



Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board

Multi-Agency Escalation Policy

First edition:	May 2016
Reviewed:	October 2017
Next review due:	October 2019

Introduction

This policy explains how concerns and cases should be escalated to the Lambeth Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and statutory Director of Children's Services (DCS) and how any issues with the application of thresholds should be resolved. It is for use by all partners in relation to inter-agency issues so the same timescales and escalation period should apply across all agencies (although it should be noted that the structural hierarchies may be slightly different in different organisations).

This policy has drawn on and developed in a Lambeth context based on the escalation policies of high performing authorities. It will be next be reviewed in October 2019.

Policy

In cases where professionals consider a child to be at immediate risk of significant harm, concerns must be escalated to their manager/supervisor and/or safeguarding lead on the same working day.

In cases where there are concerns, but the child is not considered to be at an immediate risk of significant harm, professionals should in the first instance, attempt to resolve differences or concerns through discussion and/or by meeting with the relevant practitioner/agency within 5 working days or a within a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less).

At no time should professional disagreement detract from ensuring that a child is safeguarded. The child's welfare and safety is paramount and all professionals and agencies are responsible for communicating such concerns as per the guidance provided in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2015\)](#) and the [London Child Protection Procedures](#).

The person raising a concern must always record the following information and a copy of it must be kept on the records of the child subject of the concern. When the concern is escalated, this written information must be provided

- Name of the child
- Name of practitioner and agency with whom there is a concern
- Brief description of nature of concern and action already taken to resolve the issue
- Outcome sought

Any agreed outcome must be placed on the person's records.

If the professionals are unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily, the concern must be escalated to the practitioner's line manager within 24 hours and a resolution should be achieved within 5 working days or a within a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less).

If agreement cannot be reached following discussions between the practitioner's line managers, the issue must be escalated to the relevant safeguarding leads for the agencies concerned within 24 hours.

The safeguarding leads must consider a strategy to resolve the matter and will communicate the outcome to the individuals/agencies involved. If a satisfactory resolution to the concern cannot be achieved, the safeguarding leads will escalate the matter to the Head of Service within their agency within 5 working days or a within a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less).

In the unlikely event that the issue cannot be resolved by the steps described above and/or the discussion raises significant policy issues, the Head of Service will refer the matter to the Assistant Director or Director of Children's Services and the LSCB for resolution within 5 working days or less depending on urgency.

Professionals involved in the conflict resolution process must keep contemporaneous records of any intra and inter agency discussions and actions taken and ensure that this is recorded on the child's file, together with any other written communication and information.

Circumstances where the policy is over-ridden

There are certain instances where the escalation policy described here should be over-ridden and the DCS should be made immediately aware by whoever first comes to know. These are instances of:

- Child death
- Life changing injury
- Abduction of child on CP plan or in care
- Immediate threat of judicial review; or
- Imminent threat of media attention

Additional Notes

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with the relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

Contact details for Children's Social Care (as of October 2017):

CSC Professionals number: 0207 926 3100

Naeema Sarkar, Assistant Director (Quality Assurance)
nsarkar@lambeth.gov.uk, Tel: 020 7926 5310

Mark Stancer, Director Children's Social Care
mstancer@lambeth.gov.uk , Tel: 020 7926 0144

Appendix 1: Multi-Agency Escalation Policy Flowchart illustrates the process of escalating a safeguarding concern.

