



## Escalation Policy for resolving professional disagreements between workers when working with children and families

<b>Status</b>	<b>Statutory</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	Three years
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### 1. Introduction

Effective working together depends on an open, transparent approach including the ability to challenge each other, clarity of roles and responsibilities and underpinning values of genuine partnership. Any disagreements within this working relationship need to be resolved to the satisfaction of workers and agencies in order to maintain this effective working together. In order to support this effective partnership we have adopted the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Escalation Policy April 2014.

This policy is intended to ensure partner agencies have a quick and straightforward means of resolving professional differences of view in specific cases. Examples of potential disputes include:

- Whether a case meets the threshold for Section 47 enquiries to be initiated
- Respective roles and responsibilities
- Whether a case conference should be convened
- The level of communication

At no time must professional disagreement detract from ensuring a child is safeguarded - the child's welfare and safety must remain the paramount concern throughout. Any unresolved issues between workers should therefore be escalated on the same working day with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.

This document must be read in conjunction with "The Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) Threshold Document", which provides partner agencies with clear criteria for taking action and providing the right help at the right time to children and young people and their families in order to effectively meet their needs.

## 2. Resolving Disagreements

The process for resolving professional disagreement should be as simple as possible - the aim being to resolve difficulties between agencies quickly and as close as possible to the point they arose.

When there is a disagreement over a significant issue which impacts on the safety and welfare of a child or young person, the respective workers must be clear about what the problem is and what it is they want to achieve. Consultation between the workers and their line managers should take place to assist the worker(s) to clarify these issues. This process in itself may help to resolve the disagreement.

### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Workers may not feel confident about pursuing and resolving a disagreement because of differences in status and/or experience and may need the support of a line manager in achieving a successful resolution.

If the disagreement is not resolved between workers following consultation, the issue should be referred by each worker to their respective line manager/supervisor for safeguarding, who should then discuss the concerns between themselves and attempt to achieve an agreement.

If professional disagreements remain unresolved following discussions between respective managers, the dispute must be referred to the WSCB representative for each agency for resolution.

If the issue remains unresolved and /or the discussion has raised significant policy issues, it should be referred to the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board and Partnerships Manager, who will offer mediation and determine a course of action. This will include reporting the issue to the WSCB Chair.

A clear record of discussions and actions must be kept at all stages, by all parties. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreements and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

## 3. Timescales

The safety of a child or young person must not be compromised by using the Escalation Policy. In most cases it is expected that the matter will be resolved by partners escalating the matter with managers or supervisors the same day. If the matter is escalated to the WSCB representative and finally to the WSCB and Partnerships Manager this process should still be completed and resolved the same day.

If the matter takes longer than a day to resolve, the reasons for this should be recorded with the agency escalating the matter. The Manager for that agency must ensure that the safety of a child or young person has not been compromised by the delay.

It is expected that all issues will be resolved within five working days at the maximum.

#### **4. Following the use of the Escalation Policy**

When the issue is resolved, any learning points should be identified and referred to the Warrington Safeguarding Children Board and Partnerships Manager for consideration by the relevant WSCB subgroup to inform future learning.

It may also be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

## Appendix 1

**NOTE:**

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