



Safeguarding
Partnership
Board

Escalation Policy and Resolution Pathway October 2014

Document profile	
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Short Title	Escalation Policy and Resolution Pathway
Document Purpose	To be used when resolving professional disagreements in relation to the safeguarding needs of children or adults.
Target Audience	Staff in statutory departments and third sector agencies who work with children in Jersey
Author	Professional Officer SPB
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1. Introduction

This procedure has been developed to be used when resolving professional disagreements in relation to the safeguarding needs of children or adults.

Multi-agency working to safeguard children from harm or adults at risk, is often complex and means that from time to time the judgement of staff from different professional backgrounds may differ, causing potential conflict. This policy sets out clear routes to escalate professional concerns where there are fears that differences of opinion may be getting in the way of keeping a child safe or of appropriately safeguarding an adult at risk.

2. Factors to Consider

Often there are multiple factors that affect professionals and how they gather and analyse information about individual circumstances and the level of professional anxiety they experience.

These factors may affect professional judgement and it is helpful to clarify them:

- Is limited information and/ or liaison with other agencies adversely impacting the exercise of discretion and judgement? **Remember - in all situations the over-riding consideration as to whether to share information should be the safety and welfare of the individual child or adult at risk.**
- Are strong emotional issues being raised which are impacting upon judgement?
- Are there issues of managing power and authority between individual staff, agencies and with the family; what impact is this having? Do issues relating to professional status, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexuality have a bearing on the case?
- Are the disputes within the professional group mirroring disputes and conflict within the family?
- Are organisational issues e.g. structural changes, access to support or resources, affecting judgements?

3. Resolving the difference of opinion

“Effective problem solving occurs when both the problem and its solution are owned by all parties involved” (Morrison 2002)

Practical measures should be taken to ensure that escalation occurs through the following stages, unless the situation is **so serious** that it requires urgent action to protect a child or adult at risk (e.g. through the police).

Stage 1: Relevant professionals meet and discuss the following with the aim of reaching a shared understanding and to agree necessary action. There may be a number of different points of view about a case. **Time frame: Within 5 working days.**

Do all parties clearly understand why there is a difference of opinion?

- Do the different people involved understand what the differences are?
- What information are the views based on?
- Does everyone have access to the same information?

What are the specific areas of difference of opinion?

- Is this clear?

Can more information clarify this for either party?

- What is known or not known about the child, family or individual concerned?
- What additional information is needed? How could this be gathered?
- What facts or evidence exist? Has this come from more than one source?
- What are the conclusions and analysis? Do they draw on theory and research?

Analysis and reaching a judgement

- What is life like for this child/adult and how serious are the concerns?
- Has additional information helped to clarify the opinions of the people involved?
- Is a multi agency meeting needed to bring together historical and current information from different agencies to decide how to proceed?
- Can a judgement be agreed, or does a significant difference of opinion remain?

Have we done enough to safeguard this child/adult?

- Is there agreement about the actions that now need to be taken, by whom, timescales and when these will be reviewed?

Stage 2: If agreement cannot be reached and someone still has concerns that a child/adult remains at risk of significant harm, they must discuss this with their manager and / or named / designated safeguarding lead and agree how to proceed.

Time frame: Within 2 working days.

Stage 3: Escalation of concerns

Time frame: Within 5 working days.

- The manager / named or designated safeguarding lead should make sure that the professional raising the concern has cooperated with other professionals to ensure all the steps have been followed to resolve the concern.
- A clear record should be kept at all stages, by all parties.
- It is essential that where concerns are raised these are evidenced and that factual matters are clear.
- The manager/ named or designated safeguarding lead should liaise with the equivalent colleague in the other agency involved to resolve outstanding concerns. They may require a face to face meeting and this may involve more than one agency.

Stage 4: In cases where significant concerns remain, especially if understanding and interpretation of risk is the relevant factor, the manager / named or designated lead should contact the relevant safeguarding manager, to discuss the concerns and decide whether a case conference should be convened.

Time frame: Within 2 working days.

Stage 5: If professional differences remain unresolved and especially if resources are a relevant factor, the matter must be referred to the heads of service for each agency involved for resolution.

Time frame: Within 3 working days.

Stage 6: In the unlikely event that the issue is not resolved by the steps described above, or the discussions raise significant policy issues, and having exhausted all other possibilities, the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Board for advice. This should be done via their agency representative to the Board.

Time frame: Within 2 working days.

The SPB Chair will make a **clear recommendation** on the most appropriate way to proceed and this will be communicated to all involved **within 5 working days** of the issue being brought to his/her attention.

The SPB will retain a record of any unresolved concerns which reach Stage 6 and include this information in the SPB Annual Report.

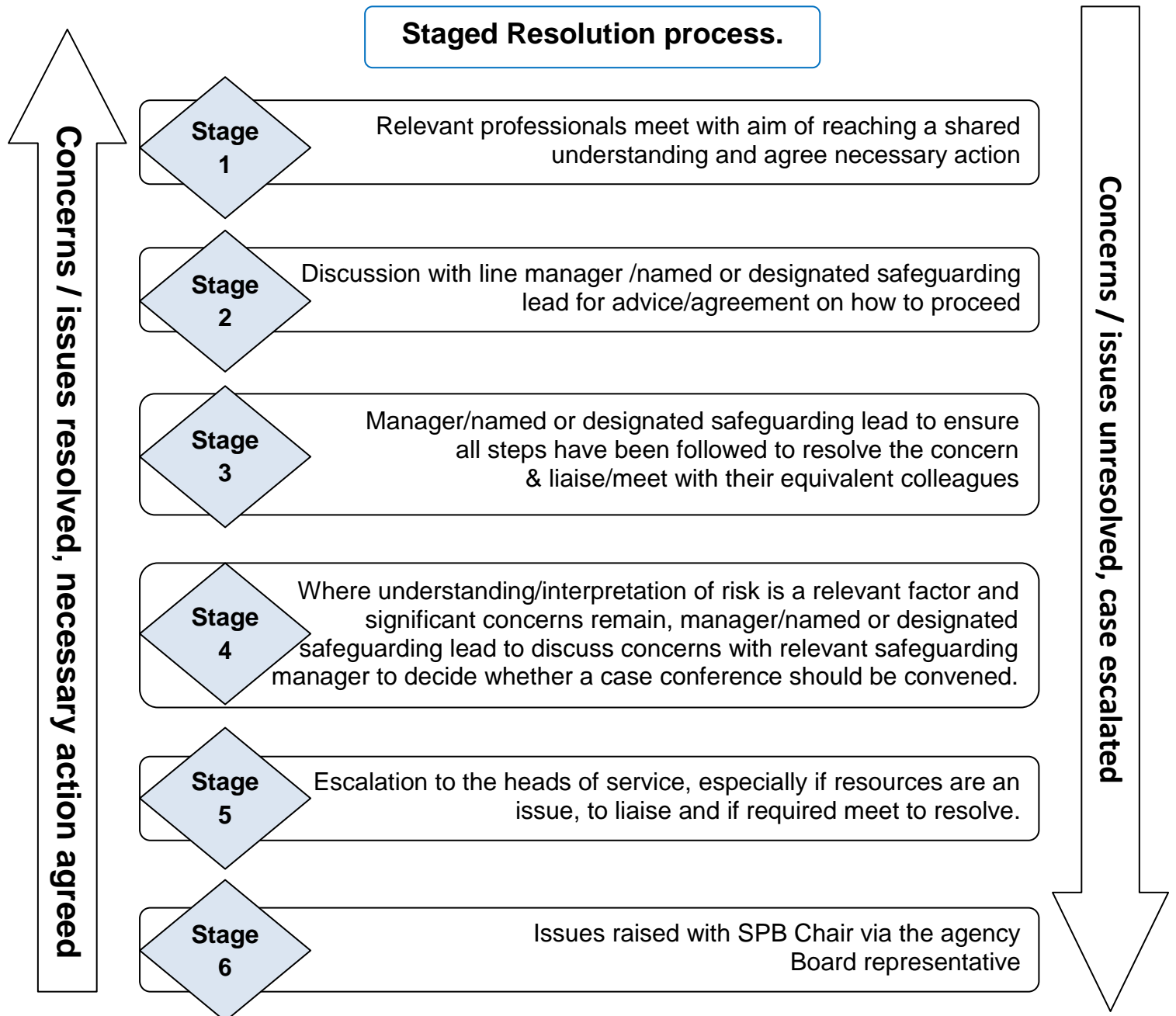
Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to act without delay to appropriately safeguard any child or adult at risk.

Appendix 1 – ESCALATION POLICY AND PROCESS

Principle of resolving difference of professional opinion

It is every professional's responsibility to 'problem solve'. Communication is extremely important and is the key to resolving professional misunderstandings or disagreements.

The aim must be to resolve a difference of opinion at the earliest possible stage, as swiftly as possible, always keeping in mind that the priority must be keeping the child or young person safe or appropriately safeguarding the adult at risk.



Appendix 2 – Information required

Cases submitted under the Escalation Policy should contain the following information:

1. Personal Details of Child/Adult (including case refs)
2. Names of involved key practitioners - plus any 'third party' agencies working with the family
3. Brief history of family/intervention
4. Summary of the issue about which agencies/workers are in dispute
5. Objective/Outcome sought from the resolution process
6. Date of submission
7. Next Steps (next stage of escalation/resolution if concerns are not resolved)