

Surrey's Escalation Procedure

The needs of Children and their families can often be complex and may require a range of interventions and support that need to be tailored to meet their differing needs and circumstances.

Often there may be no right or wrong solution and quite legitimately practitioners may exercise their professional judgements differently and have differing opinions of what the right approach should be. It is also the case that exceptionally, the needs of some young people and families may not easily fit within our conventional application of thresholds.

It is of vital importance that when professional disagreements arise, children, young people and their families do not become entangled in them and where such disputes do occur, they must be resolved together, as quickly as possible.

There are 4 options to consider when seeking to raise and resolve a concern and further information can be found in the [SSCP's Guidance Document](#).

Option 1: Make a referral to C-SPA. If you are concerned about a child who you feel may be suffering from Harm, Neglect or Abuse and you are worried about their safety and wellbeing, then you should raise this immediately with The Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) at cspa@surreycc.gov.uk or contact the team on 0300 470 9100 (Monday to Friday 9am to 5 pm) and out of hours on 01483 517898 (ask to speak to the Emergency duty team).

Option 2: Raise a Complaint: If appropriate, encourage the family to make a complaint using either the Surrey's online Complaint form or by emailing their complaint to be.heard@surreycc.gov.uk. If the family do not wish to raise a complaint themselves then you could ask for their permission to raise the complaint on their behalf.

Option 3: For disputes and complaints between agencies there is a 3 step process to follow and this is outlined in the SSCP's [Guidance Document](#).

Option 4: Surrey's FaST escalation process. This process is to be used when a child is judged to be **at risk of harm or is unsafe**. The Surrey *FaST* (Finding Solutions Together) resolution process has been agreed with all our partners, as a mechanism for seeking solutions when a child is **at risk** but other processes such as making a referral to C-SPA and/or discussing your concerns directly with the agency concerned, has not achieved a mutually agreeable resolution.

The Surrey *FaST* process places the needs of the child and the family at its centre and seeks a timely response and resolution. If you can respond "Yes" to ALL of the following THREE questions, then the *FaST* resolution process is your best course of action:

- Are you concerned about a decision or practice related to a child or young person that you are working with?
- Is the child or young person being put "at risk" of harm as a result?
- Have you already raised your concern through normal channels (e.g. referral to C-SPA, raised your concern in a child protection meeting or team around the child meeting) but not achieved the resolution you wanted for the child?

If you need advice on whether to use this process or not then guidance is always available from the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk.

The primary aim of the Surrey *FaST* resolution process is that professional disagreements are resolved at the lowest possible level, by those working directly with children and families. The process recognises that children are best safeguarded when professionals who support them and their families, work well together through timely, respectful, solution-focused, and child centred communication and coordinated action.

The Surrey *FaST* resolution process applies to and should be used by ALL agencies who work with children and families in Surrey. See diagram below.

Safeguarding Partners in Surrey appreciate that it is not always easy to find the right person to talk to in another agency and that professional judgements need to be made when deciding whether or not a response is reasonable and when to move up to the next stage of the process.

All key partners have been asked to identify a Single Point of Contact who can assist with this decision making and support colleagues in other agencies to identify the right person to speak with at each stage of the process. These contacts are shown in Table 2 below.

The SSCP do not usually become involved in a *FaST* resolution until and if the process reaches Stage 5, however the SSCP Business Team are always available to provide support and guidance to agencies, when needed. They can be contacted at any stage by email at partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk



To print off a copy of this poster please click [here](#)

The FaST Resolution Process – Key stages

All disputes should be resolved in a timely way, at the earliest possible level, so that the welfare of the child remains paramount. In some situations, it may be necessary to instigate all of the

stages within a short period of time or to escalate the process so that the safety of the child is not compromised.

All practitioners have a positive duty to facilitate the use of the *FaST* resolutions process with other practitioners even when they do not agree that the use of the procedure is necessary. For example, there is a duty to immediately provide relevant contact details for line management where this relates to the necessary next stage in the *FaST* resolutions process.

Wherever possible, at each of the Stages, discussions should be carried out between professionals of a similar level of seniority within their respective agencies. This is to avoid situations where there is an imbalance between the seniority of professionals which might inhibit the conduct of an open, frank and balanced discussion about the case.

For example, it would be appropriate for a School Head Teacher to discuss the disagreement with the member of staff in the relevant organisation of the equivalent seniority, closest to practice in the first instance. If an imbalance arises due to inappropriate escalation, the more junior member of staff should escalate the issue to their line manager, who should do the same until a similar level of seniority between the professionals discussing the case between the agencies is achieved.

Notwithstanding the above, at all times it should be recognised that the different partnership agencies have different structures and that it may not always be possible for discussions to take place between partnership colleagues of the same equivalent grade. In every case, anyone raising a safeguarding concern/disagreement with a partnership colleague, irrespective of position or grade must be listened to and their concern treated with professionalism and respect.

All communication between agencies, from Stage 2 onwards, should be documented, ideally within an email. The SSCP must be copied into any communication so that they are aware of current issues and can ensure that the *FaST* procedure is being used effectively.

Each agency is also required to keep their own log of any instances where they have used the *FaST* resolutions process themselves. This log should include a record for each stage of the process; start date, who the concern was raised with, and the outcome or resolution agreed. These logs will provide the information needed to enable the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the resolution process on a regular basis.

Table 1: Stages of the SSCP *FaST* resolution process

Stages	What	When
Stage 1: Internal Discussion	Any professional who disagrees with a decision should initially consult with their line manager so that they can discuss	The discussion should take place within two working days of the

Stages	What	When
	<p>the issue to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem and be specific about what the disagreement is about.</p> <p>This discussion may help clarify the issues at this stage so that the professional in question no longer disagrees with the decision made by the other professional.</p>	<p>disagreement or concern arising.</p>
<p>Stage 2: Inter-agency Discussion</p>	<p>Most disagreements can be resolved between professionals by discussing the reasons for the difference of opinion and without having to escalate further. The professional who has a concern should speak to the other professional to better understand their position and discuss their concern. These discussions should be conducted in an open and professional manner without the need for either party to be accusatory or defensive. At all times the needs of the child should be paramount.</p> <p>From Stage 2 onwards any communication between agencies should be documented and the SSCP copied in. partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk</p>	<p>The discussion should take place within two working days of the completion of Stage 1 above.</p>
<p>Stage 3: Team / Service Manager</p>	<p>If the professionals are not able to resolve their disagreement at Stage Two their disagreement must be reported to their line managers or second-tier managers or equivalent. In most cases the relevant line managers /second-tier managers will be able to resolve the disagreement between them.</p>	<p>The line manager should make contact with their opposite number in the partner agency within two working days of the completion of the Stage 2 above.</p>

Stages	What	When
	<p>The purpose of this contact is to review the available information and to resolve the concern. Any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the relevant professionals and the detail of the dispute and agreements reached should be recorded on the child's file.</p> <p>Any communication between agencies should be documented (ideally in an email) and the SSCP copied in. partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk</p>	
<p>Stage 4: Heads/Directors of Service.</p>	<p>Where it is not possible to resolve the disagreement at second-tier management level, the matter should be referred without delay to Heads/Directors of Service (Stage 4).</p> <p>The purpose of this contact is to review the available information and to resolve the concern. Any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the relevant professionals and the detail of the conflict and agreements reached should be recorded on the child's file.</p> <p>The purpose of escalating the dispute to this level is to reach a position where differing professional opinions have been taken into account and efforts made to explore whether the dispute has arisen through lack of clarity or understanding in the professional dialogue. Ultimately a decision will need to be reached where agencies agree a way forward where the interests of the child take precedence over a professional stalemate.</p>	<p>The Heads/Directors of Service should make contact with their opposite number in the partner agency within two working days of the completion of Stage 3 above.</p>

