to Senior Managers/Named/Designated Safeguarding Representatives from both agencies to the BCC Head of Safeguarding Adults**

If the matter cannot be resolved, the two senior managers/named/designated safeguarding representatives will inform the BCC Head of Safeguarding Adults and attempt to resolve the situation.

A response must be received within a maximum timescale of **5 working days from receipt of escalation.**

## **Stage 5 – Refer concern to Chair of the Bristol Keeping Adults Safe Delivery Group**

If the matter is still unresolved, consideration will be given to referring the matter to the Chair of BKAS who will consider whether the matter can be resolved through mediation or should be considered by a KBSP Executive 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 the BKAS will refer matters to a KBSP Executive Resolution Panel who will meet. The Panel must consist of representatives of three agencies who are members of BKAS, 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.

**Receipt must be acknowledged within 48hrs (2 working days) setting out a timescale for resolution.**

### 3. Further notes

A report of disputes that have been reported and findings of Panels will be made to the Keeping Adults Safe delivery group 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 3** 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 Keeping Adults Safe delivery group for consideration by the relevant subgroup to inform future learning. It is the representative's responsibility to send it to the secure KBSP mail 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.

## STAGE 1

### Worker to Worker

A response must be received within 24 hours (1 working day)

## STAGE 2

### Supervisor/Team Manager to Supervisor/Team Manager

A response must be received within a maximum timescale of 24 hours (1 working day) of escalation

## STAGE 3

### Senior Manager/Named / Designated Safeguarding Representative to Senior Manager/Named / Designated Safeguarding Representative

Within 48 hours (2 working days) of receipt of the escalation

## STAGE 4

### Senior Managers/Named/Designated Safeguarding Representatives from both Agencies to the BCC Head of Safeguarding Adults

Within a maximum timescale of 5 working days from receipt of escalation

## STAGE 5

### Bristol Adult's Safeguarding Board

Receipt must be acknowledged within 48 hours (2 working days) setting out timescale for resolution

## FLOWCHART

Any Worker who feels that a decision is not safe/ inappropriate should identify with their fellow Worker what their concerns are. It is every professional's responsibility to 'problem-solve' at the earliest possible stage.

If the problem is not resolved at stage one, both Workers should contact their Supervisor/Team Manager within their own agency. They should then raise the concerns with the equivalent Supervisor/Team Manager in the other agency.

If the problem is not resolved at stage two, the Supervisor/Team Manager of each Agency should report to their Senior Manager or the Named/Designated Safeguarding Representative. They will liaise with an equivalent Representative in the other agency. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

If concerns continue the 2 Senior Managers/Named /Designated Safeguarding Representatives will inform the BCC Head of Safeguarding Adults and attempt to resolve the situation.

If it is not possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned, the matter should be referred to the Chair of the BSAB by the BCC Head of Safeguarding Adults, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct through mediation, or to convene a Resolution Panel.

If an adult is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, disagreements should be resolved urgently. Timescales given are a maximum but should depend on your assessment of the immediacy of risk. Timescales apply for safeguarding only **NOT** for case management which should be resolved promptly in line with the assessed level of concerns.

Acknowledgment of receipt of the Escalation within these timescales is essential. If you have concerns about the timeliness to any of the stages this is a reason to escalate further.

Each Organisation will have different structures or titles for managers so it is important that staff are aware who to consult at Stage 2, 3 and 4. If you do not have a structure that supports this skip the next stage as appropriate.

All conversations must be recorded in writing. Decisions must be shared with the relevant people and must include the worker who raised the initial concern.



## 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 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?



## Keeping Adults Safe



**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 KBSP Joint Safeguarding Business Unit on completion to [KBSP@bristol.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:KBSP@bristol.gcsx.gov.uk) via **secure email only** (pnn, gsi,nhs.net or gsx)

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

## Keeping Adults Safe