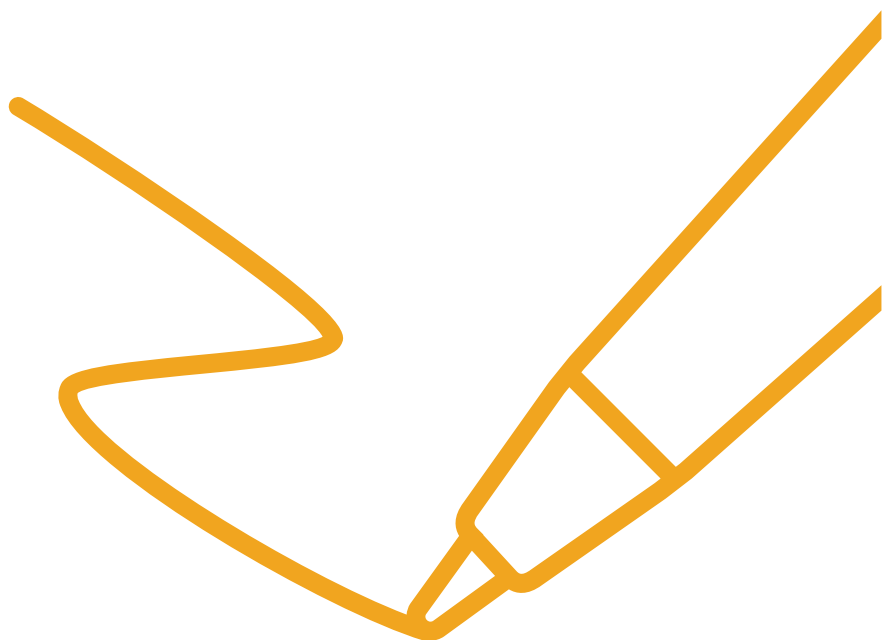




Escalation and resolution protocol

Guidance for staff on the process for
managing professional disagreements
in relation to adult safeguarding

Here's some extra help – if you need it.



Introduction

This guidance has been produced for staff, with the intention of summarising and clarifying the process for managing professional disagreements in relation to adult safeguarding. This includes where staff do not agree with the outcome of an adult safeguarding referral.

This guidance is not exhaustive and should be read alongside the [Sussex Safeguarding Adults Escalation and Resolution Protocol \(Sussex Safeguarding Adults Boards, 2023\)](#). That protocol includes guidance on safeguarding enquiries and mental capacity assessments.

Your responsibilities

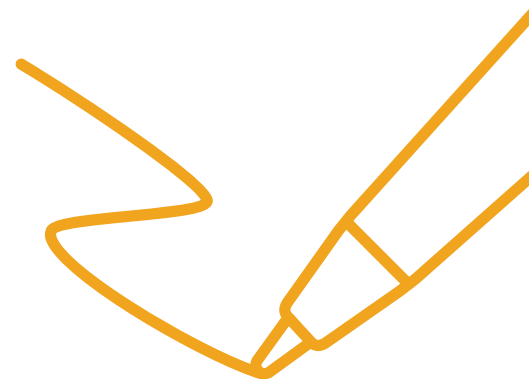
If you have concerns about an adult safeguarding decision made by another practitioner or agency, it is your responsibility to ensure that you:

- offer challenge in a professional and respectful manner;
- avoid putting the adult at risk, or distracting focus from the adult;
- resolve difficulties quickly and openly;
- look to resolve issues at a practitioner-to-practitioner level before escalating;
- keep the adult's desired outcomes central to discussions.

You may wish to use this protocol when you do not agree with:

- the outcome of a safeguarding referral to the local authority;
- the level of risk presented for an adult;
- practitioner or agency roles and responsibilities;
- the outcome of a safeguarding enquiry;
- a mental capacity or best interests decision.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.



The escalation and resolution process

If you have concerns about an adult safeguarding decision made by another practitioner or agency, you should refer to the following process. Once a resolution has been achieved, you can stop the process, regardless of which stage you are at. Each stage of the process should take no longer than 7-10 working days.

Stage one: Discuss your concerns with a manager in your own organisation, before attempting to resolve the problem at practitioner level between agencies, i.e. between the individuals who disagree. Be clear about:

- what the problem is and what you are disagreeing about – be specific;
- the potential risk and impact to wellbeing of the adult;
- what you are hoping to achieve with the resolution.

Stage two: Ask your manager to raise the issue with the equivalent manager in the other agency.

Stage three: The two managers should report to their designated safeguarding leads, who should attempt to resolve the issue. If needed, they can request support from the Principal Social Worker. The safeguarding leads should consider:

- what legislation says about the issue; and
- what the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures say.

Stage four: Safeguarding leads in each agency should report to their head of service to find a resolution. At this stage, safeguarding leads should also notify the Safeguarding Adults Board representative for their agency. Safeguarding leads and heads of service should notify the Board Manager if:

- they identify learning opportunities for agencies; or
- they identify gaps within existing policies or procedures which have led to the disagreement.

Stage five: If the disagreement has not been resolved, the final decision for conflict resolution lies with the Chief Officer for the local authority. The Chief Officer will record and share their decision with those involved.