Stages	What	When
	<p>Any communication between agencies should be documented and the SSCP copied in. partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk</p>	
<p>Stage 5: Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership ('SSCP')</p>	<p>In the unlikely event that the professional disagreement remains, the disagreement should be escalated to the Partnership Development Manager at the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership to seek a multi-agency resolution. This can be done by completing the form at Appendix 1 and sending it to partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk</p> <p>The Partnership Development Manager will then make contact with the person (s) who represents the organisation on the Partnership or its Executive Group to seek a final resolution. The learning from this resolution meeting or review will be disseminated to all parties within one month of the meeting or review.</p> <p>Any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the Heads of Service and Second tier management staff involved with details of the agreements reached.</p>	<p>A referral should be made to the SSCP by or on behalf of the Heads/Directors of Service within two working days of the completion of Stage 4 above using the form at Appendix 1.</p>

Table 2: Key Contacts to assist with the FaST Resolution Process

Partner	Contact																				
Children's Social Care	Contact the Business Support Team at fast.signposting@surreycc.gov.uk if you are unsure who to escalate your concerns to.																				
Health	<p>Single point of contact for escalations - HEALTH</p> <p><i>First Tier of escalation support Contact the: Named Doctor, Named Nurse and Named Midwife or Named GP for the agency concerned</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Organisation</th> <th>Safeguarding Children Team email</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>CSH Surrey</td> <td>CSH.safeguarding@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>First Community Health and Care</td> <td>FCHC.SGCSservice@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust</td> <td>safeguardingchildren@sabp.nhs.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>East Surrey Hospital</td> <td>sash.safeguardingchildren@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Epsom and St Helier Hospital Trust</td> <td>est-tr.safeguardingchildrenteamesth@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Frimley Park Hospital Trust</td> <td>fph-tr.safeguarding@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Royal Surrey</td> <td>rsc-tr.SafeguardingChildren@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ashford and St Peters Hospital Trust</td> <td>asp-tr.safeguardingchildrenteam@nhs.net</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South East Coast Ambulance Trust</td> <td>safeguarding@secamb.nhs.uk</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Organisation	Safeguarding Children Team email	CSH Surrey	CSH.safeguarding@nhs.net	First Community Health and Care	FCHC.SGCSservice@nhs.net	Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust	safeguardingchildren@sabp.nhs.uk	East Surrey Hospital	sash.safeguardingchildren@nhs.net	Epsom and St Helier Hospital Trust	est-tr.safeguardingchildrenteamesth@nhs.net	Frimley Park Hospital Trust	fph-tr.safeguarding@nhs.net	Royal Surrey	rsc-tr.SafeguardingChildren@nhs.net	Ashford and St Peters Hospital Trust	asp-tr.safeguardingchildrenteam@nhs.net	South East Coast Ambulance Trust	safeguarding@secamb.nhs.uk
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Partner	Contact				
	<p><i>Second Tier of escalation Support (if needed) Contact the: Designated Nursing Team Doctor, Head of Safeguarding or Designated GP for the agency concerned</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Organisation</td> <td>Safeguarding Children Team email</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Surrey Wide CCG Safeguarding Team</td> <td>syheartlandsccg.surrey.safeguarding</td> </tr> </table>	Organisation	Safeguarding Children Team email	Surrey Wide CCG Safeguarding Team	syheartlandsccg.surrey.safeguarding
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Police	Contact P-Spa at - MASHDSs@surrey.police.uk or call 01483 636451 during office hours				
Mind Works Surrey	Safeguarding Team at Surrey and Borders Partnership safeguardingchildren@sabp.nhs.uk				
Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership	SSCP Business Support Team Partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk				

Appendix 1 – FaST Resolution Form (for use in Stage 5 of the process)

FINDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

Name of the Child(ren)/Family that requires support:	
Name of the agency seeking a solution	
Name, role and contact details of agency representative seeking a solution	
What are you worried about?	
What action do you believe is needed?	

TELL US WHAT YOU HAVE DONE SO FAR...

Stage	Date Contact Made	Who did you contact	How did you contact them	Outcome/Reason for moving to next stage
1				
2				
3				
4				

If you have not found a suitable resolution on completion of Stage 4 (Day 8) then please forward this completed form on to the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partners @ partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk

Date of submission to SSCP: