



Leeds
Safeguarding
Children Board

Concerns Resolution Process

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1. Introduction

What is this process? This process outlines the steps to be taken when there are disagreements between practitioners from differing agencies in relation to concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or young person, and / or action being taken to safeguard a child or young person.

Within this process the term “family” is used to describe parent / carers and family members such as siblings as well as extended family members.

Why do we need this process? When working with practitioners from other agencies there will at times be differences of opinion with regards to how to respond to an identified concern about a child, young person or family. Disagreements can be a sign of developing thinking, and the value of exchanging ideas from different perspectives should not be underestimated. When there are disagreements between agencies, this should be recognised as potential for healthy debate. However, disagreements may disadvantage the child or family involved if they are not resolved constructively and in a timely manner.

Throughout our work the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is the primary concern, and professional disputes must not obstruct this. If you feel that a practitioner or an agency is not acting in the best interests of the child, young person or family, you have a responsibility to respectfully challenge the practitioner or agency.

What is the purpose? In order to support and challenge a clear process needs to be in place to ensure that all practitioners involved in multi-agency work understand the steps they should take when these concerns arise. This process should however, be measured in its approach to allow practitioners the opportunity to openly discuss with other practitioners, their concerns. However some disagreements may need to be escalated up to first line managers (and beyond if appropriate) who should address any concerns.

Who is this aimed at? This process is aimed at practitioners working with families either regularly or occasionally. These practitioners will come from a wide range of agencies both statutory and non-statutory.

Please note that dissent or concerns in relation to Child Protection Conferences should follow the process outlined within Appendix 1

