

St Helens Safeguarding Children Multi Agency Resolution Policy



St Helens
Safeguarding Children
Partnership



In line with the St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, this policy applies to all agencies who work with children and families within the geographical boundary of the St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership, which for the purpose of this document is to be taken as the local authority boundaries of the borough of St Helens

Version Control	
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Introduction:

Occasionally, situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision or practice made by another agency or worker, is either not safe or not in the best interests of the child. This may relate to professional involvement at a universal level, Early Help services, Child in Need, Child Protection or Children We Look After.

Effective joint working depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation, joint working to protect children and robust and effective safeguarding systems.

Ensuring the safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in resolving any professional disagreement.

As professionals, we should always be curious about why decisions are made and question if we do not feel this is right. This includes any disagreements in relation to the application of thresholds by any agency. Whatever agency we are from, we should feel confident and able to challenge decision making. We have a professional responsibility to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice and therefore, raising such concerns is an entirely legitimate and essential activity and as such the Multi-agency resolution process is there to provide workers with the means to raise any concerns.

Professionals should also feel confident to challenge drift and delay that can feature in some cases, as well as key safeguarding practices between agencies. Resolution is fundamental in challenging key safeguarding procedures, as well as decision making.

If we are on the receiving end of a professional challenge, we should see this as an opportunity to reflect on our decision-making and procedures, in order to improve and strengthen practice moving forward.

The St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) Multi Agency Resolution Policy provides workers with the means to raise any concerns they have towards other professionals or agencies by:

- Encouraging professional curiosity
- Avoiding professional disputes that put the child at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- Resolving any difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- Identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures.

Resolution of the issues raised should be sought within the shortest possible timescale to ensure the child's safety and best interests are safeguarded.

Important: if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, discretion should be used as to which stage of the Multi-Agency Resolution Process is initiated.

At all stages (1-4) of the Multi-Agency Resolution Process the St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership holds the right to utilise wide key stakeholders within local systems to assist achieving a resolution, if required this can include but is not limited to:

- Lead Safeguarding Partners
- Delegated Safeguarding Partners
- Police and Crime Commissioners,
- Mayors

- Lead Members
- Independent persons

If a resolution cannot be reached and the issue remains unresolved between the safeguarding partners once it has proceeded through the local procedures, then the agency raising the resolution request can escalate the matter to the Secretary of State as detailed within Working Together To Safeguard Children guidance.

Issues relating to Looked After Children should be taken up with the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), who has a role in overseeing services for Looked After Children. For Child Protection Conferences, the Child Protection Chairs should be utilised.

The Resolution Process is outlined and shown in the diagrammatic form shown on page 6

The Resolution Procedure:

Stage 1

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem.

This should be between the practitioner raising the Resolution and the practitioner with whom the issue relates to.

The relevant practitioner should be contacted, either by phone or email, informing them that the Resolution Procedure is being invoked and detailing what the issues are.

A resolution should be reached within **2 days**.

You should evidence the Stage 1 Resolution within your own recording systems.

The Orange Stage 1 Notification Form should be completed and sent in to scpescalations@sthelens.gov.uk and the relevant practitioner.

The Resolution should be discussed with your Line Manager.

Stage 2

If the issue remains unresolved, the problem should be referred to the practitioner's own line manager or their organisation's safeguarding children lead.

The line manager will discuss this with their equivalent in the other agency (first tier line manager to first tier line manager).

At this stage, it may be useful for the line managers to agree a meeting between themselves and the concerned practitioners to assist with the exploration of the problem.

Some organisations may not have a define line management structure and in these circumstances, the practitioner with the concerns about an unresolved issue should take responsibility for raising their concerns through the line management structure in the other agency.

A resolution should be reached within **3 days**.

You should evidence the Stage 2 Resolution within your own recording systems.

The Green Stage 2 Notification Form should be completed and sent in to scpescalations@sthelens.gov.uk and the relevant practitioner.

You may wish to discuss the resolution with senior management.

Stage 3

If the problem remains unresolved, the line managers will refer to their line managers for consideration.

In the rare circumstances where the problem cannot be resolved through management arrangements, the matter will be referred to the relevant Head of Service or 2nd Tier Line Manager equivalent (2nd Tier Line Manager to 2nd Tier Line Manager).

