



Joint Professional Resolution and Escalation Protocol

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SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter importantly deals with how professionals and agencies working with adults and families resolve disagreements and disputes in a way that is timely and does not negatively impact on the day to day working with adults and their safeguarding. This policy is designed for use in the event of cross-agency disagreement. Disagreements between professionals within the same agency should consult their internal Escalation Protocol.

AMENDMENT

This chapter was reviewed and amended between February and July 2018. At Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Operational Board in May 2018, members agreed to develop a multi-agency, joint protocol between Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB), Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) Domestic Abuse Priority Core Group. This protocol for LSAB has been adapted from LSCB's established protocol with relevant safeguarding adult language and governance.

1. Purpose

This is a good practice multiagency protocol designed to provide a clear process and timescales by which people working with adults and their families in Lincolnshire can provide professional challenge to colleagues from another agency and effectively escalate concerns regarding an adult or adults in a timely manner.

2. Background

Partnership and accountability are two of the six key principles that underpin all adult safeguarding work as stated in the guidance for the Care Act (2014).

Good practice includes the expectation that there is professional and constructive challenge amongst colleagues within agencies and between agencies. Where a member of staff from any agency is concerned that concerns or agreed actions regarding an adult are not being addressed or acted upon in a timely and consistent manner, it is expected that the escalation protocol should be used to reach a satisfactory outcome that is in the best interests of the adult. Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring robust feedback and completion of recommendations or planned actions. Where these actions are not completed or not within timescales this should be explained at reviews and a new or alternative plan devised with timeframes.

3. Professional Disagreement

At various times during the joint involvement and management of a case, professional differences of opinion and judgement emerge. The following guidance is designed to assist agencies and their staff in resolving such differences. There are a range of situations in which professional disagreements arise, however they are most likely to arise as a result of differing views of threshold eligibility, a lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities, requirements for multi-agency meetings, and the need for action and communication.

Examples are:

- Disagreements over the handling of referrals between agencies can impact negatively on positive working relationships and consequently on the ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults. There are differing views in respect of whether an adult meets the criteria for a safeguarding concern form;
- There is disagreement about the need for and attendance at a Strategy meeting;
- Disagreement in relation to the appropriate setting for an adult with multiple care and support needs;
- There is difference of opinion with regard to an adult's care plan;
- Disagreements over the outcome of assessments;
- A professional is concerned about the action or inaction of another professional in relation to an adult;
- There is disagreement over the sharing of information and or provision of services by an agency;
- Disagreement in respect of the outcome of a medical examination;
- An agency is not in agreement with another agency's decision or reasoning to close a case;
- Issues of transition for example from Children's to Adult services
- Where one worker or agency considers another worker or agency has not completed an agreed action for no acceptable or understood reason;
- Other issues that may be of concern regarding the conduct of a case by another agency, such as the timeliness or priority given to tasks, etc.

At various times during the joint involvement or management of a case, professional differences of opinion and/or judgement emerge, the protocol will assist agencies and staff in resolving such differences.

4. Core Principles

- All staff and agencies have a duty to take action to escalate concern if they believe there is a risk that relates to the immediate safety or wellbeing of an adult;
- All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their workers are supported and know how to appropriately escalate concerns and disagreements about an adult's well-being;
- When professional concerns/disagreements arise it increases the likelihood of detracting the focus away from that of safeguarding the adult. It is paramount that during any professional disagreement, the safeguarding and wellbeing of the adult at risk, as well as their wishes and desired outcomes remain the priority throughout. It is also for this reason that it is imperative that the matter is resolved in a timely manner.
- Where there is a disagreement about care arrangements, it is good practice for the adult to remain in the care setting until the escalation has occurred and has been resolved. However, in order to ensure the adult's needs can be fully met, and that an adult is not placed in an inappropriate setting for longer than is necessary, all Partners should ensure that priority is given to undertaking the relevant assessments; thereby facilitating facilitate safe, appropriate and timely discharge;
- At every point all agencies' staff should ensure discussions and outcomes are recorded in the agencies records and in the adult's file;

- Care should be taken to agree a way of managing conflict, which allows adults and families to understand the issues under discussion;
- This protocol is not designed to replace the LSAB member organisations complaints processes and should not be used when there is a complaint about a specific professional in situations where the relevant organisation's complaints procedure or allegations procedure will apply;
- This protocol should be read and utilised alongside the agency's and LSAB procedures.

