



## **BOLTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP**

### **RESOLVING DIFFERENCES AND ESCALATION PROCESS**

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## Introduction

### About this Guidance

Effective partnership working is a vital element in ensuring that children are safeguarded and positive outcomes are achieved. Within this, the statutory safeguarding partners need to create a culture of effective support and challenge between practitioners. This local escalation process has been developed to support practitioners to work together to achieve early resolution of any issues that may impact on achieving positive outcomes children or their families. This document builds on the [Greater Manchester Resolving Professional Disagreements/Escalation Policy](#).

Statutory safeguarding partners acknowledge there will be times when differences may occur between practitioners about how best to keep a child safe. These challenges require an efficient resolution process to be in place to avoid drift and delay. Most differences will be resolved at an early stage either between practitioners and/or their immediate managers or supervisors. Others may need to be escalated to senior leaders and ultimately, to the statutory safeguarding partners.

In practice: -

- Challenge is positive and should always be focused on the desired outcome for the child.
- The safety and wellbeing of the child is always paramount.
- Agencies may have their own escalation policies and should refer to these in conjunction with this process.
- It is the responsibility of each individual practitioner and/or service to progress challenge where they are not in agreement with the outcome of any aspect decision-making relating to a child's safety and welfare. This process can be used at any level of Bolton's continuum of need and thresholds document, the [Framework for Action](#) with any partner agency.
- Challenge should adhere to the principles of restorative practice; language should be respectful and where possible, discussions with the relevant practitioners should take place first.
- Challenge and escalation should be resolved at the earliest opportunity and within timescales.
- Agency/Service safeguarding leads should be consulted and updated throughout the escalation process.
- If you have an immediate concern about the safety of a child, usual safeguarding processes should be used and be the priority.

### Who this Guidance is For

This process should be read and followed by leaders, managers and frontline practitioners of all organisations and agencies set out in [Bolton's Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements](#).

## **When to Use this Guidance**

Differences may arise between practitioners and services for a range of reasons and are likely to include, but not limited to:-

- Quality and outcomes of assessments
- Application of thresholds and processes in the Framework for Action
- Service referral criteria
- Quality and/or timeliness of interventions
- Information sharing and communication
- Decisions about the need for child protection conferences or decisions made at conferences
- Care planning for looked after children
- Decisions made within strategy discussions
- The child's plan and/or interventions within the plan are not effective in keeping them safe

Where your organisation has an internal escalation process, this should be referred to in addition to this multi-agency process.

Where the concern relates to Child Protection Processes reference should also be made to policies relating to Section 4 of the [Greater Manchester Safeguarding Policies](#).

It is advised that, where needed, the Lead Professional, IRO or relevant others are informed of the escalation to ensure co-ordination across the safeguarding system.

## **Resolution or Complaint**

In the context of this process, resolving differences and managing complaints while related, have distinct purposes and approaches. Resolving differences focuses on achieving a mutually agreeable outcome when disagreements or conflicts exist about the application of safeguarding processes and decisions made within these.

Managing complaints focuses on addressing dissatisfaction or issues about an individual's practice or conduct. Where there are concerns about an individual's practice or conduct, the relevant agencies complaints process should be followed.

If you are not sure which process to follow, you should speak with your Designated Safeguarding Lead or your agency SPOC (Single Point of Contact) or with BSCP; contact details are available in [Appendix 1](#).

