

Resolution and Escalation Policy

Resolution of professional disagreements for partners who work across Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults

This policy supports partner agencies within the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership (TWSP) to resolve professional disagreements promptly and constructively. It applies to safeguarding unborn children, children, young people, adults with care and support needs, carers and families, and should be read in conjunction with the Telford and Wrekin Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, which set out how partner agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and protect adults at risk.

The aim is to ensure that safeguarding decisions are timely, evidence-based and focused on the safety, wellbeing, rights and lived experience of those involved. In line with the principles and expectations outlined within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, professionals should seek resolution at the lowest appropriate level but escalate concerns immediately where delay, increased risk, discrimination or failure to meet statutory duties may affect outcomes.



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If a child or adult is thought to be at immediate risk of harm the designated safeguarding lead within the agency identifying the concern should be informed immediately and appropriate action by the practitioner.

1.The Role of Professional and Partner Agencies

Professionals must:

- Communicate openly and respectfully with partner agencies.
- Maintain professional curiosity and respectfully challenge information, decisions or practice where safeguarding concerns remain.
- Share information appropriately and work collaboratively.
- Ensure the voice, wishes, feelings and lived experience of the individual are considered.
- Resolve disagreements at the earliest opportunity.
- Record decisions, actions, responsible persons and outcomes.
- Challenge practice that may compromise safety, wellbeing, equality or safeguarding outcomes.

- Identify and challenge discrimination, racism, disproportionality, stereotyping and barriers to accessing services where these may adversely affect safeguarding outcomes.
- Be aware of any bias.
- Escalate concerns where resolution is not achieved or risk increases.

2. Resolution or Escalation?

Use Resolution when:	Use Escalation when:
• The disagreement can be addressed through discussion.	• Protection may be delayed.
• Risk is low and not increasing.	• Risk is increasing.
• Actions can be completed without affecting safety.	• Statutory duties are not being fulfilled.
• Clarification is required regarding thresholds, roles or information sharing.	• Safeguarding processes are not progressing appropriately.
	• Discrimination, bias or barriers to services may affect outcomes.
	• Previous attempts at resolution have failed.

Professionals should seek to resolve disagreements at the lowest appropriate level through open, respectful and timely discussion, provided this does not compromise safety, wellbeing, timeliness, lawful practice or safeguarding outcomes. Resolution should focus on achieving positive outcomes through collaboration, clarification and professional challenge. Concerns relating to discrimination, racism, inequality, disproportionality, stereotyping, professional bias or barriers to accessing services should be addressed and escalated where they may affect safeguarding outcomes.

All discussions, decisions, rationale, actions and timescales must be clearly recorded, with management oversight provided where appropriate. Where resolution is not achieved, risk increases, or safeguarding concerns require a higher level of intervention, practitioners must escalate concerns without delay in accordance with this policy.

Escalation should be used where attempts to resolve concerns have been unsuccessful, or where the seriousness of the concern requires immediate action. This includes circumstances where professional disagreement may delay protection, reduce oversight, increase risk, compromise wellbeing, undermine effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, or result in statutory duties, policies or timescales not being met. The safety, wellbeing and rights of the unborn, child, young person or adult must remain the

primary consideration throughout the resolution and escalation process.

Regardless of the level at which concerns are addressed, all actions, decisions, outcomes and plans must be clearly recorded within the individual's record and reflect the urgency of the concern.

3. Escalation Examples

Area	Examples
Decision-making	Closure of involvement, safeguarding planning, risk management
Thresholds	Concerns that safeguarding thresholds have/have not been met
Safeguarding processes	Refusal or delay in undertaking safeguarding enquiries or meetings
Agency responsibilities	Disputes over lead agency or professional responsibilities
Delays	Failure to complete agreed actions within required timeframes.
Information sharing	Barriers to lawful information sharing
Consent and capacity	Disagreements affecting safeguarding outcomes
Placements and care settings	Unclear safeguarding accountability within a placement or care setting.
Equality and inclusion	Concerns about discrimination, bias or unequal access to services

4. TWSP Escalation Process

Professionals should seek to resolve disagreements at the earliest opportunity and, in the majority of cases, within 10 working days. Most concerns should be resolved through the initial stages of this process. However, where concerns remain unresolved, the issue may progress through the formal escalation pathway. The cumulative timescales set out within each stage represent the maximum expected duration and should be accelerated where safeguarding risks are ongoing or increasing.

