



London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham | The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea | Westminster City Council

# **Tri-borough LSCB Escalation Protocol October 2014**



# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that all agencies working within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council (including Health, Education, Housing, Adult Services, Probation, Police and third sector organizations), have access to a straightforward multi-agency policy to quickly escalate and resolve significant professional differences where there are concerns that the welfare and safety of children and young people are at risk of being compromised.

The aim of this protocol is to promote a culture of partnership working, whereby all agencies working with children, young people and their families feel confident, able and supported to address concerns in situations where there are differences in professional judgments around the response to the well-being and safety of children and young people. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas including:

- differences in thresholds for determining levels of need/risk,
- actions or lack of actions in relation to a referral, an assessment or an enquiry,
- roles and responsibilities, and
- intra/inter agency communication.

Concerns could also arise as a result of practice and case management issues i.e. frequency of visits and representation at professional meetings, including core group meetings and child protection conferences.

This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) Avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child,
- b) Resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly, and
- c) Identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

At no time should professional disagreement detract from ensuring that a child or young person is safeguarded. The child's welfare and safety is paramount and all professionals and agencies are responsible for communicating such concerns as per the guidance provided in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2013\)](#) and the [Pan London Child Protection Procedures \(2013\)](#).

This protocol aims to provide a working framework for escalating concerns and resolving difficulties faced by designated safeguarding leads within and across agencies. The role of the safeguarding leads is to mediate with other safeguarding leads in other agencies in order to achieve a satisfactory resolution to a concern or problem that has emerged which cannot be resolved at a practitioner or front line management level between different agencies.

## 2. Process

In cases where professionals consider a child or young person to be at immediate risk of significant harm, concerns must be escalated to a manager and/or safeguarding lead on the same working day.

In cases where there are concerns but the child or young person is not considered to be at an immediate risk of significant harm, professionals should collate and formally communicate their concerns and evidence in writing, and provide this to the partner agency. Professionals should, in the first instance, attempt to resolve differences or concerns through discussion and/or by meeting with the relevant practitioner or agency within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child/young person from harm (whichever is less).

If the professionals are unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily following further discussions and/or a meeting, the concern or difficulty should be escalated to the practitioner's line manager within 24 hours and a resolution should be achieved within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child from harm (whichever is less).

If agreement cannot be reached following discussions with the practitioner's line manager, the issue should be escalated to the relevant safeguarding lead for the agencies concerned within 24 hours. The referrer should provide the following information.

- Name of child(ren)
- Name of practitioner and agency with whom there is a concern
- Brief description of nature of concern and action taken to resolve the issue
- Outcome sought

The safeguarding lead will then liaise with their counterpart in the respective agency sharing this referral and any additional information. The safeguarding leads will consider a strategy to resolve the matter and will communicate the outcome to the referring agency. If a satisfactory resolution to the concern or problem cannot be reached, the safeguarding lead will escalate the matter to the relevant Head of Service within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the child(ren) from harm (whichever is less).

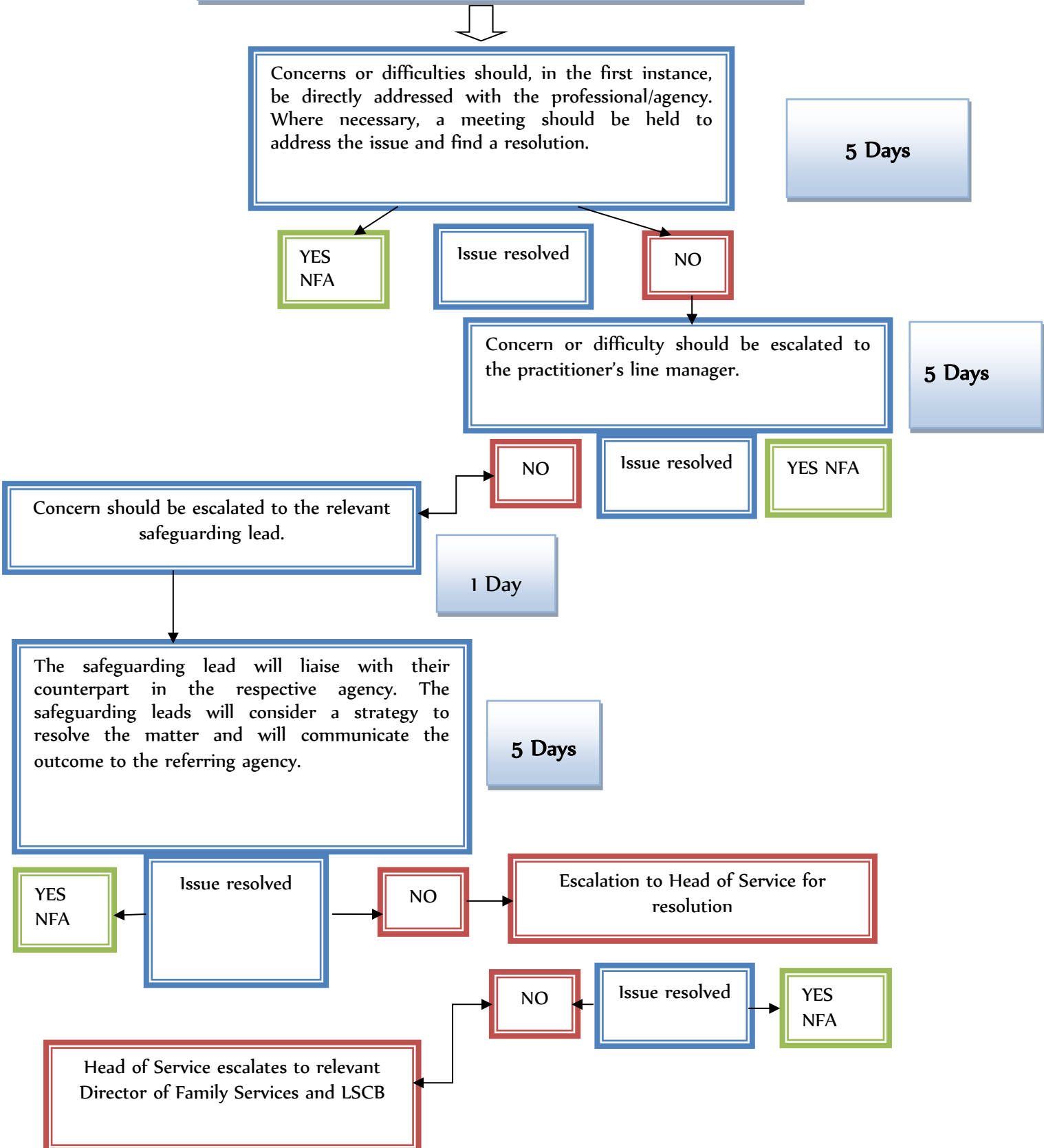
In the unlikely event that the issue cannot be resolved by the steps described above and/or the discussion raises significant policy issues, the Head of Service will refer the matter to the Director of Children's Services and the LSCB for resolution.