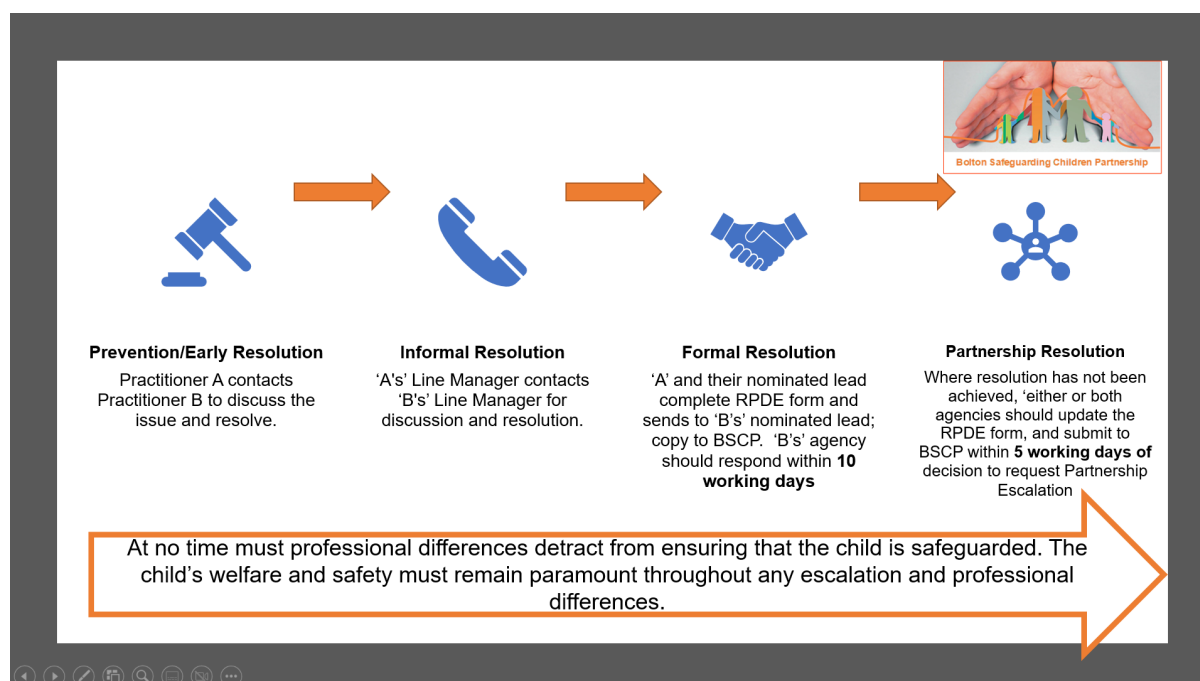
## Resolving Differences and Escalation Process – Stage by Stage

It is anticipated that the majority of differences will be resolved at either the prevention/early resolution or informal stage.

STAGE	ACTION	DOCUMENTATION
Prevention/Early Resolution	<p>Practitioner A contacts practitioner B to discuss the issue and seek resolution, if possible. This should be recorded by each practitioner on the child's record in line with agency guidance.</p> <p><b>If not resolved, move to Informal Resolution</b></p>	Organisations should record in accordance with their agency policy.
Informal Resolution	<p>Practitioner A's manager contacts practitioner B's manager for discussion and seek resolution, clearly setting out the issue that needs to be resolved and the desired outcome for the child/ren.</p> <p>Agree a timescale for a response from practitioner B's manager if it is not possible to resolve the issue immediately.</p> <p><b>If not resolved, move to Formal Resolution</b></p>	<p>Organisations should record in accordance with their agency policy.</p> <p>NB contact the relevant agency's 'Resolution SPOC' (Appendix 1) if you need details of relevant managers etc.</p>
Formal Resolution	<p>Agency A completes relevant section of the Resolving Professional Differences and Escalation (RPDE) form in accordance with their single agency process and sends to Agency B's 'Resolution SPOC' and BSCP.</p> <p>BSCP Business Unit will log the receipt of the form for monitoring and tracking purposes.</p> <p>At this stage, there may be benefit in holding a multi-agency meeting to discuss the differences and seek resolution through collaboration.</p> <p>Agency B responds to Agency A and BSCP within 10 working days with the outcome recorded on the relevant section of the RPDE form.</p> <p><b>If not resolved, move to Partnership Resolution</b></p>	<a href="#">RPDE form</a>

STAGE	ACTION	DOCUMENTATION
Partnership Resolution	<p>If the difference cannot be resolved at the formal stage, then, either agency can request that the matter can be referred to the statutory safeguarding partners via the BSCP Business Unit.</p> <p>The statutory partners will bring together an independent panel to look objectively at the action to date and seek resolution with the agencies involved.</p> <p><b>Once a resolution is made, there is no further option to escalate.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">RPDE form</a></p> <p>Additional Information as requested from BSCP, specific to the situation.</p>

The diagram below illustrates the process and larger sizes of this can be accessed [here](#).



