



**West of Berkshire**

# **Safeguarding Adults Board**

**Reading, West Berkshire & Wokingham**

## **Resolving Professional Disagreements**

**In cases that meet the statutory criteria for Safeguarding  
Adults**

## **Escalation Policy**

**June 2025**

**Version 4**

## 1. Introduction

Effective working together depends on an open and honest approach to relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation in a multi-agency approach to safeguard adults. Occasionally situations arise when an agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard an adult at risk of abuse or neglect. Such situations have been highlighted in several Safeguarding Adult Reviews. This multi-agency guidance defines the process for resolving such professional differences, when a case meets the statutory criteria for safeguarding adults , and should be read alongside the [Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](#) as well as relevant internal organisation policies on escalating matters in dispute.

Disagreements in cases that meet the statutory criteria for safeguarding adults, could arise in several areas such as:

- Whether a safeguarding concern is reportable or non-reportable;
- Practitioner's roles and responsibilities;
- Lack of action from an agency; or
- Sooner than expected case closure.

This list is not exhaustive.

This policy provides practitioners with the steps to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

1. Avoiding disputes that put adults at further risk or take away focus from the adult;
2. Resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly; or
3. Identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the adult at risk is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the earliest possible stage, however if an adult is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, the designated safeguarding lead in your agency and relevant Local Authority should be informed immediately.

## 2. The 4 Stages of Resolution

### Stage One: Discuss with the other Professional/Practitioner

Those individuals who are unable to reach an agreement should have a discussion to resolve the problem. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be a telephone conversation or a virtual '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 if they are not supported by their respective agency.

### **Stage Two: Escalate to Line Manager**

If the disagreement is not resolved, the worker should contact their immediate Line Manager who they report to, or in their absence another suitable manager. This Manager should have a discussion with the equivalent Line Manager, or in their absence another suitable manager in the other agency. If the case involves an adult who is already subject to an adult safeguarding plan, prior to the current disagreement, then this should be brought to the attention of the safeguarding lead with responsibility for that plan, if they are not already involved in the disagreement.

### **Stage Three: Escalate to your Service or Senior Managers**

If the problem cannot be resolved at Stage Two above, then the Line Manager should report the situation to their respective manager who may be a Service Lead, Senior Manager or to a Named Designated Lead for Safeguarding. It is then for these Managers to attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

If the disagreement cannot be resolved at this stage, then the expectation is that escalation should continue through the appropriate tiers of management within each agency until the matter is resolved. The respective agency members of West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAB) should be engaged in seeking resolution before the case is ultimately raised with the Independent Chair of SAB.

### **Stage Four: Resolution by the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAB)**

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences between the agencies concerned (and after the SAB agency members have been involved), the matter should then as a very last resort be referred by the agency concerned to the Independent Chair of SAB, via the SAB Business Manager. The Chair may then either seek to resolve the issue directly with the relevant senior managers or convene a Resolution Panel. The agency raising the dispute must e-mail this form: [Form for submitting cases for escalation and resolution to the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board \(SAB\) – Stage 4](#) through to the SAB Business Unit Team who will raise the matter with the chair at [sabwestofberkshire@reading.gov.uk](mailto:sabwestofberkshire@reading.gov.uk).

Any Resolution Panel convened at stage four must be composed of Senior Officers from the agencies who are members of the SAB. The Senior Officers should, as far as practicable, include the agencies engaged in the escalation process.

The Resolution Panel will receive representations from those involved in the dispute and will collectively resolve the professional differences concerned, by the application of relevant legislation, policy and best practice. The welfare of the individual and their

views will be the primary concern, in line with the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal.

### **3. Additional notes**

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing within the adult's records and shared with relevant personnel, which should include the worker who raised the initial concern.

If any agency involved in the escalation process does not have direct representation, for the resolution panel at stage 4, then this should be referred to the SAB Business Manager, who will arrange proxy representation on the resolution panel.

### **4. Acknowledgments**

Thanks, and acknowledgment to: Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Board, Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board, Walsall Safeguarding Partnership, Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board, Cheshire West and Chester Local Safeguarding Adults Board.