Stage No.	Parties involved	Process – please ensure minimum recording standards, as stated in point 2 above, are included throughout	Duration	Cumulative Duration
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1	Practitioners	Upon disagreement in relation to the safeguarding needs of a child, young person or adult, in the first instance the practitioner from the other partner agency should raise the matter with the responsible practitioner verbally and in writing within 2 working days of the disagreement or receipt of a decision. The Partnership Team should also be copied into this correspondence via emailing partnerships@telford.gov.uk so that they are able to monitor usage of this policy and have oversight of any trends and themes.	2 days	2 days
		The practitioner should provide clear evidence-based reasons for their disagreement. The receiving partner agency must read and review the particular case file. They must speak to the disputing practitioner and attempt to find a mutually agreeable way forward within 3 working days. Where a resolution is reached, the responsible practitioner will advise the partner agency of the outcome in writing (i.e. email) within a further 2 working days. WHEN ANY PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERS A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR ADULT IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM, THEN THE INDIVIDUAL MUST ENSURE THEIR CONCERNS ARE ESCALATED ON <u>THE SAME WORKING DAY</u> USING ESTABLISHED SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES.	5 days	7 days
2	Service leads/Named Safeguarding	If the receiving partner agency practitioner and the disputing practitioner are unable to resolve the disagreement following exploration of the facts, each	4 days	11 days

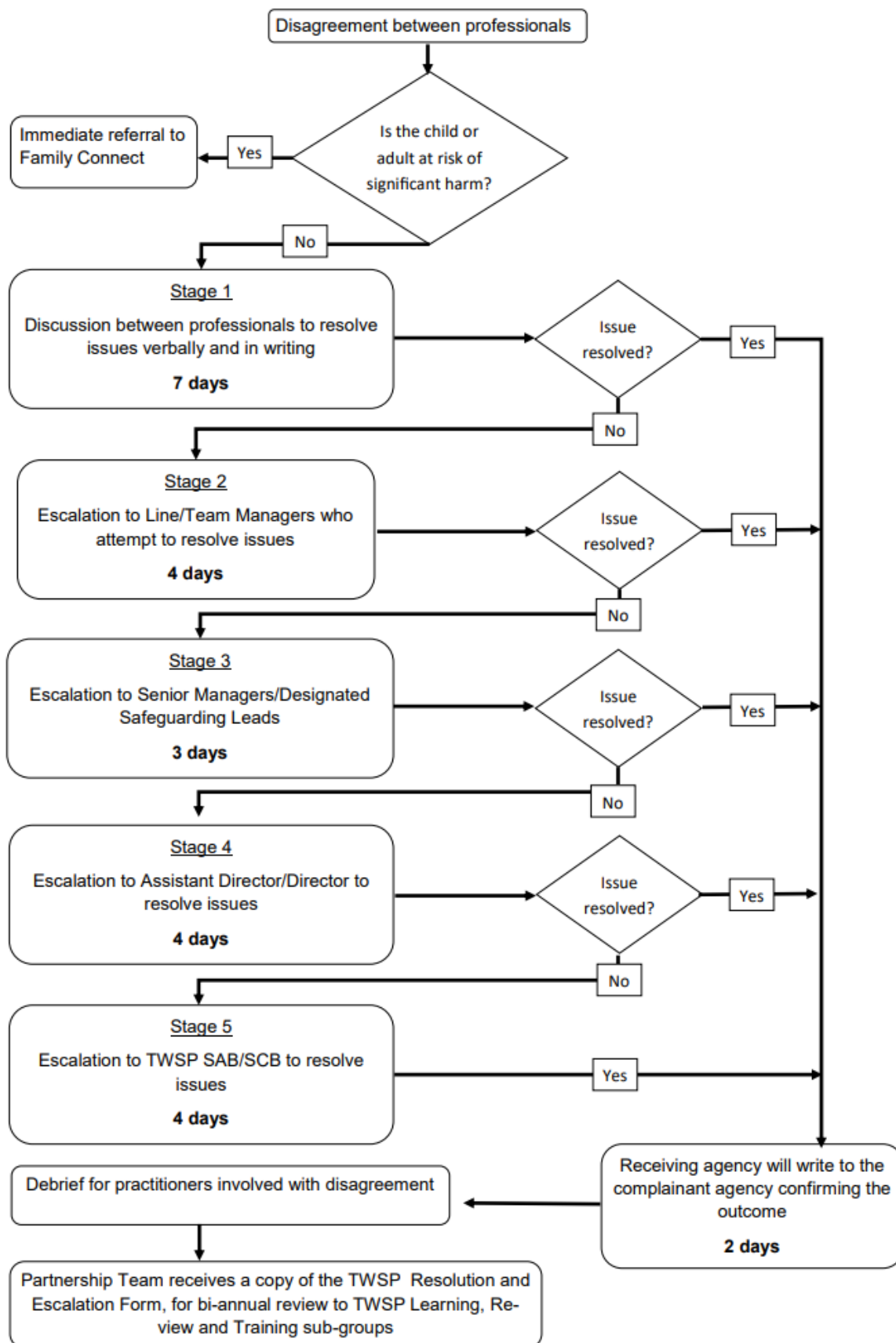
	Professionals ie: Named Nurses for Safeguarding Children / Team Managers/ Police Sergeant	practitioner should raise their concerns with their respective manager, who after consultation with their safeguarding leads should attempt to resolve the differences within 2 working days. If agreement is reached, the receiving partner agency will write to the disputing partner agency confirming the outcome within a further 2 working days.		
3	Senior Managers/Designated Safeguarding Leads/ Chief Inspector	If agreement cannot be reached following discussions between the line managers, the issue must be referred in writing, using the TWSP Resolution and Escalation Form (Appendix 3) within 24 hours to the relevant senior manager or other designated professional. The relevant managers should engage in dialogue within 2 working days to resolve the issue. A form must be completed and submitted.	3 days	14 days
4	Assistant Director/Director, Delegated Safeguarding Partners ie: Chief Nursing Officer/ Police Superintendent	Where a resolution is still not agreed after Stage 3, the service/senior manager will raise the disagreement within a further 2 working days with their partner agency or sector's TWSP representative. Their TWSP representative (or a senior manager delegated by the TWSP rep) will then write to their equivalent in the partner agency that is the subject of the dispute and meet within a further 2 working days to seek agreement on an appropriate way forward. Exceptional Circumstances TWSP expects that professional disputes will be resolved within the first 3 stages of the process set out above,	4 days	18 days

