

Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children

Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need case is not a safe decision. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of Need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Communication

The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.

All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice. This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

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

Timescales

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Some disagreements regarding safeguarding decisions will require speedy resolution. In all cases where a professional thinks a child is at imminent risk of harm and another agency disagrees they should refer direct to the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board nominated persons named overleaf after consulting quickly with their line manager or named child protection representative. For all other cases, efforts should be made by all involved to resolve the dispute in a timely way. The primary focus must always be on ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child concerned is assured whilst discussions take place.

Stages of the policy



Pre-escalation – Professional : Professional

In my service this is me

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult their safeguarding lead or line manager to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem; to be specific as to what the disagreement is about; and what they aim to achieve. They should also be able to evidence the nature and source of their concerns and should keep a record of all discussions. Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this option unsupported.



Stage One Manager : Manager *In my service this is Tina Munford (Play Leader)*

If the problem is not resolved between the professionals as above, the concerned worker should contact their manager within their own agency who should raise the concerns with the equivalent manager in the other agency to seek resolution.



Stage Two Senior Manager : Senior Manager *In my service this is Laura Lloyd (designated committee member)/Jo Aldred (Chair person)*

If the problem is not resolved at stage one the managers will report to their respective senior service manager (sometimes referred to as a tier 3 manager) or their organisations' named safeguarding lead. The two senior managers or safeguarding leads must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Stage Three Refer via the WSCB

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences at stage two the matter should be referred to the nominated WSCB representatives - the Designated Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Children and/or the Head of Safeguarding Quality Assurance (contact details below). They will listen to the views and concerns from all relevant parties and reach a final decision which will be communicated as appropriate.

Documenting discussions and decisions

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued. At the level the matter has been resolved between parties, **the WSCB 'Notification of an Escalation' form** must be completed by the manager who resolved the concern and forwarded to the WSCB administration email address below. Following resolution, it may be useful for individuals to debrief in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

WSCB mailbox: LSCB@wiltshire.gov.uk

Designated Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Children: Karen.Littlewood@nhs.net 01380 733908

Head of Safeguarding Quality Assurance: Nicola.Bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 713946

Safeguarding Quality Assurance Business Support: Karen.Stokes@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 718093

Becky.Tucker@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 716604

NB/ Please ensure that all personal identifiable information is sent by secure means.

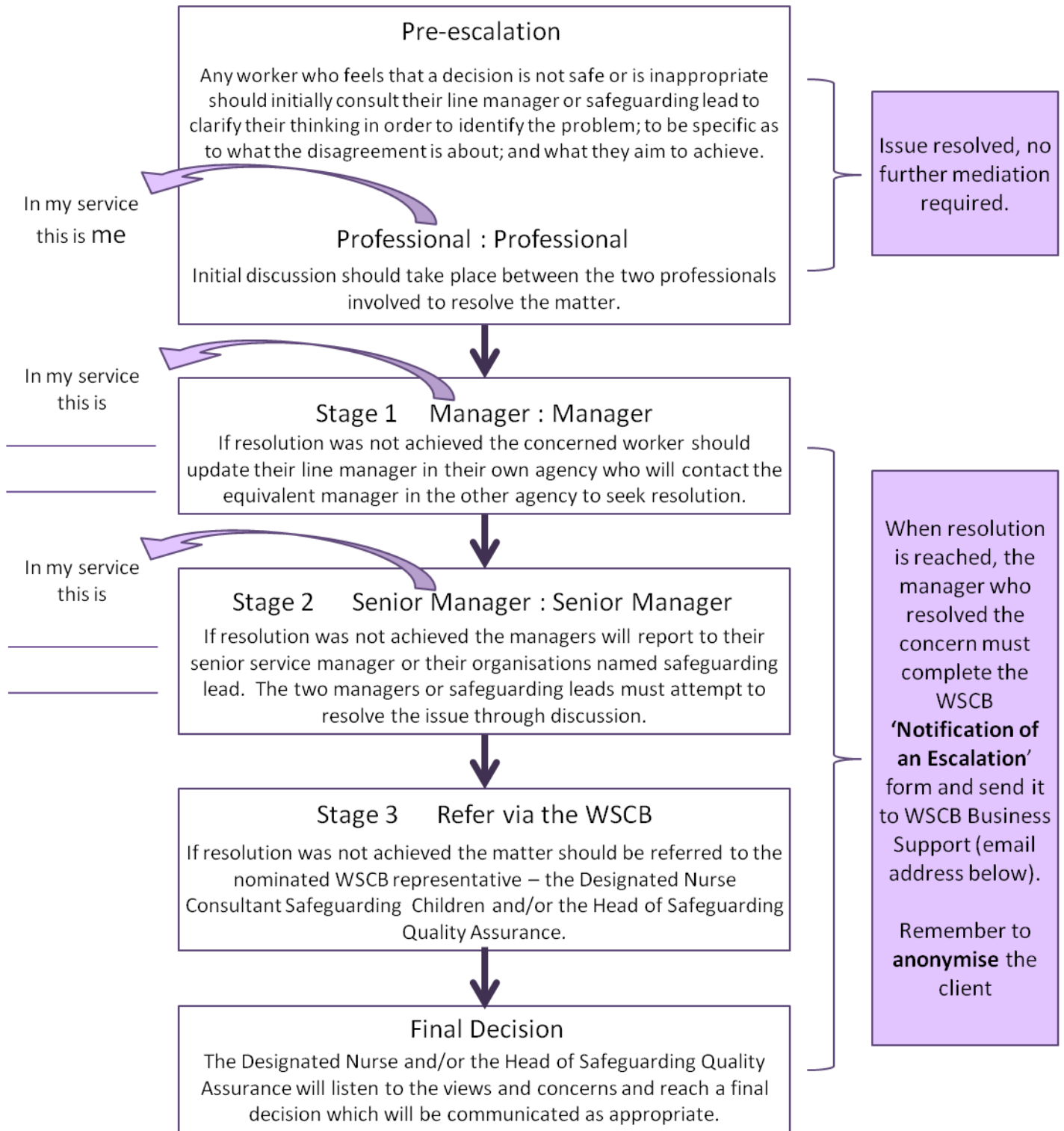
Final June 2013



Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board

WSCB Escalation Policy for professionals with child protection or child welfare concerns

Note: In all cases where a professional thinks a child is at **imminent risk of harm** and another agency disagrees they should refer direct to the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board nominated persons named below after consulting quickly with their line manager or named safeguarding lead.



Final June 2013

Designated Nurse Consultant Safeguarding Children: Karen.Littlewood@nhs.net 01380 733908

Head of Safeguarding Quality Assurance: Nicola.Bennett@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 713946

Safeguarding Quality Assurance Business Support: Karen.Stokes@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 718093,

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**Wiltshire Safeguarding
Children Board**

WSCB Escalation Policy: Notification of an escalation to the WSCB

When resolution is reached, the manager who resolved the concern must complete this WSCB 'Notification of an Escalation' form and send it to WSCB Business Support (email address below). Remember to anonymise the client.

Date	Escalation Stage	Name and agency of professionals involved	Issue/Concern	Record of discussions	Outcome	Date referred to WSCB (if necessary)

Email to: LSCB@wiltshire.gov.uk. WSCB Business Support: Karen.Stokes@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 718093 and Becky.Tucker@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 716604.

NB/ Please ensure that all personal identifiable information is sent by secure means.