

2023

Hertfordshire
Safeguarding Adults Board
Working together to prevent abuse

HSAB Escalation Policy

What to do when agencies disagree

This policy is intended to support conflict resolution when professional views differ and to promote a culture of partnership working, whereby all agencies working with adults with care and support needs feel confident, able and supported to address concerns.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy has been developed by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board (HSAB) to ensure that all agencies working with adults who have care and support needs in Hertfordshire (including Health, Education, Housing, Children's Social Care, Adult Services, Probation, Police and community and voluntary sector organisations), have access to a straight forward multi-agency policy to quickly resolve, and where necessary escalate, professional differences where there are concerns that the welfare and safety of adults at risk of being compromised.**
- 1.2. All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported and know how to appropriately escalate and resolve interagency concerns and disagreements about an adult's well-being and the response to safeguarding needs.**
- 1.3. Occasionally situations arise where professional disagreements occur. Disagreements can be healthy and foster creative ways of working with adults at risk. However, disagreements can also impact negatively on positive working relationships and consequently on the ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults at risk.**
- 1.4. The aim of this policy is to promote a culture of partnership working, whereby all agencies working with adults with care or support needs feel confident, able and supported to address concerns in situations where there are differences in professional judgements around the response to their well-being and safety by seeking to:**
 - a) Avoid professional disputes that may put adults at risk or obscure the focus on the adult,**
 - b) Resolve the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly, and**
 - c) Identify problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures**
- 1.5. The safety and wellbeing of adults must be the paramount consideration at all times and professional differences must not distract from timely and clear decision making.**

This policy is not designed to replace the statutory complaints processes established within individual partner agencies.

2. Key Principles

2.1. Professionals should always:

- **Share key information appropriately and often. There can be no justification for failing to share information that will allow action to be taken to protect adult's at risk.**
 - **Seek to resolve the issue quickly and at the practice rather than the management level.**
 - **Ensure that professional differences do not place adults at further risk by obscuring the focus on the adult or delay decision making.**
 - **Keep focus on the adult's safety and welfare at all times.**
 - **Familiarise themselves with the escalation routes within their agency for resolution and escalation.**
 - **Ensure accurate and contemporary recording on the adult's file of key decisions and conversations in relation to the resolution process.**
 - **Stay proactively involved; safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**
 - **Use HSAB resolution process when necessary set out below in section 4.**
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3. Context

3.1. Disagreements between practitioners and agencies can arise at any stage in the safeguarding process and between any of the agencies involved. Some examples of potential areas of disagreement may include:

- Levels of need/threshold for determining levels of need /risk
 - Concerns in relation to an agency's response to safeguarding concerns
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Intra/inter agency communication
 - Disagreement on lead agency or professional
 - Practice/case management issues
 - Actions or lack of actions in relation to a referral, an assessment or an enquiry
 - A dispute about mental health concerns
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4. Process

4.1. In cases where there is a difference of professional opinion and a professional considers an adult is at immediate risk of harm, concerns must be escalated to a manager and/or safeguarding lead within their organisation on the same working day. This is to ensure that there is a timely response in place which secures the safety and protection of the adult concerned.

- 4.2. When there is a disagreement over a significant issue, which potentially impacts on the safety and welfare of an adult **but the adult is not considered at immediate risk**, a more planned approach can be followed; the respective professionals must identify explicitly the issue they are concerned about, the risk to the adult, the nature of the disagreement, to whom it is to be referred and what the professionals wish to achieve.
- 4.3. The professionals involved in the dispute must contemporaneously record each intra and inter-agency discussion they have, approve and date the record and place a record on the adult's file together with any other written communications and information. The agreed outcome of discussions and how any outstanding issues will be pursued must be recorded
- 4.4. A monitoring form (Appendix 1) should be completed by the agency raising the escalation for all Escalations

Stages to be followed if an adult is not at risk of imminent harm

4.5. (Stage1)

In the first instance the professional with concerns should raise the matter with the relevant practitioner/decision maker with whom they are disagreeing verbally or in writing **within 2 working days** of the disagreement or receipt of a decision. The professional's line manager should be involved as appropriate.

The professional with concerns should provide clear evidence based reasons for their disagreement. The practitioner / decision maker receiving these concerns must read and review the case file and **speak to the concerned professional within 3 working days** and attempt to find a mutually agreeable way forward via discussion or meeting.

Where a resolution is reached the responsible worker will confirm the outcome with the professional who has raised the concerns in writing within a further **2 working days**.

4.6. (Stage 2)

If agreement cannot be reached within Stage 1, the issue must be referred without delay to the relevant Service Manager (e.g. Assessment Team Service Manager / Detective Inspector or other designated senior manager/or safeguarding lead within their organisation).

Following referral to senior managers, a resolution should be achieved **within a further five working days** or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less). The managers dealing with the issue will involve the Head of Service and Assistant Directors in their agency if required.

Where a resolution is reached the senior manager in the agency receiving the concerns will confirm the outcome with his / her counterpart in the agency raising concerns within a further **two working days**.

4.7. (Stage 3)

In the unlikely event that the professional disagreements remain unresolved following discussions between respective Heads of Services /Assistant Directors and/or the discussion raises significant policy issues, the matter must be referred to the Chair of the HSAB.

The HSAB Chair may seek further written information and will confer as necessary with senior managers / named / designated professionals in the agencies involved/safeguarding lead within the organisations, and any others as required, and will make recommendations to the agencies for the resolution of the matter within **five working days** of the issue being brought to his/her attention.

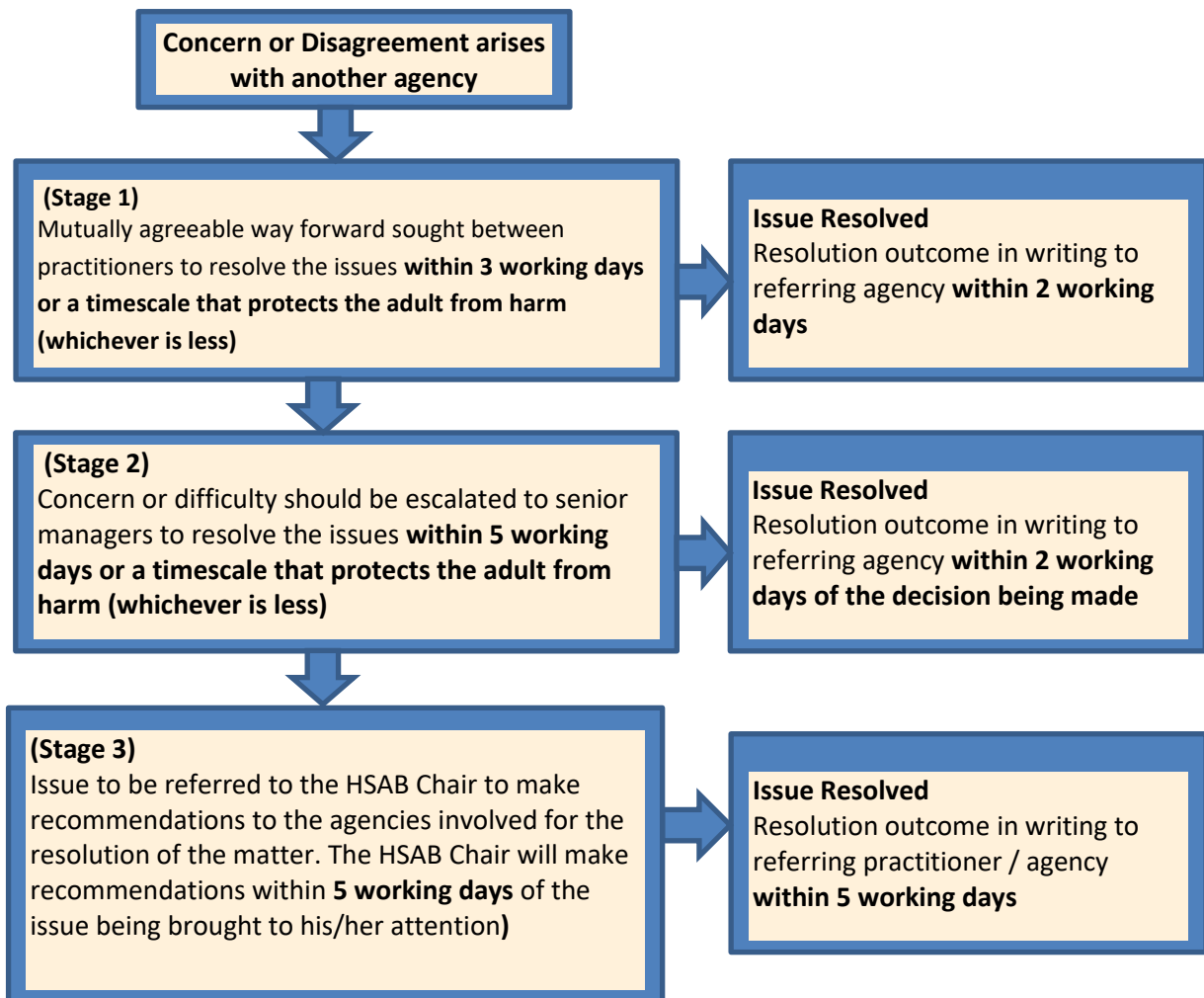
The HSAB is not an operational body and cannot direct the actions of partner agencies. However, the HSAB as a body has a strong expectation that the recommendations of the HSAB Chair will be acted upon

