Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Protocol

1. Safeguarding Lead (SL)

1.1. Each agency represented at the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) should have one SL, who should not be a member of the LSCB. They should be sufficiently senior within their agency structure to inform and influence decision making regarding concerns that emerge about practice. Ideally they would report directly into their agency representative on the LSCB, although different agency structures may not allow for this.

2. Their role in the context of safeguarding concerns

2.1. The primary role of the SL is to mediate with SL colleagues across other agencies in order to seek a consensual resolution to a concern/problem that has emerged that cannot be resolved at practitioner/front line management level between partner agencies.

2.2. If the concern cannot be resolved at the SL level then this protocol should facilitate/formalise the process to escalate to relevant LSCB members to negotiate a solution.

2.3. In exceptional cases that have not been resolved at that stage, the independent Chair of the LSCB should be notified.

3. What the role should not do/replace

3.1. The role should not replace any of the operational roles currently in place that facilitate child protection and safeguarding practices within agencies. The London Child Protection Procedures (LCPP) remain the overarching policy and protocol framework that all professionals should be implementing in their practice.

3.2. The SL will not replace the role of line managers in the child protection process. For example, a school's Child Protection Co-ordinator should be the key source of child protection support for staff in that setting. In health settings, practitioners should continue to liaise with their named child protection adviser.

4. The process (see flow chart)

4.1. The first step for the practitioner should be to liaise directly with the colleague whose practice has given rise to the concern to seek resolution at this stage. Discussions should be clearly recorded, along with the agreed solution.

4.2. If a practitioner remains concerned about a practice issue, despite several attempts to resolve the matter directly with their colleague, they should inform them that they will be discussing the issue with their own manager and/or child protection adviser.

4.3. The practitioner and manager/child protection advisor should agree a conflict resolution strategy and record the details of this agreement.

4.4. The manager should inform the colleague and their line manager of any intention to refer to the SL should the issue not be resolved at this stage.

4.5. If this final attempt still fails to produce a satisfactory, cross agency consensus, the SL of the referring agency should be contacted by the practitioner by phone to discuss the matter.

4.6. The SL (referring agency) should complete the 'Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Referral Form': section A (Appendix B) in collaboration with the practitioner and contact the SL in the relevant agency (receiving agency) to negotiate a resolution. This may involve the receiving SL liaising with the Manager/Child Protection Adviser to seek a resolution and/or may also involve the referring SL going back to the original referrer to re-negotiate their position.

4.7. The actions agreed between the SLs and the timescales for completion should be recorded in section B of the 'Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Referral Form' and a copy sent or emailed to the receiving SL.

4.8. At the end of the agreed period for completion the receiving SL should contact the referring SL who should record the outcome in section B of the 'Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Referral Form'

4.9. For the vast majority of cases that have reached this stage, the goal is for the matter to be resolved at this level. However, if a resolution cannot be sought then the referral, the actions and the outcomes template will need to be forwarded by the referring SL to the LSCB members of the respective agencies. The same principle as above will apply in seeking a resolution, and finally if this is still not achievable this should go to the Chair of the LSCB. It is anticipated that this would be the very last resort.

