



Multi Agency Escalation Policy

Approved by SSAB - January 2016
To be Reviewed – January 2017

Introduction

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

- Threshold for intervention
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Communication

The safety of adults at risk is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement (where Safeguarding children is not an issue) and any unresolved areas should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the adult.

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 vulnerable adults at risk or take away focus from the adult
- 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 professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard adults at risk.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the adult at risk is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage, however if an adult is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

Stages of the policy

Stage one

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a supervisor/manager (in the agency concerned or in their own organisation, if the latter is the same as stage 3)

When consulting with the supervisor/manager they should:

1. Clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem
2. Be specific as to what the disagreement is about;
3. Be clear about what they aim to achieve.

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 without support.

Stage two

If the problem is not resolved at stage one, the concerned worker should contact their supervisor/manager within their own agency who should raise the concerns with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency.

Stage three

If the problem is not resolved at stage two the supervisor/manager reports to their respective operations manager or named /designated safeguarding representative. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Stage four

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned a Safeguarding Adults Board Resolution Panel will be convened by the Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board. The panel must consist of representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences).

The panel will receive representations from those concerned and make a decision as to the next course of action, resolving the professional differences concerned. The decision of the panel is binding on all agencies concerned. The panel will produce a brief report of the issues and decisions made, which is submitted to the Safeguarding Adults Board on an annual basis.

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.

It may be useful for individuals to meet together and debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

The Process highlights wider learning points or gaps in policies and procedures

Any general issues should be identified and referred to the agency's representative on the Safeguarding Adults Board for consideration by the Quality Assurance sub- group to inform future learning and possible changes to existing policies and procedures.

Where this relates to a training need, then the Workforce Development Sub-Group will give this consideration.

If the process highlights gaps in policies and procedures this will be brought to the attention of the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

Sutton Safeguarding Adults Board – Escalation Procedure

Website: www.sutton.gov.uk Email: Safeguardingadults@sutton.gov.uk Tel: 020 8770 5000