5. Safeguarding Leads' Contacts

Organisation	Safeguarding Contact	Telephone
Adult Care Services	Head of Safeguarding	0300 123 40 42
HPFT	HPFT Safeguarding Team Professional contact General public enquiries	hpft.safeguardingteam@nhs.net hpft.spa@nhs.net
East and North Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Lead Nurse for Safeguarding Adults	01438 284994 adultsafeguarding.enh-tr@nhs.net
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Named Nurse for Safeguarding Adults	01923 217009/01923 217294 westherts.safeguarding@nhs.net
Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust	Safeguarding Adults Specialist Nurse	0208 102 4218 CLCHT.adultsafeguarding@nhs.net
Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB	Named Nurse for Adult Safeguarding	01707 685 000 hweicbhv.safa@nhs.net
Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust	Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust Safeguarding Adults Team	01727 732075 hct.safa@nhs.net
CGL	Senior Social Worker	0800 652 3169 Herts@cgl.org.uk
HCPA	Principal Business Development Manager	01707 536 020 Jackietaylor@hcpa.co.uk
East of England Ambulance Service	Safeguarding Lead	01767 312573 safeguarding@eastamb.nhs.uk
Hertfordshire Constabulary	Head of Serious Crime and Safeguarding Command Head of Adult Safeguarding	01707 354 000 amanda.bell@herts.police.uk John.Harlock@herts.police.uk

Probation Service	Head of Hertfordshire Local Delivery Unit	01438 747074 nevee.bishop@justice.gov.uk
East Herts Council	Head of Housing and Health	01279 655261 www.eastherts.gov.uk
Watford Borough Council	Corporate Safeguarding Manager	01923 226400 Contact us – www.watford.gov.uk
St. Albans District Council	Emergency Planning and Principal Community Protection Officer	01727 866100 www.stalbans.gov.uk
Three Rivers District Council	Head of Community Partnerships	01923 776611 www.threerivers.gov.uk
North Herts District Council	Service Director - Legal & Community or Policy and Communities Manager	01462 474370 01462 744212 www.north-herts.gov.uk
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	Neighbourhood and Enforcement Manager	01707 357 000 www.welhat.gov.uk
Hertsmere District Council	Child and Adult Lead	020 8207 2277 www.hertsmere.gov.uk
Broxbourne Borough Council	Community Safety Manager	01992 785508 community.safety.inbox@broxbourne.gov.uk www.broxbourne.gov.uk
Dacorum Borough Council	Safeguarding Lead Officer	01442 228000 www.dacorum.gov.uk
Stevenage Borough Council	Community Safety Manager	01438 242242 www.stevenage.gov.uk
HSAB	HSAB Chair	Elizabeth.hanlon@hertfordshire.gov.uk adminHSCPHSAB@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Flowchart



Appendix A

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board Escalation Protocol – Monitoring Form

A tool to record decisions and to monitor the effectiveness of the Escalation Protocol

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency, about an adult, is not a safe decision. Problem resolution is an integral part of working together to safeguard adults. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage, and resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the adult is protected. If an adult is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated. **This form to be used at the point of escalation to the practitioner's manager and at each further step of the Escalation Protocol.**

Checklist
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you consulted a supervisor/manager, to seek advice about resolving your concern?
<input type="checkbox"/> Have you made clear initial attempts to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level?
<input type="checkbox"/> Did the supervisor/manager raise the concerns with their equivalent in the other agency?
<input type="checkbox"/> If this did not resolve the concerns, has the Senior Manager or Named/Designated Safeguarding representatives attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion?
<input type="checkbox"/> If this did not resolve the professional differences, are you seeking resolution by the Independent Chair of the HSAB?

Action Note: A copy of this form is to be held on the adult's file in all agencies involved in resolution of professional difficulties. If escalating to next stage, use this form as a basis for reporting to the manager at the next stage. Please send a copy to the HSAB Team on completion – email to: Expand as much as required.

Name

Summary of reason for dispute – include views of *all* agencies concerned

Agreed outcomes or actions if satisfactorily resolved – includes escalation to next stage if unresolved

Signature of referring manager

Name

Designation

Agency

Date

Signature of receiving manger

Name

Designation

Agency

Date

Stage at which resolution achieved, noting how effective the policy/practice was in resolving the issue

Time taken to reach resolution