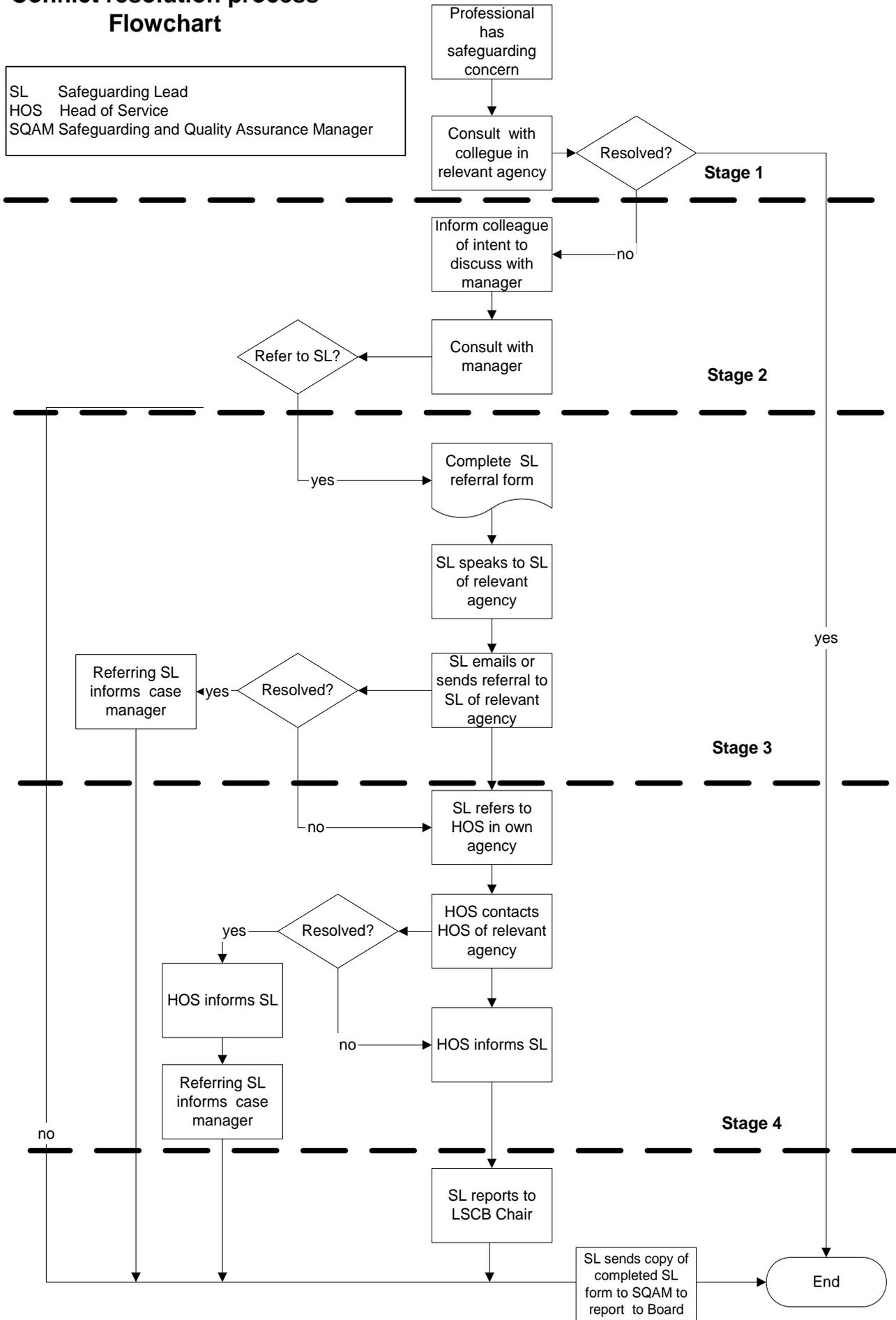5. ***Examples of when the SL should be consulted***

5.1. The following examples demonstrate when a SL should be consulted. This is not an exhaustive list but should be seen as a guide to the types of issues that would justify liaising with the SL:

a) persistent refusal by one agency to liaise with another regarding a safeguarding matter for example;

b) Children's Services not contacting a professional referrer after several attempts have been made by the referrer;

c) schools' staff consistently not providing information to social worker as part of assessment within child protection process;

d) regular non attendance at meetings.

e) inappropriate application of the London Child Protection Procedures

NOTE-the normal child protection procedures should be followed with supporting evidence that several attempts to address the issue have not met with a satisfactory response.

Conflict resolution process Flowchart

SL   Safeguarding Lead
HOS   Head of Service
SQAM Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Manager

Professional has safeguarding concern

Consult with collegue in relevant agency

Resolved?

Stage 1

no

Inform colleague of intent to discuss with manager

Consult with manager

Refer to SL?

Stage 2

yes

Complete SL referral form

SL speaks to SL of relevant agency

Resolved?

Referring SL informs case manager

SL emails or sends referral to SL of relevant agency

Stage 3

no

SL refers to HOS in own agency

yes

Resolved?

HOS contacts HOS of relevant agency

HOS informs SL

no

HOS informs SL

Referring SL informs case manager

Stage 4

no

SL reports to LSCB Chair

yes

SL sends copy of completed SL form to SQAM to report to Board

End

Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Referral form

Section A
To be completed by referring SL in consultation with practitioner

Name of practitioner in receiving agency	
Receiving agency	
Receiving Safeguarding Lead	
Date of referral	
Name of practitioner in referring agency	
Referring agency	
Referring Safeguarding Lead	
Names of children concerned	**DOB**

Brief description of concern	
Outcome sought	

Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Agreement form

Section B
To be completed by referring SL

Action Pan (agreed by both SLs)			
Issue	**Agreed action**	**By whom?**	**When?**

Outcome (*to be completed at end of agreed time scales*)

Resolved? ☐ yes ☐ no Notify HOS? ☐ yes ☐ no

Comments: