



Adult Safeguarding Escalation Policy

For the resolution of multi-agency professional differences

Version:	Draft v6 Final Draft
Date:	January 2021
Review Date:	June 2022
Document Author:	Victoria Guillaume
Document Owner:	Swindon Safeguarding Partnership

1. Introduction

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR), nationally and in Swindon, have highlighted the importance of professionals challenging decisions to ensure the best outcomes for adults with care and support needs who are at risk of or experiencing harm. In some cases, professionals may believe that they have challenged a decision, but the process of the review has evidenced that the challenge was not clear or not perceived as such.

Escalation is a process of **formally** challenging a decision made by another professional, group or organisation.

The purpose of this Escalation Policy is to explain what to do when a professional has a concern or a professional difference with another agency decision or action related to an adult at risk of or experiencing harm, and how to respond to that challenge in a timely and effective way.

When working with adults at risk, professional difference can be positive, respectful challenge allows for review and can foster creative ways of working and improve working relationships. Professionals should feel confident to share their views and raise any concerns without fear of retribution, criticism, or isolation.

The Swindon Safeguarding Partnership supports and promotes a culture of professional challenge and has devised this framework for timely and effective case resolutions. Working together effectively depends on resolving differences to the satisfaction of all practitioners and agencies involved, with a genuine commitment to partnership working. Swindon Safeguarding Partners are listed in **Appendix 3**.

This Policy does not replace the need for single agency dispute resolution procedures which should be in place to manage disputes on decisions between internal services, nor is it a substitute for reporting serious incidents that individual organisations have in place.

Examples, where the concerns about the adult at risk should prompt action, are given below. **This list is not exhaustive.**

- Dispute at the point of referral made by one agency to another due to differing opinions about thresholds/eligibility for services
- Concern about the action / inaction of another professional in relation to an adult at risk or non-compliance with safeguarding procedures
- Professional difference about decision making and a course of action to be taken, for example whether there should be a section 42 Enquiry, or whether the Safeguarding Action Plan responds accurately and adequately to the Concern
- Professional difference about the outcome of a Safeguarding Planning Meeting which had been raised during the Meeting and is recorded in the record of the meeting
- Professional difference about the implementation of a Safeguarding Adult at Risk Plan or its effectiveness in bringing about the necessary changes
- Professional difference about information sharing
- Difference of professional opinion over the analysis of information and associated decision making
- Professional difference about the provision of services
- Concern that there is drift or unreasonable delay in progressing a case
- Concerns about the operation of Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Adult Safeguarding Procedures

When any professional considers an adult is at immediate risk of significant harm, then the individual must ensure their concerns are addressed on the same working day using Adult Safeguarding Referral procedures.

- When there is a need to escalate a concern, professionals should:
- Raise the concern with respect, balance and clarity
- Provide clear evidence or if it is a 'gut feeling', say that it is and own it as such
- Act swiftly and deal with issues and concerns as they arise
- Ensure concerns are raised correctly using this agreed process – telling colleagues isn't enough
- Be open and ready to listen to the responses when provided
- Focus on the adult at risk's safety and wellbeing at all times

By raising issues of professional difference when you are concerned about the safety of an adult with care and support needs who is at risk of or experiencing harm, you are exercising/evidencing:

- A fundamental professional responsibility
- A positive proactive approach
- Openness
- Professional curiosity
- Ownership
- Confidence in the way you work
- Good professional practice
- Reflective practice
- Making Safeguarding Personal practice
- Your obligation to provide good safeguarding outcomes for that adult

2. Case Resolution – a staged approach

It is expected that most differences can be resolved, without escalation, by professionals discussing the concerns and agreeing a way forward to meet the needs of the adult at risk. The practitioner with the concern should raise the issue/concern with their counterpart¹ from the relevant agency; they may also wish to discuss the issues with their named safeguarding lead. Discussions can be a telephone conversation or face to face meeting. This is **not a formal stage** in the Escalation process and the agreed outcome of discussions or actions should be recorded on the case records of the adult at risk and used, should there be a need to refer the concerns to a manager, to activate the case resolution approach.


In the event that this does not result in a resolution, the formal stages below **must** be followed until there is agreement as to how the issue/concern will be resolved. Timeframes, set out in working days, are suggested for each stage. In some cases, the matter will require a swifter response.

