



Warwickshire  
Safeguarding

# WARWICKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING

## Practitioner Escalation Protocol

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## Introduction & Guiding Principles

**All practitioners working with children, young people, adults with care and support needs and carers have a responsibility towards their clients to ensure that the child's or adult's welfare is seen as a priority at all levels of practitioner activity. Practitioners are individually responsible for being satisfied about the substance and progress of safeguarding plans for service users. This protocol recognises this and provides a tool to support individuals to exercise this responsibility when they are concerned about the actions or inactions of other agencies or practitioners.**

The scope of this protocol relates to all individuals who work as practitioners with children, young people, adults with care and support needs and carers. The protocol should be used in all situations where there are concerns about practice, decision making or resource allocation and applies whether the practitioners work in a paid or voluntary capacity in the statutory and voluntary sector.

Locally, learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs) and Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's) has highlighted practitioner resolution and escalation as a key theme. This protocol serves to assist practitioners in ensuring they have a clear understanding of the process for escalating and when and how it should be applied.

This protocol includes an escalation monitoring process to ensure that the concerns are being appropriately actioned, monitored and relevant learning is identified.

## Prevention

A diverse range of practitioners need to work together to safeguard children and adults. It is very important that practitioners value and respect each other's perspectives. There may be times that practitioners have different opinions or disagree with each other. However, in order to keep children and adults safe, support children and adults to develop their own plans, and fully participate in the changes that are required to safeguard them, practitioners need to build relationships with the people they work with.

A timely discussion between practitioners can often resolve poor communication, misunderstandings and differences of opinion. Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child or adult at risk has a proportionate level of response. With this in mind practitioners should use their judgement to decide what is a satisfactory timescale for the child/adult or their organisation. Such discussions often achieve a shared understanding and agree a resolution and plan. These should be recorded by each agency in the relevant place, e.g. minutes of meetings or individual case notes.

This protocol acknowledges that in the majority of situations healthy challenge takes place between practitioners with early resolution being achieved. Practitioner challenge creates learning, the opportunity to understand different perspectives and this has a positive impact on children and adults.

If practitioners are unable to resolve differences within a suitable timescale, they should escalate that disagreement using this protocol, and record the process using the Escalation Monitoring Form.

**The escalation protocol adopts a three stage process. It is recognised that this process might not be appropriate in all settings especially where the escalating practitioner is the designated safeguarding lead, senior manager or does not have a line manager; for example, in schools, early years settings and for individual childminders. Where this is the case the escalating practitioner should follow the process at each stage and record accordingly on the monitoring form.**

### Examples of Potential Areas for Escalation

- A poorly framed or constructed referral by a specific agency
- A failure to make a referral to Children's/Adult's Social Care in a timely way
- Disagreement between agencies about interpretation and implementation of thresholds for intervention
- Concern or disagreement about the outcome of assessments, plans, decisions and whether the appropriate case management is occurring to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child/adult
- Where no or inadequate action is being taken by an agency or any other issue where a practitioner remains concerned about a child or adult
- Concern there is drift or unreasonable delay in progressing a case resulting in a lack of sustained change and the outcomes have not improved
- Where there are concerns about practitioner practice in any agency
- Where a practitioner is uncomfortable about the position taken by their own management

### Stage One: Line Manager to Line Manager\* Discussion

*(Management lead to be identified by each agency based on individual organisation structures)*

If the discussion between practitioners fails to resolve the issue, the escalating practitioner should raise the matter with their line manager or safeguarding lead. The line managers should then liaise with their counterpart in an attempt to reach a resolution. The escalating line manager should be clear that they wish to raise their concerns under the Warwickshire Safeguarding escalation process.

If a resolution cannot be reached, the disagreement should be escalated to stage two.

The Escalation Monitoring Form (appendix 1) must be completed by the escalating line manager and stored on the child's/adult's file. Agencies will be required to submit an annual return to Warwickshire Safeguarding detailing the number of escalations they have made, the number they have received and any themes and issues for future learning.

