



**Shropshire Safeguarding
Community Partnership**

Escalation Policy

**Multi-agency resolution / escalation procedure for
professionals' disagreements or concerns**

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Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership is committed to open and transparent joint working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults with care and support needs and to keep our communities safe. Raising questions, challenging, and escalating concerns where appropriate, quickly and clearly, is seen as a positive approach to practice and continuing improvement in how we protect and meet the needs of children, adults with care and support needs and communities.

This guidance has been developed to enable a quick and straightforward means of resolving professional differences or issues in specific cases and is designed to be used by all agencies across the private and statutory sectors.

Purpose of the escalation policy

When practitioners are working together in the complex business of safeguarding and community safety, there will inevitably be occasions when there are professional differences of opinion or concerns about practice decisions, actions or perceived lack of action.

In these circumstances practitioners have a duty to take action to address professional disagreements as soon as they arise in a way that is proportionate to improve the safety of others. Learning from statutory case reviews also highlights the importance of this. It is important that any escalations are formally recorded including what decision has been reached.

Examples of case-specific professional disagreements include when there is:

- disagreement about the response to a referral made by one agency to another agency or service (e.g. decision making)
- disagreement about the outcome of an assessment
- concern about the implementation of a protection / safeguarding / management plan and disagreement about how this should be addressed (e.g. agreed actions not being followed through)
- concern about the effectiveness of a protection / safeguarding / management plan (e.g. drift / delay)
- disagreement over the sharing of information in a particular situation

It is important that practitioners and managers understand what action they need to take in order to address professional differences of opinion and understand the systems in place in their organisation to support this.

Key principles

- All communication should be respectful and professional
- Good working together requires sharing information and discussing joint working appropriately and often. Joint working arrangements should include **all** relevant agencies working with the individual and/or their families or representatives
- Any issues or disagreements should be resolved quickly and at practice level where possible

- The focus should be on the safety and welfare of the people affected at all times. **Addressing any disagreements should not prevent agencies working separately or together to keep people as safe as possible**
- Any disagreements or concerns raised by professional colleagues should be accepted as genuine, valid and given full consideration
- At each stage of the process a record should be retained of contacts, discussions and outcomes

Disagreements managed openly and effectively, should be resolved at the earliest stages.

Should any disagreements reach stage 4 of this process, the matter should be referred to the Shropshire Safeguarding Community Partnership at SSCPBusinessUnit@shropshire.gov.uk, in order that the Partnership can be assured that any concerns may be isolated and not systemic in nature that might require further consideration and learning.

The flowchart below shows the process that should be followed.

Resolution and Escalation Flowchart

Move through the stages of the escalation flowchart until the issue is resolved. The timescales stated are maximum timescales. Meeting should be arranged when necessary. **Please note that this process should be expedited if someone is at risk of harm.**