5. Escalation to Resolution Process

See [Appendix 1: Escalation to Resolution Process Flowchart](#) – please note that this link is to Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board website as this is a joint protocol and the same flowchart is to be followed for safeguarding adults. For safeguarding adults the content of the flowchart differs on two occasions: where 'LSCB' is referred to within the flowchart, this is to be read as 'LSAB' and during Step 4, learning points from non-urgent cases can be referred to the next LSAB Review and Learning group.

Escalation can be via telephone, face-to-face, email or a meeting. All escalation should be recorded in single agency records to ensure that the procedure is effective, transparent and for LSAB auditing purposes.

Step 1

Direct Professional to Professional Discussion

Differences of opinion or judgement should be discussed amongst frontline professionals to attempt to achieve a shared understanding and agree a local resolution, in line with the plan, or to ensure a plan is developed if needed. Care should be taken to agree a way of managing conflict, which allows adults and families to understand the issues under discussion. This must occur immediately with an acknowledgement and a mutually agreed plan of action should be developed detailing how this will be resolved, including clear timescales within 48 hours (2 working days) of the initial discussion.

Step 2

Direct Manager to Manager Discussion

If Step 1 does not resolve the issue then each professional should discuss the issue with their line manager or safeguarding supervisor. The line manager should review the concerns and ensure that they are justified and meet the purpose of this protocol. The line manager should then liaise with the other professional's line manager in an attempt to reach a resolution. Consultation with senior managers within each organisation can be used if this would be felt to assist resolution. The discussion between managers must occur within 5 working days of step 1, with a mutually agreed plan of action developed including clear timescales.

Step 3

Direct SLO to SLO Discussion

If Step 1 and 2 do not reach a mutually agreeable resolution then the agencies' Senior Liaison Officer (SLO) should be contacted immediately to liaise with the other agency's SLO or assist as appropriate to resolve the conflict. A mutually agreeable plan of action including timescales should be in place within 48 hours (2 working days). LSAB SLO contact details are available within Appendix 1.

Step 4

a) Urgent resolution required- LSAB Independent Chaired Meeting

If the Senior Liaison Officer's cannot resolve the issue that is causing conflict between professionals and agencies then a meeting should be convened with an independent chair selected from the LSAB partner organisations where the agencies can discuss the case and conflict issue in a chaired and minuted meeting, with resolution being agreed and recorded. The meeting should take place asap with a date set within 24 hours of step 3.

b) Non-urgent and / or lessons learned

Senior Liaison Officers can advise that the learning points from a non-urgent case should be referred to the LSAB Review and Learning Group for interagency consideration. At this point the group may make recommendations for individual agencies to review performance and/or involvement, or for LSAB policy and procedural review and development.

Outside of Working Hours

All statutory agencies have an on call manager and director system. Where escalation requires urgent resolution and it is outside of Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm staff are advised to use the on call process.

Appendix 1: Escalation to Resolution Process Flowchart

[Click here](#) to view the Escalation to Resolution Process Flowchart

Appendix 2:

Lincolnshire County Council	County Manager for Adult Safeguarding
Boston Borough Council	Safeguarding Lead
East Lindsey District Council	Lead Officer for Safeguarding
North Kesteven District Council	Safeguarding Lead
South Kesteven District Council	Safeguarding Lead
West Lindsey District Council	Safeguarding Lead
Lincoln City Council	Safeguarding Lead
South Holland District Council	Safeguarding Lead
Diocese of Lincoln	Bishop's Safeguarding Advisor
HealthWatch Lincolnshire	Partnership and Development Manager
HumberSide Lincolnshire North Yorkshire CRC	Lead for Safeguarding Children and Adults
Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) Morton Hall	Centre Manager

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HMP Lincoln	Safeguarding Adults Lead
HMP North Sea Camp	Governor
Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue	Area Manager, Planning, Prevention and Protection.
Lincolnshire Police	Head of Public Protection Unit
Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Consultant Nurse Safeguarding and Mental Capacity
National Probation Service	Senior Probation Officer
South West Lincolnshire CCG	Head of Safeguarding Adults
United Lincolnshire Health Trust	Named Professional Adult Safeguarding
Lincolnshire Community Health Services	Head of Safeguarding

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
0.1	Michelle Morris	July 2018	First draft following request at May 2018 SAOB that LSAB's Escalation Policy be a joint tri-board policy following LSCB's equivalent policy.
0.2	Michelle Morris	October 2018	Following presentation at Partnership Board on 16.10.18. Changes requested: LSCB in Step 4 to amend to LSAB. Appendix 1 note.
1.2	Michelle Morris	February 2019	Approved as final version at LSAB Partnership Board on 12.02.19. following minor typo amendment.