Where the escalating practitioner is concerned about a safeguarding decision made by their managers, they should escalate to the manager of their Line Manager, Safeguarding Lead or sideways to an alternative team/manager within their service, in accordance with their organisation's own internal escalation procedures.

## Stage Two: Senior Manager to Senior Manager\* Discussion

*(Senior Management lead to be identified by each agency based on individual organisation structures)*

If concerns remain unresolved at this stage a Senior Manager to Senior Manager discussion should take place to discuss the concerns, and if necessary, call a joint meeting with the involved practitioners and first line managers. Advice and support should also be sought from the designated safeguarding leads within the agencies (unless the escalating practitioner or manager is the designated safeguarding lead for their setting, e.g. a school or early years setting).

The escalating senior manager should be clear that they wish to raise their concerns under the Warwickshire Safeguarding escalation process.

The Escalation Monitoring Form (appendix 1) must be updated by the escalating Senior Manager and stored on the child's/adult's file.

Where the escalating practitioner is concerned about a safeguarding decision made by their managers, they should escalate to the manager of their Line Manager, Safeguarding Lead or sideways to an alternative team/manager within their service, in accordance with their organisation own internal escalation procedures.

## Stage Three: Safeguarding Partnership

In the unlikely event that the issue is not resolved by the steps described above and/or the discussions raise significant policy issues, the matter should be referred to Warwickshire Safeguarding Partnership in a timely way. This should include forwarding the Escalation Monitoring Form which should evidence what attempts have been made to resolve the issue. If necessary, a meeting should be convened to seek resolution.

## Monitoring Process

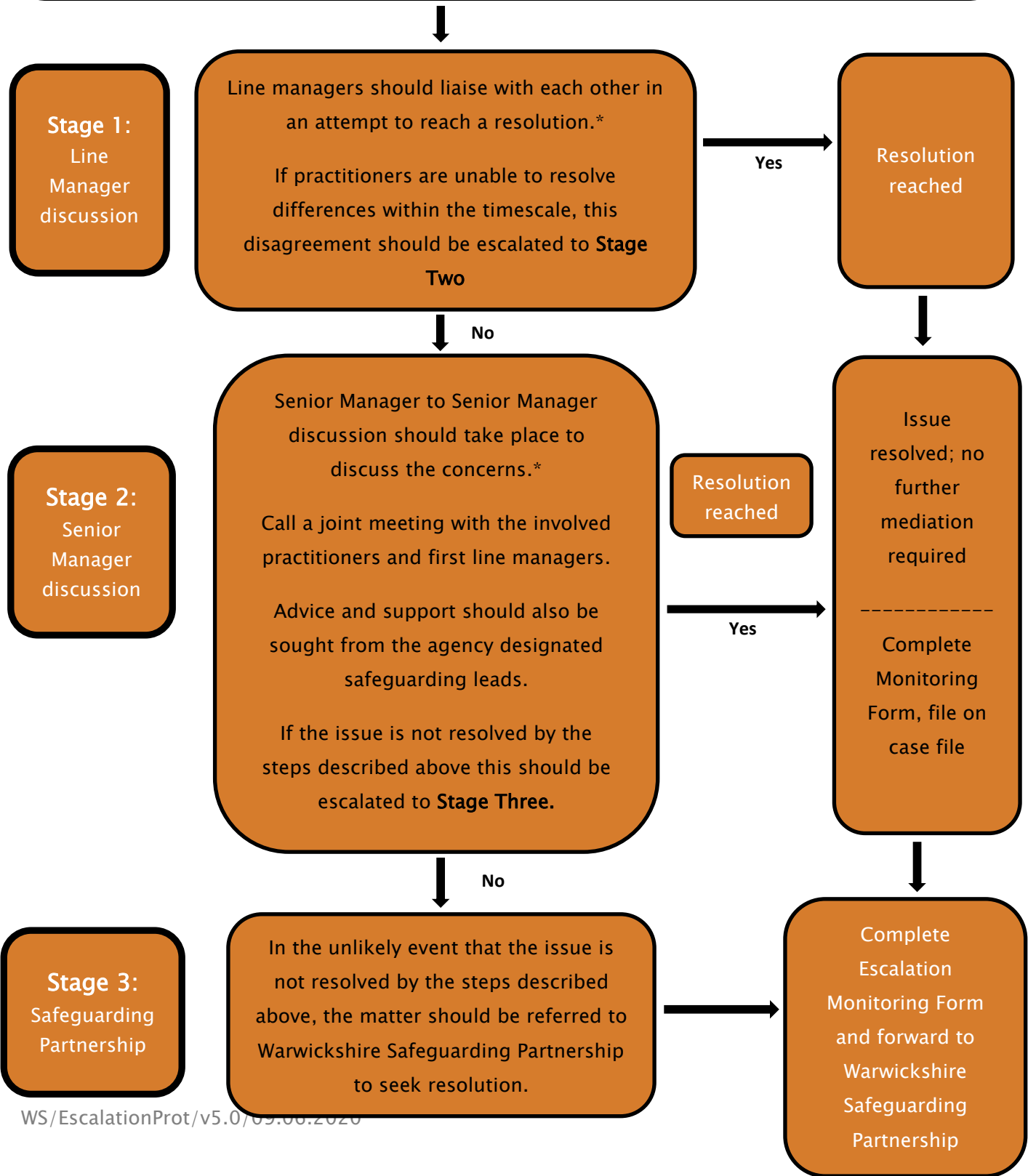
By completing the Escalation Monitoring Form at each stage assurance is provided that the concerns are being appropriately actioned. Agencies will be required to submit an annual return to Warwickshire Safeguarding, based on their completed Escalation Monitoring Forms, detailing the number of escalations they have made, the number they have received and any themes and issues. Warwickshire Safeguarding will review agency annual returns to determine whether there are any key trends being identified and whether any learning or policy amendments are required. This will be managed through the Safeguarding Reviews Subgroup.

