Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership

ESCALATION & DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

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V0.2	Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership	12 May 2022
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1. Introduction

1.1 Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

1.2 Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. This inter-agency policy defines the process for resolving such professional difference and should be read alongside the London Child Protection Procedures and relevant internal policies on escalating matters of concern.

1.3 Disagreements can arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- **levels of need**
- **roles and responsibilities**
- **the need for action**
- **progressing plans and communication.**

1.4 Where professionals consider that the practice of other professionals is placing children at risk of harm, they must be assertive, act swiftly and ensure that they challenge the relevant professionals in line with this policy.

- The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional activity.
- Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected: See London Child Protection Procedures edition 5 para 11.14-11.16 http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/profess_conflict_res.html
- As a guide, professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within one working week or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is shortest).
- Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage

1.5 **If a child is thought to be at immediate harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in your agency should be informed immediately.**

1.6 Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate can initially consult their supervisor/manager to clarify their thinking if required. They should be able to evidence the nature and source of the concerns and should to keep a record of all discussions.

1.7 Individuals may wish to refer to the Escalation Policy for their organisation to clarify the approach required. Professionals may wish to gain advice and not escalate- senior managers in their agency can be approached plus the Health Designated Doctor and Designated Nurses for Safeguarding and Children Looked After in Havering

1.8 Concerns relating to decisions, suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work within an agency, should be raised in line with each agencies' policies for dealing with such matters, including but not limited to those setting out the arrangements for *whistleblowing*.

2.   Stages of Resolution

2.1   Stage One: Discuss with the other worker

2.2   The people who disagree have a discussion to resolve the problem in a timely manner considering the child's needs. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be a telephone conversation or a face to face meeting. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

2.3   Stage Two: Escalate to line manager

2.4   If the problem is not resolved, the worker should contact their supervisor / manager /Named Safeguarding Professional within their own agency who should have a discussion with the equivalent supervisor/ manager in the other agency.

2.5   If the case involves a child subject to a Child Protection Plan or a Looked After Child, the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must also be notified.

2.6   Stage Three: Escalate to senior managers

2.7   If the problem is not resolved at Stage Two, the supervisor/ manager reports to their respective manager or Health Designated Safeguarding Representative. These professionals must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

2.8   **If there remains disagreement, the expectation is that escalation continues through the appropriate tiers of management in each organisation until the matter is resolved. The respective agency members on the Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) should be engaged in seeking resolution before the case is raised with the HSCP Chair.**

2.9   Stage Four: Resolution by HSCP Chair

2.10   If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned (and after the agency HSCP members have been involved), the matter should be referred by the concerned agency to the HSCP Chair , who may seek to resolve the issue direct with the relevant senior managers, or convene a Resolution Panel.

2.11   The agency raising the dispute must e-mail the details through to safeguardingpartnerships@havering.gov.uk

2.12   The Resolution Panel must consist of senior officer from three agencies who are members of the full Board of the HSCP. The senior officers must include the agencies concerned in the professional differences.

2.13   The Panel will receive representations from those involved in the dispute and will collectively resolve the professional differences concerned.

3.   Additional Notes

3.1   At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing on the child's file and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern.

4.   Escalation Policy Flowchart

You consider that the actions,inactions or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child.

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Stage 1
Make initial attempts to resolve a matter through discussion with the other professional involved in a timely manner.
Record the outcome.

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Stage 2
If the disagreement remains unresolved – speak with your line manage Health Named Safeguarding Professional; who will contact their equivalent manager in the other agency and seek to resolve the matter.

→ If child is subject of a CP Plan or is a Looked After Child, notify the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Stage 3
If the disagreement remains unresolved, the line managers report to their respective managers or Health Designated Safeguarding Representatives.

If there remains disagreement,escalation continues through the appropriate tiers of management in each organisation until the matter is resolved.

The respective agency members on the HSCP are engaged in seeking resolution before Stage 4 is considered.

→ If unresolved at Stage 3, the concerned agency to notify the HSCP Chair via:

safeguardingpartnerships@havering.gov.uk

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Stage 4
The HSCP Chair facilitates the resolution of the issues with the senior managers involved – either directly or through a Resolution Panel.

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