



Resolving professional differences (a procedure to support escalations)

Introduction

The following text is from the London Child Protection Procedure PA4. Resolving Professional Differences. KRSCP is a signatory of the London Child Protection Procedures and follows this procedure which can be found in original form here:

https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/profess_conflict_res.html?zoom_highlight=resolution

It is recognised that locally the addition of Appendix 1, a flow chart giving an overview of the stages in concise form, and Appendix 2, a local contacts list, may assist practitioners in navigating escalations either pertaining to an individual case and/or relating to an area of practice or policy.

1. Disagreement at Referral and Enquiry Stage

1.1 Professionals providing services to children and their families should work co-operatively across all agencies, using their skills and experience to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management.

1.2 All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are competent and supported to escalate appropriately intra-agency and inter-agency concerns and disagreements about a child's wellbeing.

1.3 Concern or disagreement may arise over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in relation to a referral, an assessment or an enquiry.

1.4 Professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion and/or meeting within a working week or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less) [Stage 1]

1.5 If the professionals are unable to resolve differences within the timescale, their disagreement must be addressed by more experienced / more senior staff [Stage 2]

1.6 Most day-to-day inter-agency differences of opinion will require a local authority children's social care manager to liaise with their (first line manager) equivalent in the relevant agencies, e.g.:

A police detective sergeant;

A designated or named safeguarding child health professional;

Designated safeguarding lead in a school.

These first line managers should seek advice from their agency's designated safeguarding children professional.

1.7 If agreement cannot be reached following discussions between first line managers within a further working week or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less), the issue must be referred without delay through the line management to the equivalent of service manager / detective inspector / head teacher or other designated or named safeguarding children senior professional [Stage 3].

1.8 Alternatively (e.g. in health services), input may be sought directly from the designated or named safeguarding children doctor or nurse in preference to the use of line management.

1.9 The professionals involved in this process must contemporaneously record each intra- and inter-agency discussion they have, approve and date the record and place a copy on the child's file together with any other written communications and information.

2. Dissent Regarding the Implementation of a Protection Plan

2.1 Concern or disagreement may arise over another professional's decisions, actions or lack of actions in the implementation of the child protection plan, including the timing, quoracy or decision-making of core group meetings, progress of the plan or professional practice.

2.2 Professionals should attempt to resolve differences in line with the actions outlined above.

[Please note this is distinct from dissent regarding the decision making at a child protection conference itself – please refer to the following procedure and note your dissent must be made known at the conference

https://kingstonandrichmondsafeguardingchildrenpartnership.org.uk/media/mwlpmahz/afc_professional_dissent_from_the_decision_of_a_child_protection_conference.pdf]

3. Where Professional Differences Remain

3.1 If professional differences remain unresolved, the matter must be referred to the heads of service for each agency involved [Stage 4]

3.2 In the unlikely event that the issue is not resolved by the steps described above and/or the discussions raise significant policy issues, the matter should be referred urgently to the safeguarding children partnership [Stage 5].

See also Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships Procedure, Monitoring and evaluation function

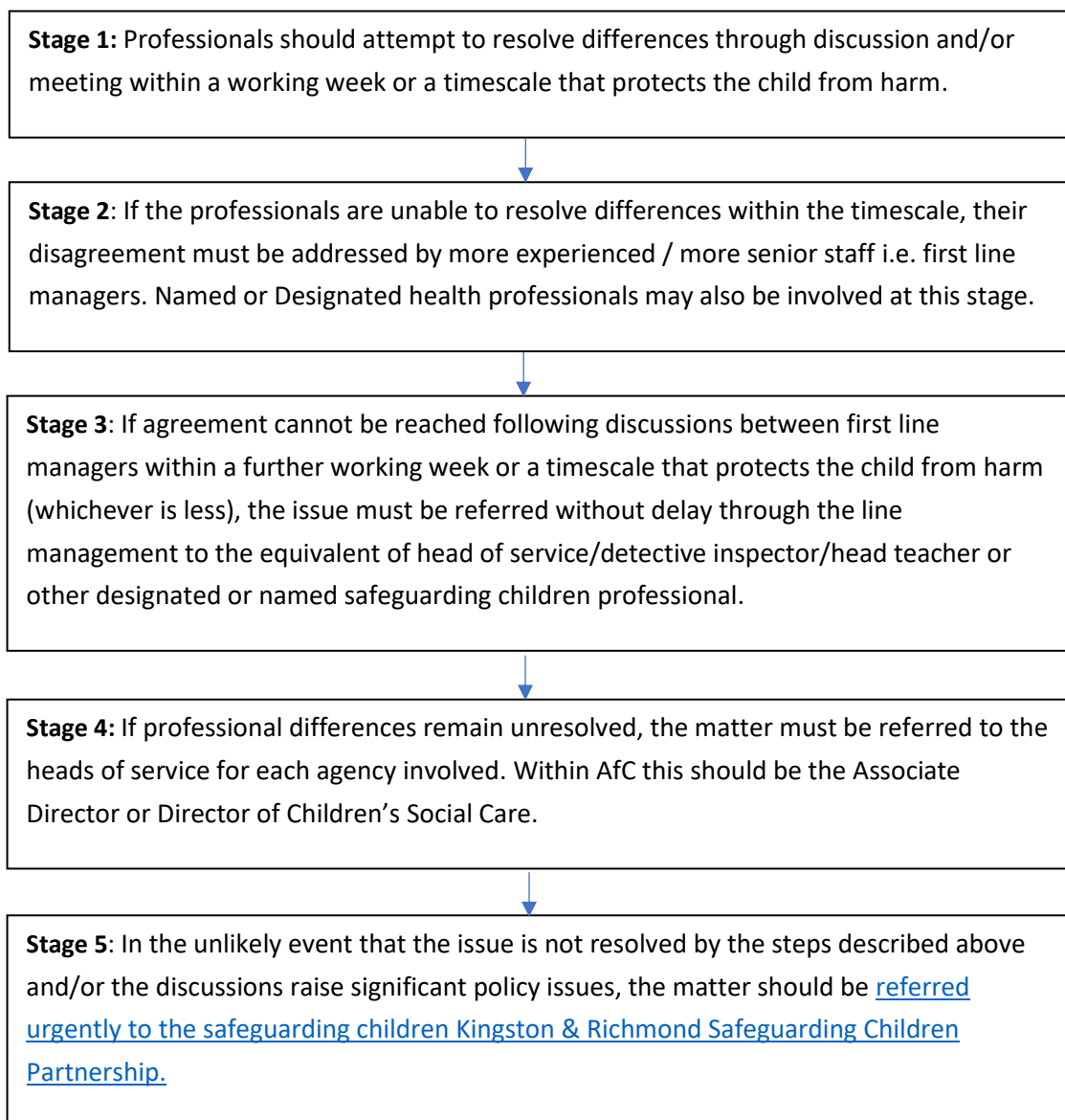
<https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/lscb.html#-monitoring-and-evaluation-function>).

3.3 Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to act without delay to safeguard the child (e.g. by calling for a case to be allocated or for a strategy meeting / discussion, for a core group meeting or for a child protection conference or review conference).

3.4 Specialist regional facilities such as a specialist children's or cancer hospital or a psychiatric or other mother and baby unit, must have in place a protocol for resolving professional differences which sets out how differences will be managed, through the line managements of the specialist facility and the local authority children's social care or other service with responsibility for the child. This protocol should take into account the role of the local authority children's social care in the locality of the specialist service.

Appendix 1 – flow chart describing stages of escalation

Throughout this process each agency must contemporaneously record each intra- and inter-agency discussion they have, approve and date the record and place a copy on the child's file together with any other written communications and information.



Appendix 2 – Key local contacts

For disagreements at referral and enquiry stage, the local contacts will be dictated by the specific agencies and teams involved, for example a particular school, health provider etc – therefore these agencies will need to be contacted to clarify the appropriate lead.

The following are some key contacts for each of the local partners who may be relevant to escalating professional differences:

Children’s Services provided by Achieving for Children

For contact details of individual service areas please visit the following webpage for contact details and ask to be put in touch with the relevant Manager, Associate Director, or Director of CSC as applicable <https://kr.afcinfo.org-.uk/pages/enquiries>

Early years and Education Settings

For early years and education settings, please contact the setting directly and ask to speak with the designated safeguarding lead in the first instance.

Health

Contact details for safeguarding teams/leads in local provider trusts; please ask for the named nurse for the relevant borough where information provided is for the safeguarding team rather than a named individual –

Provider	Email	Phone number
Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (HV & SN services, Richmond)	CLCHT.southhubsafeguardingchildren@nhs.net	020 8102 4218
Hounslow and Community Healthcare NHS Trust (CLA, & Children’s Community Nursing, Urgent Treatment Centre, Richmond)	HRCH.safeguarding@nhs.net	020 8973 3080
Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	khn-tr.KingstonHospitalCPAdmin@nhs.net	020 8934 3400/2676 or mobile: 07342 099847
South West London St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust (CAMHS tier 3)	sophie.helyer@swlstg.nhs.uk	07595 413718
West Middlesex University Hospital (part of Chelsea & Westminster NHS Foundation Trust)	daisy.dholoo@nhs.net	020 8321 5361
Your Healthcare (HV & SN services, Kingston)	SafeguardingChildren@yourhealthcare.org	07585 103156

If you are unclear on which health provider is relevant, please consult the SWL ICB Designated leads who can assist you in navigation.

Designated Safeguarding leads in South West London Integrated Care Board

Louise Doherty, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Kingston
louise.doherty@swlondon.nhs.uk
Mobile: 07388 226574, or Tel: 020 4526 2707

Michele Okuda, Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Richmond
michele.okuda@swlondon.nhs.uk
020 3922 1455

Dr Vanessa Impey, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children, Richmond (covering Kingston also)
Vanessa.impey@nhs.net
020 3771 6100

Deborah Clark, Designated Nurse for Children in Care, Kingston & Richmond
Deborah.clark@swlondon.nhs.uk
07384 877047

Dr Sandya Kenyon, Designated Doctor for Children Looked After, Kingston & Richmond
sandhya.kenyon@achievingforchildren.org.uk
0208 547 5750 or 07545 649 200

Dr Charlotte Pennycook, Named GP for Safeguarding
cpennycook@nhs.net

Metropolitan Police Service

For police colleagues there will be different teams with involvement depending on the nature of the concern, and who you wish to contact will vary according to the stage of attempted resolution you've reached, but the following email address can be contacted with a request to put you in touch with the relevant detective sergeant/inspector:

SWMailbox.SafeguardingCAITReferrals@met.police.uk

Voluntary Sector

For individual voluntary sector organisations please contact them directly in the first instance and ask to speak to their named lead for safeguarding. If the organisation concerned is a registered charity, they will generally have a trustee lead for safeguarding who is additional point of escalation beyond the operational lead as required. All trustees share a legal responsibility for safeguarding so should be able to assist where there is no named lead.

Kingston & Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership

For matters that remain unresolved under section 3 of the above procedure and require referral to the safeguarding children partnership, please contact the KRSCP Partnership Manager care of the following contact details and note that you wish to make a formal escalation:

lscb-support@kingrichlscb.org.uk
07834 386459