

Professional Challenge and Escalation Procedure

Introduction

Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) is committed to being a learning partnership where professionals achieve high standards and the partnership challenges poor practice. Challenge and escalation are vital to delivering improvement and improving outcomes for adults at risk.

In supporting this professional challenge and escalation policy, SAB members are committing to work together in the spirit of openness, proportionality and mutual respect.

Context

Multi-agency working is pivotal to the safeguarding of adults at risk, however there will be occasions when workers from different agencies disagree on decision making in safeguarding. Disagreements may arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to be around the following:

- Intervention thresholds
- Roles and responsibilities
- Requirement for action
- Communication.

Principles to support resolution

It is important that practitioners feel empowered and supported within their agencies to challenge aspects of practice that they do not feel are in the best interests of adult at risk. When trying to resolve a difference of professional opinion or concern about practice, practitioners should work within the following principles:

- ✓ The safety and wellbeing of the adult at risk is paramount and at the centre of all professional discussions.
- ✓ Ensure that the right conversations are had, with the right people, at the right time, taking place face to face where possible.
- ✓ Challenges must be resolved in a timely manner.
- ✓ Concerns, actions, responses and outcomes must be recorded.

All staff should have the opportunity to challenge decision making to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice. This procedure provides workers with the means to raise the concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- Focussing on the adult at risk and the risks posed by the decision making
- Providing a framework for resolution which is open and timely
- Supporting clarity and promoting resolutions to areas of challenge across multi-agency working.

Disputes should be resolved within the shortest timescale possible, to protect the adult at risk. Whilst there may be a legitimate basis for the difference of the opinion, the welfare of the adult should be paramount.

Disagreements should also be resolved at the lowest stage possible, however if an adult is thought to be at immediate risk discretion should be used to initiate at the most relevant stage.

Stages of escalation

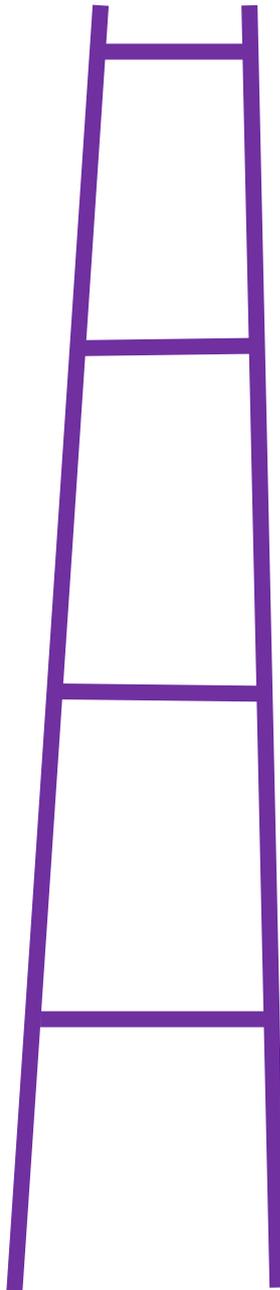
Stage 1	<p>Most disagreements can be resolved between professionals by having a conversation about the reasons for the difference of opinion and without having to escalate the matter further. When concerns arise, the professional must raise the issue with the other individual or their agency. The person raising their concern must be specific and clear about their concerns.</p> <p>If this does not resolve the issue, they should consult a line manager or supervisor within their agency to move the escalation onto stage 2.</p>
Stage 2	<p>The manager should raise the concerns with the equivalent manager in the other agency, or request the involvement of the safeguarding lead to discuss with their equivalent.</p> <p>If this does not resolve the issue, they should consult with senior management and representatives on the Warrington Safeguarding Adults Board to move the escalation onto stage 3.</p>
Stage 3	<p>Senior Management representatives and the agencies representatives on the WSAB should seek resolution to the issue. This may require a meeting with the involved parties to achieve a mutual understanding of perspective.</p> <p>If this does not resolve the issue the escalation should move to stage 4.</p>
Stage 4	<p>Once all other stages have been completed, the agency representative on the WSAB should refer the issue to the WSAB Independent Chair to recommend what action should be taken. This will be reported to the WSAB Main Board and written records will be kept.</p>

Additional notes

All stages of the professional challenge and escalation should be recorded and shared with the relevant personnel, including the person raising the concerns.

Staff involved must be given opportunities to debrief during the process to promote continuous good working and to identify opportunities and guidance to avoid similar disagreements in future.

Where policy issues are identified as a result of a dispute, these must be raised via the relevant representative to the WSAB Independent Chair.



Step 4:

The agency representative on the WSAB should refer the issue to the WSAB Independent Chair to recommend what action should be taken.

This will be reported to the WSAB Main Board and written records will be kept.

Step 3:

Senior Management representatives and the agencies representatives on the WSAB should seek resolution to the issue. This may require a meeting with the involved parties to achieve a mutual understanding of perspective. They must record this step within their case recording.

If an agreement can't be achieved the issue should be brought to the Safeguarding Partnership Manager and the escalation will move to step 4.

Step 2:

The manager should raise the concerns with the equivalent manager in the other agency, or request the involvement of the safeguarding lead to discuss with their equivalent. They must record this step within their case recording.

If a resolution can't be achieved, the professionals must notify their senior manager and the escalation will move to step 3.

Step 1:

When concerns arise, the professional must raise the issue with the other individual or their agency. The person raising their concern must be specific and clear about their concerns. They must record this step within their case recording.

If a resolution can't be reached, professionals must escalate the issue to their line manager or the named/ designated safeguarding lead in their organisation. This is when the escalation moves to step 2.

Most disagreements can be resolved between professionals by having a conversation about the reasons for the difference of opinion and without having to escalate the matter further.

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