



# Barking & Dagenham Safeguarding Children Board (BDSCB)

## Conflict Resolution and Escalation Protocol

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## **1. Introduction:**

- 1.1 The aim of this protocol is to enhance partnership working across Barking and Dagenham, promoting an open and honest approach between agencies.
- 1.2 Occasionally situations arise where professional disagreements occur. Disagreements can impact in a negative way on relationships and consequently on the ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children and Young People.
- 1.3 The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount. Where professionals consider practice by other professionals is placing a child at risk, they must act swiftly, assertively and ensure that they challenge in line with statutory guidance [Working together to safeguard Children 2018](#) and [London Child Protection Procedures, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition 2017](#).

## **2. Context**

- 2.1 Each agency represented at the Barking & Dagenham Safeguarding Children Board (BDSCB) should have one Safeguarding Lead (SL), who should not be a member of the BDSCB. 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 BDSCB, although different agency structures may not allow for this.
- 2.2 The primary role of the SL is to mediate with SL colleagues across other agencies 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. They will not replace any operational roles currently in place that facilitate child protection and safeguarding practices within agencies.
- 2.3 Disagreements between practitioners can arise at any stage in safeguarding processes. The following examples are not an exhaustive list but should be a guide to the types of issues:
  - Concerns in relation to an agency's response to a safeguarding concern;
  - Inappropriate application of London Child Protection Procedures;
  - Roles and responsibilities; and
  - Practice/Case Management issues

- 2.4 If the concern cannot be resolved at the SL level, then this protocol should facilitate/formalise the process to escalate to relevant BDSCB members to negotiate a solution.
- 2.5 In exceptional cases where the issues have not been resolved at that stage, the Independent Chair of the BDSCB should be notified.
- 2.6 This protocol is not designed to replace the statutory complaints processes within individual agencies.

### **3. Process for Resolution (Appendix A)**

#### **3.1 Stage One: Discuss with worker**

- 3.1.1 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 **within 2 working days**.
- 3.1.2 The Receiving practitioner should review the information and liaise with the concerned professional, within **3 working days**.
- 3.1.3 Discussions should be clearly recorded, along with the agreed solution and relayed to all parties **within a further 2 working days**
- 3.1.4 The practitioner should inform their colleague of their intention to escalate, should the issue not be resolved.

#### **3.2 Stage Two: Escalate to Line Manager**

- 3.2.1 If a practitioner remains concerned about a practice issue, despite following stage one escalation, 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.
- 3.2.1 The practitioner and manager/child protection advisor should agree a conflict resolution strategy and record the details of this agreement **within 7 working days** or a timescale that protects the child from harm (an earlier resolution may be required where a baby is involved)
- 3.2.2 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.

### 3.3 **Stage Three:** Escalation to Safeguard Lead

3.3.1 If no satisfactory resolution has been sought in Stage two, the SL of the referring agency should be contacted by the practitioner by phone to discuss the matter **within 2 working days**.

3.3.2 The Safeguarding Lead from the referring agency, should complete the “*Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Form*” (Appendix B).

3.3.3 Actions agreed between the SLs and the timescales for completion, should be recorded within Section B of the form, and shared with the receiving SL.

3.3.4 At the end of the agreed period for completion, the receiving SL should contact the referring SL who should record the outcome within Section B of this form.

3.3.5 If there remains a disagreement, the expectation is that escalation continues through to Superintendent/Director/Designated Level in each organisation for the matter to be resolved. The respective agency member of the Barking & Dagenham Safeguarding Children Board (BDSCB) should be engaged in seeking resolution before the case is escalated to Stage four. It is anticipated that escalation to stage four would be the very last resort.

### 3.4 **Stage Four:** Resolution for BDSCB Chair

3.4.1 In the unlikely event that the professional disagreements remain unresolved, the matter must be referred to the Chair of the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Board.

3.4.2 The agency raising the dispute should email details through to the BDSCB Business Manager [elizabeth.winnett@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.winnett@lbbd.gov.uk)

3.4.3 The BDSCB is not an operational body and cannot direct the actions of partner agencies. However, the BDSCB as a body has a strong expectation that the recommendation of the BDSCB Chair will be acted upon.

## APPENDIX A: Escalation and Conflict resolution process Flowchart



- Make initial attempts to resolve the matter through discussion with the other professional involved.
- Record the outcome
- Resolved? - End of process
- Not resolved? - Escalate to Stage 2



- Inform colleague of intent to discuss with Manager
- Consult with Manager
- Conflict resolution strategy to be agreed and outcome recorded
- Resolved? - End of process
- Not resolved? - Escalate to Stage 3. Inform colleague and their Line Manager of intention to refer to Safeguarding Lead



- Safeguarding Lead from referring agency should make contact with practitioner
- Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Form to be completed
- Action agreed and form shared
- Outcome recorded and sent back to referring SL
- Escalation continues through appropriate management tiers within organisation
- Resolved? - End of process
- Not resolved? - Escalate to Stage 4. This should only occur once all other escalation methods have been exhausted



- Escalation to the BDSCB Chair to be made in writing to the BDSCB Business Manager

## APPENDIX B



### ***Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Referral form***

#### **Section A**

*To be completed by referring SL in consultation with practitioner*

<b>Receiving Agency</b>	
Name of Practitioner:	
Name of Agency:	
Name of Safeguarding Lead:	
<b>Referring Agency</b>	
Date of Referral:	
Name of Referrer:	
Agency of Referrer:	
Name of Safeguarding Lead:	

<b>Names of Children concerned</b>	<b>Date of birth</b>

**Provide a brief description of concern**

**Outcome sought**

**Safeguarding Lead Conflict Resolution Agreement form**

**Section B**

*To be completed by referring SL*

<b>Action Plan</b> <i>(to be agreed by both SLs)</i>				
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Agreed action</b>	<b>By whom?</b>	<b>By when?</b>	<b>Outcome</b> <i>To be completed at end of agreed timescales</i>

Resolved?    Yes    No   Notify HOS?    Yes    No

**Additional Comments:**