A resolution should be reached within **5 days**.

You should evidence the Stage 3 Resolution within your own recording systems.

The Blue Stage 3 Notification form should be completed and sent in to scpescalations@sthelens.gov.uk and the relevant practitioner.

Stage 4

If the issue is still unresolved, the Chair of the Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) Board or one of the key partners will make the final decision on the issue.

A resolution should be reached within **3 days**.

You should evidence the Stage 4 Resolution within your own recording systems.

The Pink Stage 4 Notification form should be completed and sent in to scpescalations@sthelens.gov.uk and the relevant practitioner.

Resolution

Once an agreement has been reached, regardless of the stage at which it was resolved, the Purple Resolution Outcome Form should be completed and sent in to scpescalations@sthelens.gov.uk and the relevant practitioner.

This provides the partnership with opportunities to reflect on professional resolutions, identify key themes or trends and adapt policy and procedures to improve safeguarding practice in the future.



Notification Stage 1

Practitioner to Practitioner

All Stage 1 Resolutions should be resolved within 2 working days

Notification Stage 1	Date	
	Name of professional submitting resolution	
	Agency	
	Further agency details <i>(For education please provide type of school; For health please include who you are employed by)</i>	
	Contact Details	
	Name of professional who you have raised resolution with	
	Agency	
	Further agency details	
	Contact Details	
	Child/Family Name <i>(Please state how many children this escalation relates to)</i>	
	Date of Birth	
	Current Level of Need	
	ICS Number (if known)	
	NHS Number (if known)	
	Any additional comments	

Notification Stage 2

1st Line Manager to 1st Line Manager

All Stage 2 Resolutions should be resolved within 3 working days

Notification Stage 2	Date	
	Name of professional submitting resolution	
	Agency	
	Further agency details <i>(For education please provide type of school; For health please include who you are employed by)</i>	
	Contact Details	
	Name of professional who you have raised resolution with	
	Agency	
	Further agency details	
	Contact Details	
	Child/Family Name <i>(Please state how many children this escalation relates to)</i>	
	Date of Birth	
	Current Level of Need	
	ICS Number (if known)	
	NHS Number (if known)	
	Any additional comments	

Notification Stage 3

2nd Tier Management to 2nd Tier Management

All Stage 3 Resolutions should be resolved within 5 working days

Notification Stage 3	Date	
	Name of professional submitting resolution	
	Agency	
	Further agency details <i>(For education please provide type of school; For health please include who you are employed by)</i>	
	Contact Details	
	Name of professional who you have raised resolution with	
	Agency	
	Further agency details	
	Contact Details	
	Child/Family Name <i>(Please state how many children this escalation relates to)</i>	
	Date of Birth	
	Current Level of Need	
	ICS Number (if known)	
	NHS Number (if known)	
	Any additional comments	

Notification Stage 4

Key Partner Final Decision

All Stage 4 Resolutions should be resolved within 3 working days

Notification Stage 4	Date	
	Name of professional submitting resolution	
	Agency	
	Further agency details <i>(For education please provide type of school; For health please include who you are employed by)</i>	
	Contact Details	
	Name of professional who you have raised resolution with	
	Agency	
	Further agency details	
	Contact Details	
	Child/Family Name <i>(Please state how many children this escalation relates to)</i>	
	Date of Birth	
	Current Level of Need	
	ICS Number (if known)	
	NHS Number (if known)	
	Any additional comments	

Resolution Outcome Form

Outcome Form	Date					
	Name of professional submitting Outcome Agency					
	Further agency details <i>(For education please provide type of school; For health please include who you are employed by)</i>					
	Contact Details					
	Name of professional who you have raised resolution with Agency					
	Further agency details					
	Contact Details					
	Child/Family Name <i>(Please state how many children this escalation relates to)</i>					
	Date of Birth					
	Current Level of Need					
	ICS Number (if known)					
	NHS Number (if known)					
	What stage of the resolution policy was the outcome reached?					
	Reason for Escalation (please tick):					
	Level of need		Drift and delay		Lack of communication	
	Minutes not received		Disagreement with a decision		Non-attendance at meeting	
	Meeting not being held		Other (please provide brief details)			
	What worked well?					
	What were you worried about?					
	What needs to change?					