At all formal stages of the process, agencies should agree the timeframes for when a response to the issue/concern raised will be provided. This should be the shortest possible time needed to explore the issues raised and be informed by the level of concern about the adult at risk's safety and wellbeing. A lack of response within the agreed timeframe may lead the professional raising the concern to escalate to the next stage citing a lack of response at the previous stage of the process and ongoing concerns about the safety and wellbeing of the adult at risk as the reason for doing so.

Stage 1: Manager / Safeguarding Lead to Manager / Safeguarding Lead within 5 working days



Stage 2: Senior Manager or Agency Safeguarding Partnership Representative to Senior Manager or Agency Safeguarding Partnership Representative within 5 working days



Stage 3: Refer to Executive Leads for the Partnership within 5 working days



Stage 4: Refer to Safeguarding Partnership Chair within 5 working days

In more detail: Stage by stage process for resolution and escalation

Stage 1: Manager / Safeguarding Lead to Manager / Safeguarding Lead

Line managers/safeguarding leads should seek a resolution within 5 working days. If it is deemed that an adult is at risk of harm, then attempt at resolution should be made as soon as possible between the managers.

Examples of 'line managers' may include first line manager, sergeant, or named person.

Where an acceptable resolution is reached, the receiving line manager will confirm the agreed outcome of the concern and how any outstanding issues will be pursued. This must be documented, in writing to their counterpart outlining the issue within a further 5 working days. The manager must also ensure that the worker who first raised the initial concern is aware of the resolution. Agencies should subsequently check that agreed actions have been implemented in the agreed timeframe.

If the manager of the professional with who the disagreement is away, then the concern must be raised with another line manager and a resolution sought.

Individual agencies may also have their own internal procedures to record professional difference matters and these should also be followed. A template that could be used to record such matters can be found at **Appendix 1**.

Matters that remain unresolved **must** be escalated to Stage 2. This should be completed within **1-3 working days** however **do not delay if inaction will increase the risk to the adult**.

Stage 2: Agency Partnership Representative to Agency Partnership Representative

If the problem is not resolved at Stage 1 the managers must, without delay, report to their relevant senior manager or Safeguarding Partnership agency representative. The two senior managers or Partnership representatives must together attempt to resolve the concern within 5 working days or less if there is deemed to be a risk to the adult.

Examples of 'relevant senior manager' may include Service Manager, Designated Professional, or Detective Inspector.

Where a resolution is reached, the receiving senior manager will confirm the outcome which must be documented in writing to their counterpart who raised the issue within a further 5 working days.

The organisations' Safeguarding Partnership representative or relevant senior manager must send a copy of the completed escalation pro-forma (**Appendix 1**) to the Safeguarding Partnership Business Team.

N.B. For all escalations in respect of Local Authority Adult Services, it is expected that if resolution is not agreed then before going to Stage 3, the Adult Services Director of Social Work must be informed.

Confidential and sensitive information should be sent using a secure email system to Swindon Safeguarding Partnership mailbox at safeguardingpartnership@swindon.gov.uk

Matters resolved or actions agreed including timescales must be recorded on the adult's file by both parties. To ensure a shared understanding of the agreed action, the agencies must agree who will make a record of the agreed actions and share it with the other agency. Agencies should subsequently check that agreed actions have been implemented in the agreed timeframe.

Stage 3: Refer to Executive Leads for the Partnership

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences between the agencies concerned, the matter must be referred to the Executive Leads for the Partnership, within 5 working days. The Executives must together attempt to resolve the concern within 5 working days or less if there is deemed to be a risk to the adult. Where a resolution is reached, the receiving Executive manager will confirm the outcome which must be documented in writing to their counterpart who raised the issue within a further 5 working days.

Examples of Executive Leads include: Directors, Detective Superintendent, Chief Nurse.

The organisations' Safeguarding Partnership representative or relevant senior manager must send a copy of the completed escalation pro-forma (**Appendix 1**) to the Safeguarding Partnership Business Team.

The decision(s) will be documented and shared with each agency and the worker who first raised the initial concern.

Confidential and sensitive information should be sent using a secure email system. Swindon Safeguarding Partnership mailbox at Safeguardingpartnership@swindon.gov.uk

Stage 4: Refer to Safeguarding Partnership Chair

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences between the agencies concerned the matter must be referred to the Safeguarding Partnership Independent Chair, within 5 working days, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct, or to convene a Resolution Panel within a timescale that protects the adult at risk from harm.

