

Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board



Professional Disagreement and Escalation Policy

Version	v1.0
Approved	24.11.2022 (Exec. Group)
Review date	
Officer's initials	RS

1. Introduction

Effective partnership working requires an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem solving and resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard adults at risk of abuse and neglect.

Transparency, openness and a willingness to understand and respect individual and agency views are core aspects of multi-agency working. However, there may be occasions where individuals or agencies disagree on how best to work with and promote the wellbeing of Adults at Risk.

Disagreements can arise in a number of different areas and could include:

- Perceived levels of risk
- Levels of need and whether a concern has met the requirement for a service or intervention
- Roles and responsibilities
- Level or quality of communication/ information sharing
- Provision of services
- Action or lack of action progressing plans
- Cases being, or not being, stepped up or down and/ or being closed

The Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board is clear that there must be respectful challenge whenever a professional or agency has a concern about the action or inaction of another professional or agency. The aim must always be to resolve a professional disagreement at the earliest possible stage, always keeping in mind that the adult at risk's safety and wellbeing is paramount.

In the first instance a conversation must take place with the person who made the decision that is being disagreed with. Any staff member who disagrees or objects to a decision made by another agency should consult their supervisor or line manager to discuss and clarify their concerns. The staff member should be able to seek support from their supervisor or manager throughout the escalation process. The staff member should be able to evidence the nature and source of their concerns, and they should keep a record of any discussions held. All records should be kept in accordance with the individual agency's information and governance policy.

All requests made for a discussion using the escalation process should receive a prompt and timely response from practitioners and managers. All agencies involved should aim to conclude professional disagreements as soon as possible and certainly within 28 days of the original escalation date.

If the disagreement is between two staff members employed by the same organisation, the Professional Disagreement and Escalation Policy should not be used. Instead, the staff members should follow their own internal policy and procedure for addressing disagreements.

2. Key Principles

- The Adult at Risk's views and wishes should be central to the professional disagreement and escalation process, and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 must be adhered to at all times.
- The Adult at Risk's safety and wellbeing should be the key focus at all times and any dispute between individuals or agencies will not absolve the said agencies of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- It is the responsibility of all professionals to be assertive and to present a respectful challenge to the actions and decisions of other agencies where they believe there is evidence to suggest that the Adult at Risk's safety or wellbeing may be compromised
- Agencies should seek to nurture a culture of professional challenge. This can be developed and facilitated through consistent communication and information sharing. Professionals should know who else in the multi-agency network is involved with the Adult at Risk.
- Individuals and agencies should avoid being defensive when challenged and must always be prepared to review decisions and plans with an open mind and revise decisions in light of any new information
- Differences of opinion should be resolved at the earliest opportunity and within the shortest timescale possible.

NOTE: If an Adult is thought to be at immediate risk, action should be taken in accordance with the Joint Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures which can be accessed here: <https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/adults/>

At each stage of escalation professionals must ensure that appropriate records are made in the Adult at Risk's case records. This should include the concern, action taken to resolve, agreed actions from resolution process, timescales and the outcome. This should be clear, evidenced and factual. Appendix 2 provides a template to assist with recording the disagreement. Each agency should record and store escalation process documentation in accordance with its own information governance guidance.

3. Stages of Resolution

Stage One: Discussion between workers

The people who disagree should have a discussion to try and resolve the issue. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be a telephone conversation or a face to face meeting. It should be recognised that differences in status and/ or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported. The more senior worker may wish to encourage the more junior worker to seek support.

It should be noted in the Adult at Risk's care records that a professional disagreement has occurred and the Professional Disagreement and Escalation Process has been commenced.

Stage Two: Discussion between Line Managers

If the issue is not resolved and concerns remain, the worker should contact their supervisor or line manager. A discussion should be held to consider the issue being raised. This should include how the differences of opinion can be addressed and how resolution might be obtained.

The supervisor or line manager should contact their respective counterpart to try to negotiate an appropriate way forward. This could involve a professionals meeting if deemed appropriate.

Stage Three: Discussion between Operational/Senior Managers

If the issue is not resolved at stage two, the supervisor or line manager should escalate to their manager and notify their lead safeguarding representative. The two senior managers from each organisation must liaise with each other and attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion. At this stage the senior managers or lead safeguarding representatives should consider requesting a meeting of relevant BSAB multi-agency safeguarding leads to assist with obtaining resolution to the disagreement.

If after convening a meeting of safeguarding leads disagreement remains, escalation should continue through the appropriate tiers of management in each organisation until the matter is resolved.

