



Kingston and Richmond
Safeguarding Children Partnership

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Dispute Resolution Guidance

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Related policies & publications

London Child Protection Procedures

https://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/profess_conflict_res.html

Dispute Resolution Guidance

This guidance builds upon the London Child Protection Procedures Professional Conflict Resolution here: https://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/profess_conflict_res.html

Key principles:

- Professionals working together across agencies is key to keeping children and their families safe in Kingston and Richmond;
- Professionals will not always agree and this is healthy; but they should always feel able to challenge each other in a professional and open manner, and escalate issues if there are concerns which hinder the progress or work, or the safety of children and their families;
- It is the responsibility of each organisation to have its own conflict resolution process for its own staff, including a whistle-blowing policy;
- Between organisations, if workers are unable to resolve matters in a timely manner (for the child) there is the expectation that all methods are taken to resolve the matter by using more senior managers in their organisation;
- If organisations are unable to resolve matters in a timely manner, the matter will be brought to the attention of the three strategic partners in Kingston and Richmond and their representatives on the Strategic Leadership Group; Kingston & Richmond CCG, Kingston and Richmond Councils (whose Children's Services are delivered by Achieving for Children) and the SW Borough Command Unit Met Police for one of them to hold a resolution meeting;
- If the matter concerns one or more of those strategic partners and cannot be resolved, the Independent Scrutineer or Independent Chair will hold a resolution meeting;
- The process of resolution, where difficulties or disagreements arise between agencies, should be kept as simple as possible. The aim, where possible, is to resolve difficulties quickly and without delay at a professional practitioner level. The expectation in line with Section 11 of the pan London Child Protection Procedures (version 5) 1, is one working week, or more quickly, in order to assure a child's safety;
- If matters are still without resolution the matter can then be escalated as appropriate to the most senior level for each statutory partner: the CCG's Accountable Officer and/or Chair of the CCG Board; the Council Chief Executive and/or Leader of the Council; and the South West BCU Commander;
- If still unresolved and appropriate, the matter can then be referred to the relevant inspectorate: Ofsted, CQC or HMICFRS. Typical scenarios: Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around the application of thresholds for access to services, around roles and responsibilities, the need for decisions, action or greater efforts to communicate.

Some examples of the above may include the following:

- Where one professional disagrees with the action or decision making of another, such as case closure or no further involvement with a child and his/her family. One scenario is a No Further Action (NFA) decision made by a qualified senior member of staff within the SPA (Single Point of Access).
- Where one worker or agency considers that another worker or agency has not completed an agreed action and the reason why the action has not been undertaken is unclear.
- Where one worker or agency considers that the plan for the child is inappropriate and that a child's needs are not being met fully by the current plan. This could include a disagreement concerning continued involvement by other agencies for example.
- Where a member of staff or an agency considers that the child's safeguarding needs are better met by either a multi-agency professionals' meeting or a multi-agency Child Protection Plan and have requested that such a meeting or an initial Child Protection Conference is held and this request has been refused.
- The most critical of the above is probably where an agency feels that an initial Child Protection Conference should be called in order to plan to safeguard a child. In this instance, the six steps to resolve the issue set out at section 5 should be followed. This process reflects the process set out at Section 11 of the London Child Protection Procedures version 5.