The panel will consist of Safeguarding Partnership Executive representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences, where possible).

The panel will receive representations from those concerned in the professional differences and make a decision as to the next course of action, and the well-being of the person involved.

The decision(s) will be documented and shared with each agency and the worker who first raised the initial concern.

Confidential and sensitive information should be sent using a secure email system.

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership mailbox at:

Safeguardingpartnership@swindon.gov.uk

3. Concerns about the practice of colleagues within your own organisation

Each agency should have its own clear and accessible policy in respect of 'whistleblowing' which should be consulted when there are serious concerns about the practice of a colleague which have not yet been resolved by discussion through internal arrangements. If you have exhausted your organisation's whistleblowing process you should escalate outside the organisation. Details at: <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Whilst it can be very difficult to raise issues about the professional practice of a colleague this should not be ignored where to do so might leave an adult at risk.

Case Resolution Stage 1 / 2 Pro-forma (copy to be kept on service user file)			
Name of adult:			
DOB:			
Address:			
Name, Role and Agency of person completing this form:			
Name, Roles and Agency of others involved:			
Brief details of the professional disagreement:			
Has the disagreement been resolved at Stage 1 or 2	Yes	No	
If yes, what was agreed?			
How long did it take for the issue to be resolved from the date of initial case resolution?			
If not, please state why and who has them case resolution been raised to as Stage 2 or 3 of the pathway and what was the date the concern was raised.			
What is the learning for your agencies from this case?			
Is there learning for the wider safeguarding partnership?			
A requirement for staff training	Yes	No	
Development of a new SSP Protocol	Yes	No	
Further discussion at a particular SSP Sub Group	Yes	No	Other
Please send the completed form via secure email to: safeguardingpartnership@swindon.gov.uk			

Appendix 1: Agency Case Resolution Summary Log

If agencies wish to maintain a summary of cases escalated for resolution, the log below can be used

Agency Case Resolution Summary Log

(For completion by the escalating Line Manager/Safeguarding Lead as appropriate)

Agency: (INSERT):

** Case Number	Adult's Details: Name: DOB: Unique Identifier:	Concern	Summary of Professional Difference	Action taken towards reaching a Resolution	Outcome of Resolution

Appendix 2: Report to Swindon Safeguarding Partnership: Multi Agency Resolution Template

Multi-Agency Resolution: Resolution Template – (required from Stage 2)

Name of adult at risk:		
D.O.B:		
Address:		
Name of Professional and email contact details of the person raising a concern		
Role and Agency:		
Name(s) of other professionals involved: (Including SSP Board Members where appropriate) Role and Agency:		

Brief details of professional difference (including agreed outcomes)	
Date of discussion/ Meeting re difference:	
Methodology used to resolve conflict:	
Difference resolved at: Level Date	

Please indicate lessons learned from the resolution process (e.g. Individual agency review of procedure, requirement for staff training, understanding of agency referral criteria/thresholds of need);		
Please identify any further actions taken by your agency following the resolution of this issue:		
Actions taken:	By whom:	Date completed:
Form completed by:		
Date:		

To be completed by Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Manager:

Date received by SSP Manager:		
Concerned referred to Safeguarding Partnership Chair for immediate action	YES/ REASON:	NO/REASON:
Issues referred to SSP Chair / Outcome:		

Please send the completed form via secure email to:
safeguardingpartnership@swindon.gov.uk

Appendix 3: Partners in Swindon Safeguarding Partnership

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership

The statutory partner agencies are:

Swindon Borough Council
Wiltshire Police
NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Wider partners include:

Avon & Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust (AWP)
Care Providers
Care Quality Commission
Dorset & Wilts Fire & Rescue
GWH NHSFT
Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB)
NHS England
Oxford Health - CAMHS
Probation CRC
Probation NPS
SBC - Adult Social Services
SBC - Cabinet Member Health and Adult Social Care
SBC - Communities & Housing
SBC - Community Safety Partnership
SBC - Public Health
SBC - Trading Standards
South Western Ambulance Service (SWAST)
Swindon Safeguarding Partnership
Swindon Advocacy Movement (SAM)
Swindon Carers
Swindon Healthwatch