



Bromley Safeguarding  
Children Partnership

## **Escalation Policy**

### **Resolving Professional Difference**

**May 2023**

[www.bromleysafeguarding.org](http://www.bromleysafeguarding.org)

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## Version Control

Version 1.2	Draft circulated: 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Kerry Davies
Version 1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Version Control added to front cover</li><li>• 1.1 reworded</li><li>• 2.4 added sentence "The manager may wish to take advice from their own Safeguarding Team"</li></ul>	Kerry Davies
Final version	Ratified 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	Jim Gamble
Version 1.4	Revision due July 2019. Updates made post transition from LSCB to statutory multi-agency arrangements (BSCP).	Hazel Blackman
Version 1.5	Ratified 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2019 Revision due December 2021	Jim Gamble
Version 1.6	Changed titles of Stages and added examples of jobs for clarity. Splitting Stage 3 into two separate stages and re-numbering. Introduction of section 3 – timescales and notification to BSCP team for Stage 3 and 4 escalations.	Changes agreed at COG subgroup on 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Version 1.7	Ratified 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2021	Jim Gamble
Version 1.8	Updates made following changes with Mash and the new Children and Families Hub	Hazel Blackman

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Working together effectively to safeguard children is dependent on open and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation. Agencies and professionals should not be defensive if challenged and should respond with an open mind and act proportionately.
- 1.2 Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. This inter-agency policy defines the process for resolving such professional difference and should be read alongside the London Child Protection Procedures and relevant internal policies on escalating matters of concern.
- 1.3 Disagreements can arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:
  - **levels of need**
  - **roles and responsibilities**
  - **the need for action**
  - **progressing plans and communication.**
- 1.4 Where professionals consider that the practice of other professionals is placing children at risk of harm, they must be assertive, act swiftly and ensure that they challenge the relevant professionals in line with this policy.
  - The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional activity.
  - Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected.
  - • If the professionals are unable to resolve differences within the timescale given in section 3, their disagreement must be addressed by more experienced / more senior staff.
  - Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage
- 1.5 **If a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, a referral must be made to Children and Families Hub and the designated safeguarding lead in your agency should be informed immediately.**
- 1.6 Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate can initially consult their supervisor/manager to clarify their thinking if required. They should be able to evidence the nature and source of the concerns and should keep a formal record of all discussions.
- 1.7 Individuals may wish to refer to the Escalation Policy for their own organisation to clarify the approach required.
- 1.8 Concerns relating to decisions, suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work within an agency, should be raised in line with each agencies' policies for dealing with such matters, including but not limited to those setting out the arrangements for *whistleblowing*.

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## **2. Stages of Resolution**

### **2.1 Stage One: Professional to Professional**

2.2 The people who disagree must have a discussion to resolve the problem. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be a telephone conversation or a face to face meeting. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

### **2.3 Stage Two: Manager to Manager**

2.4 If the problem is not resolved, the worker should contact their supervisor/ manager within their own agency who should have a discussion with the equivalent supervisor/ manager in the other agency. The manager may wish to take advice from their own Safeguarding Team.

2.5 If the case involves a child subject to a Child Protection Plan or a Looked After Child, the relevant Child Protection Chair or Independent Reviewing Officer must also be notified.

### **2.6 Stage Three: Senior Manager to Senior Manager**

2.7 If the problem is not resolved at Stage Two, the supervisor/ manager reports to their respective senior manager, Health Named Professional/Head of Safeguarding/ Safeguarding Lead, CSC Head of Service, school DSL. . These two senior managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

2.8 At this stage an escalation notification should be sent to BSCP business manager via [BSCP@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:BSCP@bromley.gov.uk)

### **2.9 Stage Four: Director to Director**

2.10 If there remains disagreement at senior management level, there should be a discussion between Directors (or equivalent) in each agency. These are usually also members of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership Board (BSCP). Where they are not, the BSCP Board member representing the sector/agency should also be informed of the escalation to Stage 4<sup>1</sup>.

2.11 Directors should seek resolution before the case is raised with the BSCP Chair.

2.12 Designated health professionals will become involved at Stage 4 escalations to give professional health safeguarding advice.

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<sup>11</sup> If you are unsure who your agency's representative is on the BSCP Board, please contact the BSCP Administrator on [BSCP@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:BSCP@bromley.gov.uk) or 0208 461 7816.

2.13 At this stage an escalation notification should be sent to BSCP business manager via [BSCP@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:BSCP@bromley.gov.uk)

## 2.14 Stage Five: Resolution by BSCP Chair

2.15 If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned (and after the agency BSCP members have been involved), the matter should be referred by the concerned agency to the Chair of the BSCP, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct with the relevant senior managers and Directors, or convene a Resolution Panel.

2.16 The agency raising the dispute must e-mail the details through to [bscp@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:bscp@bromley.gov.uk) for the attention of the independent chair.

2.17 The Resolution Panel must consist of senior officers from three agencies who are members of the Executive of the BSCP. The senior officers must include the agencies concerned in the professional differences.

2.18 The Panel will receive representations from those involved in the dispute and will collectively resolve the professional differences concerned.