		however, it is recognised that there may be occasions when some issues will remain unresolved at the end of stage 3 above. Where this is the case, a referral should be made for the attention of the TWSP, who will mediate the activities through to a resolution and inform relevant professional bodies if appropriate, i.e. Care Quality Commission Home Concerns.		
5	TWSP Safeguarding Children or Adult Board (as appropriate)	In exceptional circumstances only, where the matter remains unresolved and the concerns of the complaining agency persist, the Director of this partners agency should write immediately and within no more than 2 working days, to the TWSP Safeguarding Adults Board or Safeguarding Childrens Board Manager, via the TWSP Partnership email address partnerships@telford.gov.uk For Safeguarding Adults Board escalations, the Independent Chair will be notified of all Stage 5 referrals and will determine the most appropriate mechanism for facilitating resolution and/or securing appropriate assurance. This may include requesting further information, convening a meeting of relevant senior leaders, facilitating independent challenge, or referring matters to the Safeguarding Adults Board where strategic oversight is required. The TWSP Safeguarding Adults Board or Safeguarding Children's Board Manager will seek written representation initially, and may request a meeting with those involved at all levels of service delivery to seek their views and solutions to the concerns raised. The Safeguarding Adults Board or Safeguarding Children Partnership will provide independent scrutiny, strategic challenge and oversight of the issues raised and seek to secure a senior-level resolution and agreed way forward between the agencies	7 days	25 days

