

## What is the policy about?

The Havering Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) Escalation & Dispute Resolution Policy is designed to ensure that all agencies including health, police, children's social care and third sector organisations have access to a straight-forward multi-agency policy to quickly resolve, and where necessary escalate professional differences where there is concern that the welfare and safety of children & young people are at risk of being compromised.

## What is the aim of the policy?

The aim of the policy is to promote a culture of partnership working, whereby all agencies working with children, young people and their families feel confident, able and supported to address concerns in situations where there are differences in professional judgements around the response to the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.

**If a child or young person is thought to be at immediate harm, an agency's designated safeguarding lead must be informed without delay.**

## Disagreements

Disagreements between practitioners can arise at any stage in the safeguarding process and between any agency involved.

Examples of potential areas of disagreement may include:

- Levels of need
- Roles
- Responsibilities
- The need for action
- Progression plans
- Communication

## Remember

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships.

Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation & joint working to safeguard children & young people.

HSCP Escalation & Dispute Resolution Policy can be viewed [here](#).

## Resolution Process

If any agency considers the actions, inactions or decision of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child or young person, then the following should be undertaken:

**Stage 1:** A practitioner to practitioner discussion with the aim to resolve, and the outcome recorded.

**Stage 2:** If unresolved, then a Line Manager to Line Manager discussion should occur.

**Stage 3:** Where intervention by Managers has not resolved, then a Senior Manager to Senior Manager discussion should be arranged.

**Stage 4:** If unresolved at Stage 3, the concerned agency should refer to the HSCP's Independent Chair.

A child or young person's safety must be the paramount consideration at all times, and professional differences must not distract from timely and clear decision-making.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child or young person is protected. See edition 4 para 11.14-11.16 of the: [London Child Protection Procedures](#).

Professionals should attempt to resolve any differences through discussion, with the aim for any disagreements to be resolved at the lowest possible stage. The Health Designated Professional are available to give advice at any time.

## Key Points

Any worker who feels that a decision is not appropriate or an action is delayed, can consult with their supervisor/manager. Records should be kept in order to evidence the source of concerns.

The policy is not designed to replace the statutory complaints processes established within individual partner agencies.

All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported and know how to escalate and resolve inter-agency concerns.