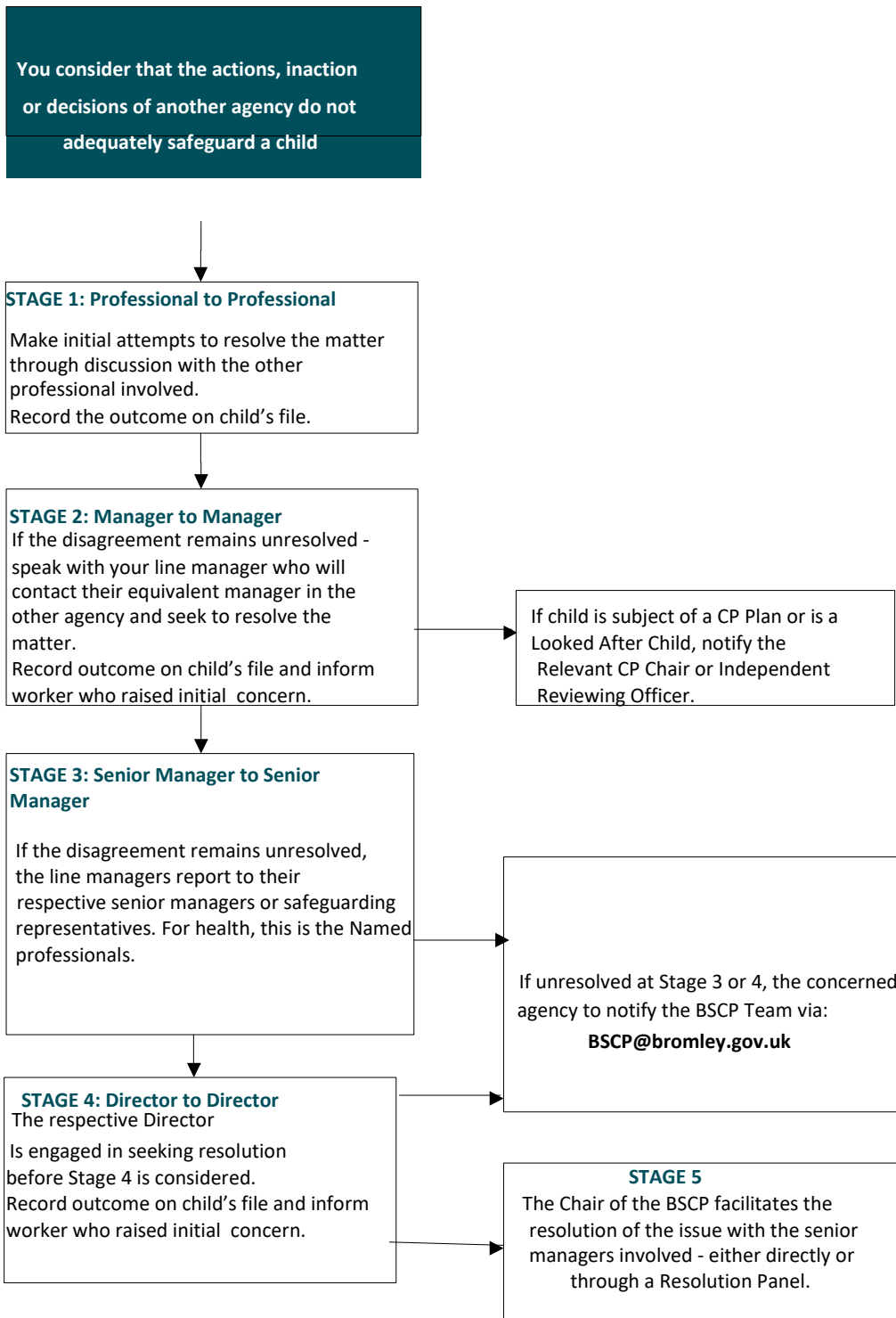
## 3. Timeliness of escalation and resolution

	Timescale	Staff Involved (examples)	Other action
Stage 1	1 day	Frontline Professionals – social worker, teacher, nurse, doctor, police constable, health visitor, midwife, parenting practitioner, GP, youth worker	
Stage 2	2 days	Health Manager, CSC Team/Group Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead in a school/EY setting, Police Sergeant, GP safeguarding lead in surgery/practice	
Stage 3	2 days	Health Named Professional/ Head of Safeguarding/ Safeguarding Lead; CSC Head of Service; Headteacher, Police Inspector	Notify BSCP
Stage 4	2 days	CSC Director/Assistant Director; Police DCI/Superintendent; Health Director/ Head of Nursing, with advice from CCG Designated Professionals	Notify BSCP
Stage 5	3 days	BSCP Chair +/- Resolution Panel	Notify BSCP

## 4. Recording Professional Disputes

- 4.1 At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing on the child's file and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern.

## 5. Escalation Policy Flowchart



If you're unsure who your agency's representative is on the BSCP Partnership, please contact the BSCP Administrator on [BSCP@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:BSCP@bromley.gov.uk) or 0208 461 7816.



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