		involved. Any recommendations and actions arising will be communicated to the relevant senior leaders within partner organisations, who retain responsibility and accountability for operational decision-making and statutory duties. Alternatively, the TWSP Safeguarding Adults Board or Safeguarding Childrens Board Manager will identify a Board member from an uninvolved agency to chair a meeting of the most senior managers with operational responsibility for the case. This meeting will review the issues at hand and provide a final opportunity for the involved agencies to ensure that there is a full understanding of the issues before recommendations and an agreed way forward are confirmed. The chair of this meeting will report back to the TWSP Safeguarding Adults Board or Safeguarding Children's Board. If through the mechanism described, the Safeguarding Children's Board cannot resolve the issues at hand, then the matter will be escalated to the Lead Safeguarding Partners. The Lead Safeguarding Partners will identify an appropriate lead who will chair a meeting to consider the matter and reach a decision. The Lead Safeguarding Partner will report back to the next Lead Safeguarding Partners meeting.		
6	Debrief for practitioners involved with the dispute	It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.		
7	End of the process	At the end of the process, once the Resolution and Escalation Referral Forms have been completed by the senior manager/DSL involved in seeking a		

		resolution, a copy should be sent to the TWSP Partnership Team, who in consultation with the TWSP Adult Learning, Review and Training (ARLT) and Safeguarding Children Quality Performance and Development (QPD) Sub-groups will undertake a bi-annual review. The Partnership Team will undertake a bi-annual analysis of escalation activity and provide assurance reports to both the Safeguarding Adults Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership. Reports will include: • Number and source of escalations • Agencies involved • Timeliness of resolution • Outcomes achieved • Recurring themes or patterns • Examples of positive practice and learning • Any systemic, strategic or inter-agency concerns requiring Board attention This information will be used to support continuous improvement, identify emerging safeguarding issues and inform partnership learning and development activity Where analysis identifies recurring themes, repeated agency involvement or emerging partnership risks, the Partnership Team may refer these matters to the relevant Board, subgroup or partnership governance forum for further scrutiny and assurance.		
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5. TWSP Resolution and Escalation Pathway



6. Resolution and Escalation Referral Form

Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership



Resolution and Escalation Referral Form

FORMAL ESCALATION FORM (to be used from Stage 3 only and sent to the relevant senior manager or other designated professional)

Client Reference Number (if applicable):		Date:	
Name of Individual:			
Date of Birth:		NHS Number:	
Agency/Team:			
Named GP and Surgery:			
Summary of Concerns, including the specific difference/s which has resulted in utilising the Escalation process: (It is important that you provide information that details how you have made every effort to resolve this matter at a local level within Stages 1 & 2)			
Requested Action:			
Response:			

Date:	Signature:
Resolution of Issues:	
Date:	Signature:
Actions taken to resolve the professional disagreement:	
Date:	Signature:

7. Agency Safeguarding Leads Contact Details

Agency	Role	Contact Details
CAFCASS	Service Manager	07768 728467
Family Connect / Emergency Duty Team	Safeguarding Hub Executive Director of Childrens Services(Designated Safeguarding Partner for Childrens Social Care)	01952 385385 / EDT - 01952 676500
Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust	Head of Strategic Safeguarding	01785 895629
Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust	Lead Nurse for Safeguarding Children	01952 641222 ext 4195
Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust	Head of Adult Safeguarding	01743 261000 ext 3859
Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt	Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Young People	01691 404459 07769329384
Shropshire Community Health Trust	Head of Safeguarding	07500443231 07794238303
Telford & Wrekin Council	Director, Children's Safeguarding and Family Support	01952 385723
	Director Education and Skills	01952 380800
	Director Adult Social Care: Adult Social Care	01952 383002
NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Board	Chief Nursing Officer (Health Delegated Safeguarding Partner)	01952 580417

	Designated Safeguarding Leads and Designated Nurse for Children In Care. Designated GP for Safeguarding Children Shropshire Telford and Wrekin Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children Shropshire Telford and Wrekin	01952 580300 01952 583000 07779119087
The Probation Service	Head of Service	01952 984464
West Mercia Police	Detective Superintendent, Public Protection, Crime & Vulnerability (Designated Safeguarding Partner for West Mercia Police)	101
West Midlands Ambulance Service	Safeguarding Manager	wmas.safeguarding@wmas.nhs.uk
Wrekin Housing Group	Neighbourhood Manager	01952 217100
Youth Offending Team	Head of Service	01952 385963
Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership	Safeguarding Adults Board Manager Safeguarding Childrens Board Manager	Partnerships@telford.gov.uk