If the risks and issues in a particular case are considered to be so great and of an immediate nature, a decision by the referring agency must be made as to the necessity to bypass the structures in place and consult the relevant senior officer as a matter of urgency. This is to ensure that there is a timely response in place which secures the safety and protection of the child (ren) concerned.

Professionals involved in the conflict resolution process must keep contemporaneous records of any intra and inter agency discussions and actions taken and ensure that this is recorded on the child's file, together with any other written communication and information.

## Multi Agency Escalation Policy Flowchart

### A Practice issue arises with another agency



### 3. Safeguarding Contacts

Borough	Safeguarding Contact	Email & Telephone
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Anna Carpenter	<a href="mailto:Anna.carpenter@lbhf.gov.uk">Anna.carpenter@lbhf.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0208 753 5124/07775 554 389
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea	Alexandra Handford	<a href="mailto:Alexandra.handford@rbkc.gov.uk">Alexandra.handford@rbkc.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0207 598 4638
Westminster City Council	Cathy Smith	<a href="mailto:cjsmith@westminster.gov.uk">cjsmith@westminster.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0207 641 7675

NB. All child protection advisors within the three councils will be able to assist if the manager is not available.

LSCB Contact	
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster City Council Local Safeguarding Board	Email: <a href="mailto:lscb@lbhf.gov.uk">lscb@lbhf.gov.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/safeguardingchildren/lscb.aspx">http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/safeguardingchildren/lscb.aspx</a> Tel: 020 8753 3914

### 4. Additional Notes

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

Appendix A – please refer to Appendix A for an example of the Tri Borough LSCB Monitoring Form. This form is for the formal monitoring of escalation, and evidence of the multi agency partners' 'challenge' afforded to each other.

## Appendix A

### Tri Borough Local Safeguarding Children Board Escalation Protocol – Monitoring Form

#### A tool to record decisions and to monitor the effectiveness of the Escalation Protocol

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency, about a child or young person, is not a safe decision. Problem resolution is an integral part of working together to safeguard children. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage, and resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. If a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated. **This form to be used at the point of escalation to the practitioner's manager and at each further step of the Escalation Protocol.**

#### Checklist

- Have you consulted a supervisor/manager, to seek advice about resolving your concern?
- Have you made clear initial attempts to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level?
- Did the supervisor/manager raise the concerns with their equivalent in the other agency?
- If this did not resolve the concerns, has the Operations Manager or Named/Designated Safeguarding representatives attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion?
- If this did not resolve the professional differences, are you seeking a meeting between the agencies concerned, with oversight by the relevant Director of Family Services and the Independent Chair of the Tri Borough LSCB?

**Action Note:** A copy of this form is to be held on child/family file in all agencies involved in resolution of professional difficulties. If escalating to next stage, use this form as a basis for reporting to the manager at the next stage. Please send a copy to the LSCB Team on completion – email to: [lscb@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:lscb@lbhf.gov.uk) Expand as much as required.

<b>Child/Family Name</b>			
<b>Summary of reason for dispute – include views of all agencies concerned</b>			
<b>Agreed outcomes or actions if satisfactorily resolved – includes escalation to next stage if unresolved</b>			
<b>Signature of referring manager</b>	<b>Name</b>		
	<b>Designation</b>		
	<b>Agency</b>		
	<b>Date</b>		
<b>Signature of receiving manger</b>	<b>Name</b>		
	<b>Designation</b>		
	<b>Agency</b>		
	<b>Date</b>		
<b>Stage at which resolution achieved, noting how effective the policy/practice was in resolving the issue</b>			
<b>Time taken to reach resolution</b>			