*\*Please note, that at the point of the initial escalation each agency involved is to identify the name of the Line Manager and Senior Manager who is managing the escalation.*

# Process Flowchart

Practitioners involved should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within appropriate timescales. If practitioners are unable to resolve differences this disagreement should be escalated

\*It is recognised that this process might not be appropriate in all settings especially where the escalating practitioner is the designated safeguarding lead, senior manager or does not have a line manager. Where this is the case the escalating practitioner should follow the process at each stage and record accordingly on the monitoring form.



## Appendix 1: Warwickshire Safeguarding Escalation Monitoring Form – a tool to record decisions and to monitor the Escalation Process Protocol

*(Please return to Warwickshire Safeguarding **only if the escalation reaches Stage 3** at [wscb@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:wscb@warwickshire.gov.uk))*

Experience and outcomes of safeguarding reviews tell us how devastating practitioner disagreements can be to children and adults at risk, when concerns are raised but not addressed or when services are required but not provided in a timely fashion. This tool is a means to enable your service to record the escalation process and the agreed outcome of the use of the Escalation Protocol, and to aid Safeguarding Warwickshire to monitor its use and review the impact on any procedures/practice guidance.

<b>Child/Adult Name:</b>	<b>DOB:</b>	<b>Address:</b>
<b>Escalating organisation:</b>	<b>Recipient organisation:</b>	
<b>Escalator name and contact details:</b>	<b>Recipient name and contact details:</b>	
<b>Summary of reason for dispute. Please include views of any other agencies involved</b>		

<b>Response from the recipient:</b>	
<b>Agreed outcomes:</b>	
<b>Date agreed:</b>	
<b>Escalator signature:</b>	<b>Recipient signature:</b>
<b>Escalation stage that agreement was reached:</b>	<b>Time taken to reach resolution:</b>