



BOLTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

RESOLVING DIFFERENCES AND ESCALATION PROCESS

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Introduction

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](#).

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 addition to this process, as needed.
- 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 of assessment, planning or intervention. This can be progressed at any level of Bolton's continuum of need and thresholds document, the [Framework for Action](#) with any partner agency.
- Challenge should be restorative and relationship based; 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 prioritised.

The statutory safeguarding partners recognise 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.

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
- Roles and responsibilities of practitioners
- 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 the 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 other is informed of the escalation to ensure co-ordination across the safeguarding system.

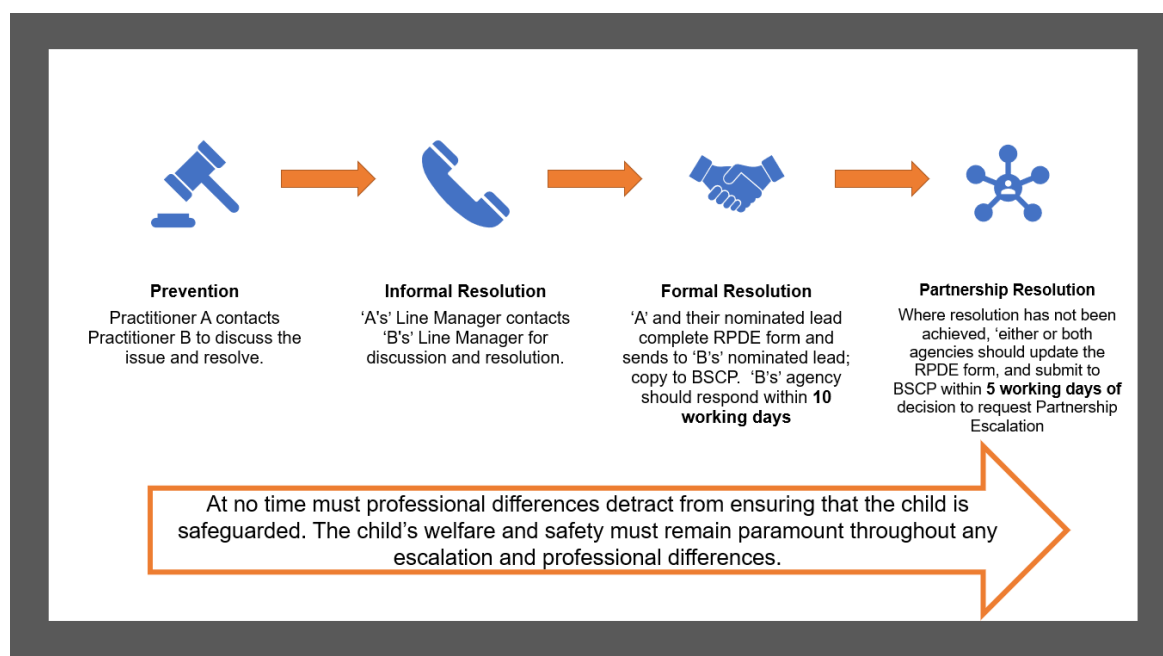
Resolving Differences and Escalation Process

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

STAGE	ACTION	DOCUMENTATION
Prevention	Practitioner A contacts practitioner B to discuss the issue and seek resolution, if possible. This should be recorded on the child's record in line with agency guidance. If not resolved, move to Informal Resolution	Organisations should record in accordance with their agency policy.
Informal Resolution	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. Agree a timescale for a response from practitioner B's manager if it is not possible to resolve the issue immediately. If not resolved, move to Formal Resolution	Organisations should record in accordance with their agency policy. NB contact the relevant agency's 'Resolution SPOC' (Appendix 1) if you need details of relevant managers etc.
Formal Resolution	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. BSCP Business Unit will log the receipt of the form for monitoring and tracking purposes. At this stage, there may be benefit in holding a multi-agency meeting to discuss the differences and seek resolution through collaboration. Agency B responds to Agency A and BSCP within 10 working days with the outcome recorded on the relevant section of the RPDE form. If not resolved, move to Partnership Resolution	RPDE form

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>Once a resolution is made, there is no further option to escalate.</p>	<p>RPDE form</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.

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	CONTACT DETAILS	
		Telephone	Email
Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership	BSCP Business Manager	01204 337479	boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk
Bolton NHS Foundation Trust	Safeguarding Team	01204 390267	boh-tr.boltonchildprotection@nhs.net
Childrens Social Care and Early Help	Head of Conference, Reviewing and Partnerships	01204 337400	anisa.patel@bolton.gov.uk
Early Years	Early Years and Childcare Advisor	01204 33 8149	laura.wright@bolton.gov.uk
Education – Inclusion Services	Head of Inclusion	01204 334315	steve.berryman@bolton.gov.uk
Education – School Settings	Safeguarding in Education Team	01204 337072	set@bolton.gov.uk
Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust – CAMHs	Safeguarding Lead	01204 483 222	debra.jackson@gmmh.nhs.uk
Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust – Adult Mental Health Services	Safeguarding Lead	01204 390 741	richard.wright@gmmh.nhs.uk
Greater Manchester Mental Health Foundation Trust – Substance Misuse Services	Safeguarding Lead	01204 483 323	kirsten.griffiths@gmmh.nhs.uk
Greater Manchester Mental Health	Corporate Safeguarding Team	n/a	gmmh-ft.safeguarding@gmmh.nhs.uk

SERVICE	ROLE	CONTACT DETAILS	
		Telephone	Email
Housing Partners	Bolton Community Homes Manager	-	jennifer.maher@bolton.gov.uk
Greater Manchester Probation Service	Head of PDU Bolton	01204 874100	Gail.Churchill@justice.gov.uk
NHS Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group	Designated Nurse/Deputy Designated Nurse for Safeguarding and Looked after Children	01204 463390	bolccg.safeguardingandlac@nhs.net
Voluntary Sector	Strategic Lead Bolton Together	07547409726	louise.mcdade@boltontgether.org.uk