The key contact for comments about this policy is: lscb@leeds.gov.uk

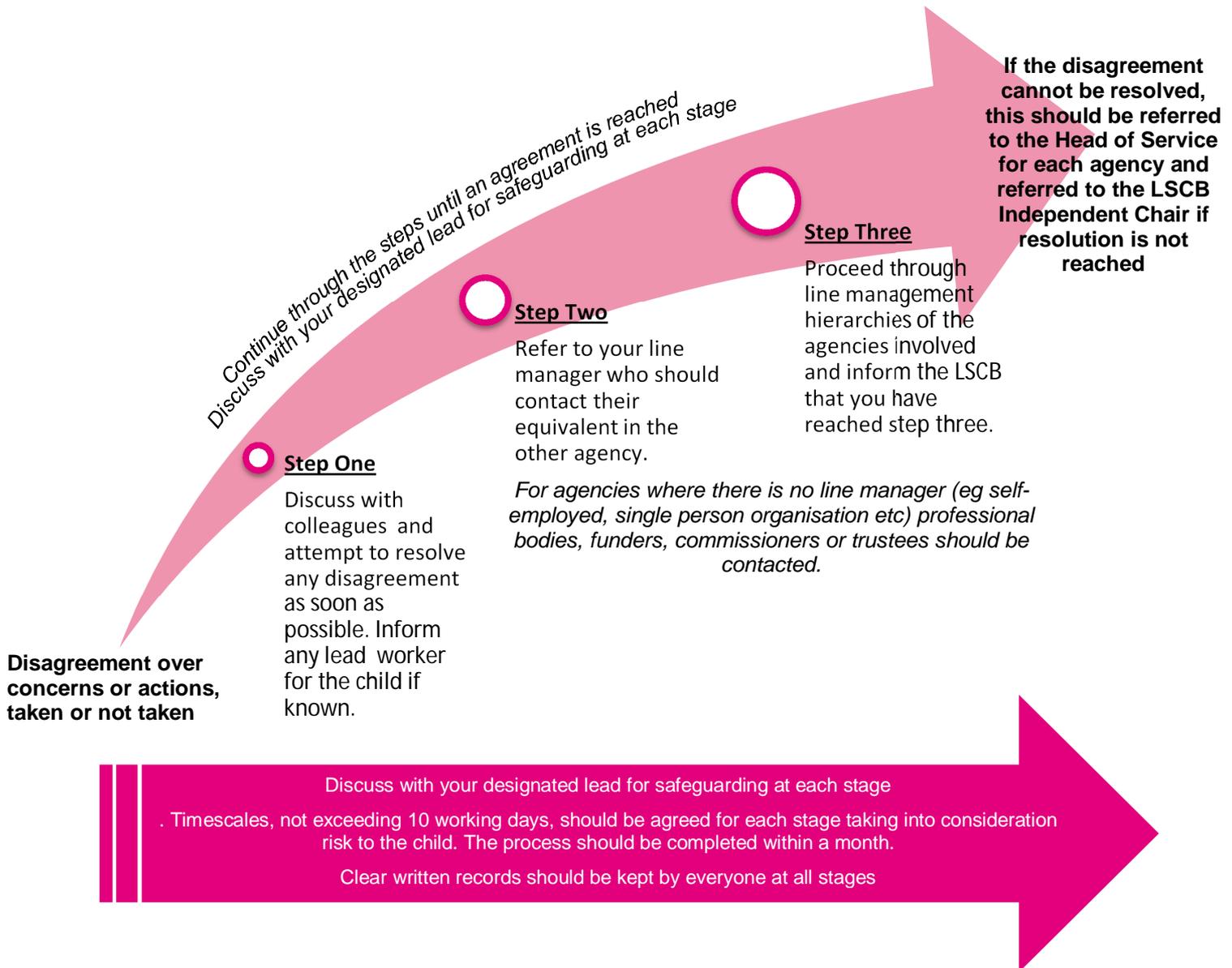
2. Principles of concerns resolution

When trying to resolve disagreements practitioners should work within the following principles:

- The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount, and should they be considered to be at significant risk of harm
- Keeping the child, young person and their family at the centre of all professional discussions
- Quality conversations about the approach which should be undertaken
- Ensuring that the right conversations are had with the right people at the right time, taking place face to face where possible
- To resolve disagreement using a restorative approach which includes appropriate challenge
- Resolving disagreements in a timely manner
- Undertaking a solution focus approach
- Concerns, actions, responses and outcomes must be recorded
- Duty and Advice should be contacted.

3. Resolving concerns

When disagreements arise, the following steps should be undertaken:



Step One

Immediately discuss with colleagues and agency designated lead for safeguarding to clarify thinking, practice and attempt to resolve any disagreements face to face before initiating the full process. Inform the Lead Professional / IRO / Chair of multi-agency meeting for information and monitoring as above.

Step Two

If following Step 1 the disagreement remains, discuss with your designated lead for safeguarding and immediately refer this to your line manager, for them to discuss with the line manager of the other practitioner. *For agencies where there is no line manager (eg self-employed, single person organisation etc) professional bodies, funders, commissioners or trustees should be contacted.* They should do this within an agreed timescale with the practitioner raising the concern, and a timescale for response from the other line manager (or professional body / funder / commissioners / trustees) should also be agreed. Where

possible this should not exceed 10 working days between stages and one month for the process to be completed.

Step Three

If agreement cannot be reached following discussions between first line managers the issue must be referred without delay through the line management structure to the equivalent of Head of Service, again with agreed timescales for responses. The LSCB must also be notified for information only. leedslscb@leeds.gov.uk

If professional disagreements remain unresolved, the matter must be referred to the Head of Service for each agency involved and also the LSCB Independent Chair, who will take action with both parties to resolve.

Please note that dissent or concerns in relation to Child Protection Conferences should follow the process outlined within Appendix 1

4. Things for consideration

- Appropriate timescales for passing on, and responding to, concerns should be agreed for each stage. These should take into consideration any potential risk to the child and need for provision of services
- Clear written records should be kept by everyone at all stages, which must include written confirmation between the parties about agreed resolutions and the proposed follow-up of any outstanding issues. Feedback should be given at every stage to the practitioner who raised the original concern
- If throughout the process the disagreement cannot be resolved, and you feel that a child is still suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, you are responsible for communicating your concerns to your immediate line manager and / or your organisation's designated lead for child protection. Contact Duty and Advice
- Practitioners should continue to use their agency procedures in conjunction with this document
- The NSPCC have launched a Whistleblowing Helpline for practitioners (further details can be found on the NSPCC Website). This is not intended to replace existing processes to resolve disputes or the local LADO arrangements.

5. Contacts

Duty & Advice	0113 3760336 (option 3)
LSCB	leedslscb@leeds.gov.uk
LSCB Independent Chair	leedslscb@leeds.gov.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline	0800 028 0285

Appendix 1 – Child Protection Conferences

a) Need for Child Protection Conferences

The decision whether or not to convene a **Child Protection Conference** rests with Children's Social Care Services. However, those professionals and agencies who are most involved with the child and family, and those who have taken part in a section 47 Enquiry have the right to request that Children's Social Care Services convene a Child Protection Conference if they have serious concerns that a child's welfare may not otherwise be adequately safeguarded. This should be done through a restorative conversation with the appropriate workers at Duty and Advice, and following discussion with your agencies safeguarding lead.

Where there remains differences of view over the necessity for a conference in a specific case, every effort should be made to resolve them through discussion and explanation.

b) Dissent at Child Protection Conferences

If a Child Protection Conference Chair is unable to achieve a consensus as to the need for a Child Protection plan, they should follow the West Yorkshire procedure for [Initial Child Protection Conferences](#) section 14, Dissent from the Conference Decision. They will make a decision and note any dissenting views. This will include the situation where there is no majority view and where the Conference Chair exercises their decision making powers as set out in the West Yorkshire procedure for [Initial Child Protection Conferences](#) section 13.4, The Decision Making Process.