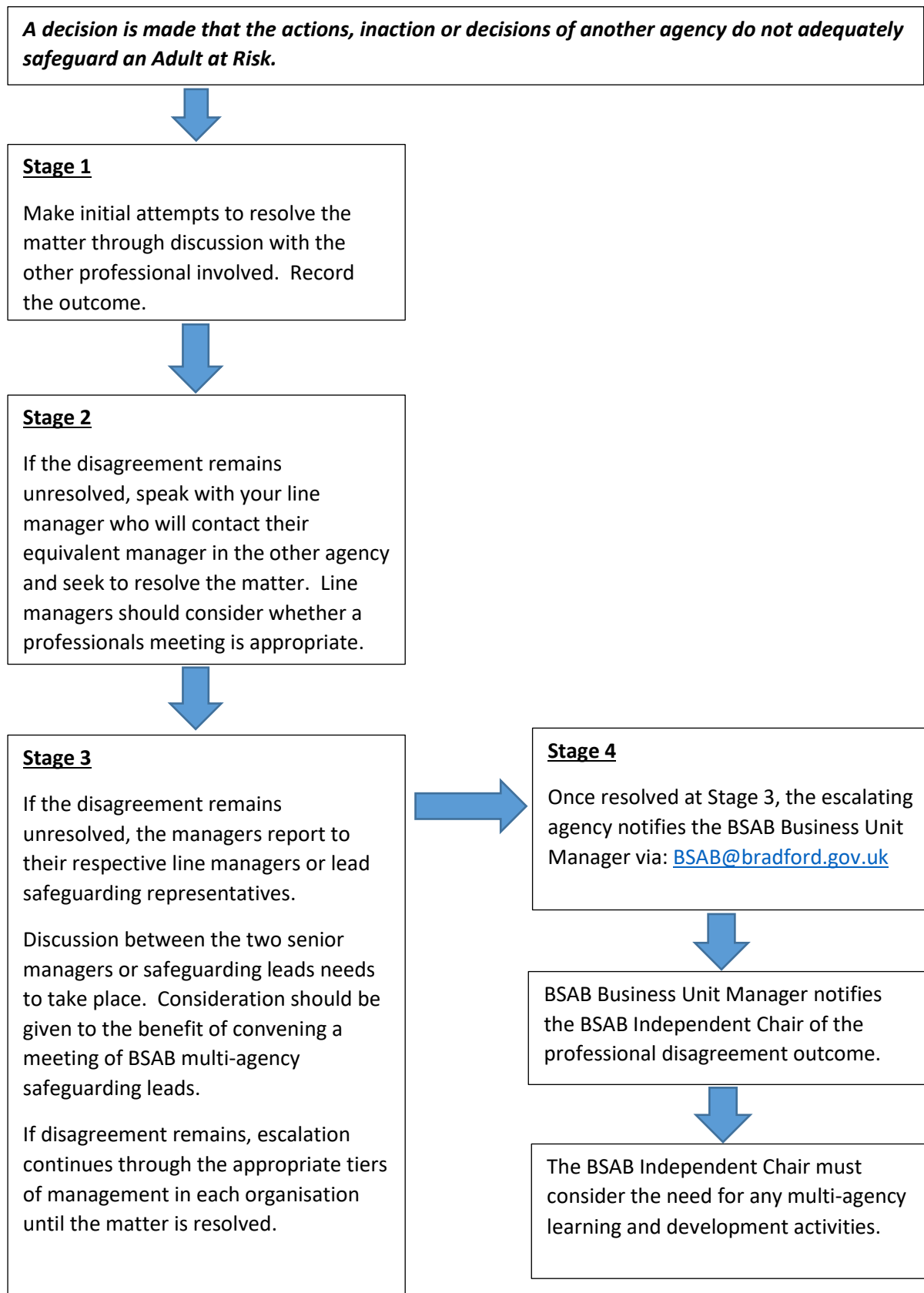
Stage Four: Notifying the BSAB Business Manager and BSAB Independent Chair.

Once the professional disagreement has been resolved the agency which commenced the disagreement process should notify the BSAB Business Unit Manager of the outcome. The Business Unit Manager will report the outcome to the BSAB Independent Chair.

The Independent Chair will decide whether any multi-agency learning can be taken from the disagreement and if so, decide on how this should be disseminated across the wider adult safeguarding partnership.

Appendix 1

Escalation procedure flow chart



Appendix 2

Record of Escalation

Recording template to be completed at each stage of escalation. A copy of the completed template must be saved to the Adult at Risk's case record or in accordance with the individual agency's information governance guidance.

Name of adult at risk:	
NHS number of adult at risk:	
Name and agency name of the person escalating the dispute:	
Email address and contact telephone number of person escalating the dispute:	
Name and agency name of the person dispute was escalated to:	
Summary of reason for dispute – <i>include views of all agencies concerned and the views of the adult at risk:</i>	
Agreed outcomes or actions if satisfactorily resolved or agreed next steps including escalation to next stage if unresolved:	
Stage at which resolution was achieved:	
Additional notes / information:	
Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix 3

Key contacts across the Bradford district safeguarding adults partnership

Correct on 04.01.2023

Organisation name	Contact person	Job role	Telephone number	Email address
ANHSFT	Debbie Fox	Assistant Chief Nurse Patient Safety & Head of Safeguarding	01535 294018 01535 292113 01535 292114	deborah.fox10@nhs.net
ANHSFT	Sophie Wilson	Lead Professional, Safeguarding Adults	01535 292113 01535 292114	sophie.wilson27@nhs.net anhsft.safeguardingadults@nhs.net
BDCFT	Mandy Robinson	Head of Safeguarding	07766 821036	Amanda.robinson@bdct.nhs.uk
BTHNHSFT	Karen Dawber	Chief Nurse	01274 382407	karen.dawber@bthft.nhs.uk
BTHNHSFT	Sarah Turner	Assistant Chief Nurse Vulnerable Adults/ Safeguarding Adults	01274 366063	sarah.turner@bthft.nhs.uk
CBMDC	Rob Studzinski	Service Manager Adult Safeguarding	01274 431077 01274 437563	Rob.studzinski@bradford.gov.uk
ICB, Bradford District and Craven	Designated Nurses	Safeguarding Adult Team	01274 237645	Nhsba.safeguarding@nhs.net