## Recording the Professional Difference and Resolution

All steps of the process should be documented by the respective agencies in accordance with their internal processes. The Resolving Professional Differences and Escalation (RPDE) Form should be used to support Formal and Partnership Resolution.

## Managing the Process

The BSCP Business Unit will: -

- Acknowledge receipt of all RPDE forms, reminding agencies of the timescales for resolution
- Record all RPDE forms that it receives
- Track the progress of RPDE

- Follow up with agencies if responses are not received within 10 working days
- Convene meetings with statutory partners or their nominated representatives to support 'Partnership Resolution'

### **Outcomes and Learning**

The BSCP Business Unit will review the themes, outcomes and learning from RPDE's on an annual basis and include these as part of the statutory safeguarding partner's quality and scrutiny responsibilities.

The BSCP Safeguarding Effectiveness Group (SEG) will determine whether any actions are required as a result of the analysis. It is the responsibility of each agency representative at SEG to ensure that key themes are being brought to the attention of BSCP.

## Appendix 1

### Resolution Single Points of Contact (SPOC)

The contacts below will be able to support and sign-post practitioners to ensure escalations are made appropriately and to the right individuals within services working in Bolton. They will not necessarily be directly involved in the resolution process.

Service	Role	Telephone	Email
Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership	BSCP Business Manager	01204 337479	<a href="mailto:boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk">boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk</a>
Bolton NHS Foundation Trust	Safeguarding Team	01204 390267	<a href="mailto:boh-tr.boltonchildprotection@nhs.net">boh-tr.boltonchildprotection@nhs.net</a>
Children's Social Care and Early Help	Head of Conference, Reviewing and Partnerships	01204 337400	<a href="mailto:cpu@bolton.gov.uk">cpu@bolton.gov.uk</a>
Early Years	Early Years and Childcare Advisor	01204 33 8149	<a href="mailto:laura.wright@bolton.gov.uk">laura.wright@bolton.gov.uk</a>
Education – Bolton Council Inclusion Services	Head of Inclusion	01204 334315	<a href="mailto:steve.berryman@bolton.gov.uk">steve.berryman@bolton.gov.uk</a>
Education – School Settings	Safeguarding in Education Team	01204 337072	<a href="mailto:set@bolton.gov.uk">set@bolton.gov.uk</a>
Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust – CAMHs	Strategic Safeguarding Lead – Community CAMHS	01204 483 222	<a href="mailto:sharron.mullen@gmmh.nhs.uk">sharron.mullen@gmmh.nhs.uk</a>
Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust – Substance Misuse Services	Safeguarding Lead	01204 483 323	<a href="mailto:kirsten.griffiths@gmmh.nhs.uk">kirsten.griffiths@gmmh.nhs.uk</a>
Greater Manchester Mental Health	Corporate Safeguarding Team	n/a	<a href="mailto:gmmh-ft.safeguarding@gmmh.nhs.uk">gmmh-ft.safeguarding@gmmh.nhs.uk</a>
Greater Manchester Police	Vulnerability Lead	n/a	<a href="mailto:Vikki.Gibson@gmp.police.uk">Vikki.Gibson@gmp.police.uk</a>

<b>Service</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Telephone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Housing Partners	Bolton Community Homes Manager	-	<a href="mailto:jennifer.maher@bolton.gov.uk">jennifer.maher@bolton.gov.uk</a>
Greater Manchester Probation Service	Head of PDU Bolton	01204 874100	<a href="mailto:Andrew.Roberts@justice.gov.uk">Andrew.Roberts@justice.gov.uk</a>
NHS Greater Manchester	Designated Nurse/Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding and Looked after Children	01204 463390	<a href="http://www.gmintegratedcare.org.uk">www.gmintegratedcare.org.uk</a>
Voluntary Sector	Strategic Lead Bolton Together	07547409726	<a href="mailto:louise.mcdade@boltontogether.org.uk">louise.mcdade@boltontogether.org.uk</a>