### **5. Escalation Flowchart**

**Only cases that meet the statutory criteria for safeguarding adults can be considered for this process.**

**Key principle:** it is every professional's (professionals include volunteers) responsibility to problem solve. The aim must be to resolve professional disagreements at the earliest stage and lowest level and to ensure the adult concerned is safeguarded whilst the dispute is resolved.

### Stage 1

If a professional is unhappy with a decision or response from any organisation arising out of an adult safeguarding procedure. Professional raises issue directly with professional colleague concerned to seek resolution.

Timescales — stage completed within 1 day of the concern arising (act immediately if there is a risk of significant harm).

Process ends if resolved at this stage.



### Stage 2

Professional contacts Line Manager who will then have a decision with the equivalent Line Manager in the other agency.

If adult at risk is already subject to a safeguarding plan, the assigned safeguarding lead for that plan is informed of the professional disagreement, if they are not already involved.

Timescales — stage completed within 2 days of the concern arising (act immediately if there is a risk of significant harm).

Process ends if resolved at this stage.



### Stage 3

Line Manager reports situation to their manager who will then attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussions.

Designated Safeguarding Lead within the agency are to be informed of the disagreement.

Discussions should be escalated through the appropriate management tiers within the agency until resolved. SAB members from the agency to be engaged in seeking a resolution before moving to stage 4 in the process.

Timescales — stage completed within 5 days of the concern arising (act immediately if there is a risk of significant harm).

Process ends if resolved at this stage.



### Stage 4

Case to go to resolution panel, complete form and submit to SAB.

Timescales — stage completed (including resolution panel and agreed action plan) within 10 days of the concern arising (act immediately if there is a risk of significant harm).

## Appendix 1 - Stage Four – Senior operational manager and/or SAB representative

Adult Social Care Providers (Agency / Organisation)	Manager / Position
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust	Heidi Ilsley, Deputy Director of Nursing, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust <a href="mailto:Heidi.Ilsley@berkshire.nhs.uk">Heidi.Ilsley@berkshire.nhs.uk</a> Mobile: 07717 653897
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	Tel: 03000 616161
Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (Berkshire West)	Kathy Kelly, Designated Head of Safeguarding Adults. Berkshire West, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board. <a href="mailto:kathy.kelly2@nhs.net">kathy.kelly2@nhs.net</a> 0118 9503094 Mobile : 07990 741591
Continuing Health Care	Diane Utley Assistant Director CHC <a href="mailto:bobicb.chcduty@nhs.net">bobicb.chcduty@nhs.net</a> Escalation emails: include FAO Manager
Healthwatch Reading, Healthwatch West Berkshire & Healthwatch Wokingham Borough (hosted by The Advocacy People)	Jamie Evans Area Director, The Advocacy People <a href="mailto:jamie.evans@theadvocacypeople.org.uk">jamie.evans@theadvocacypeople.org.uk</a> Mobile: 07842 443299
The Probation Service	Chantal Foster, Head of Probation Delivery Unit, The Probation Service <a href="mailto:chantal.foster@justice.gov.uk">chantal.foster@justice.gov.uk</a> 07922 814895
Reading Borough Council	Melissa Wise, Executive Director – Communities & Adult Social Care (DCASC), Reading Borough Council <a href="mailto:melissa.wise@reading.gov.uk">melissa.wise@reading.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0118 937 4945 Mobile: 07580 871066
Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	Darci Hellend Safeguarding Manager <a href="mailto:hellendd@rbfrs.co.uk">hellendd@rbfrs.co.uk</a> Mobile: 07774 215674
Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust	Jessica Higson, Deputy Chief Nurse, Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Tel: 07776 457988 Email: <a href="mailto:Jessica.higson@royalberkshire.nhs.uk">Jessica.higson@royalberkshire.nhs.uk</a>
South Central Ambulance Service	Kirsty Lane, Named Professional for Safeguarding Adults,

	<p>South Central Ambulance Service  <a href="mailto:Kirsty.Lane@scas.nhs.uk">Kirsty.Lane@scas.nhs.uk</a>  Mobile: 07549 434741</p>
Thames Valley Police	<p>C/Supt Felicity Parker,  Thames Valley Police  <a href="mailto:felicity.parker@thamesvalley.police.uk">felicity.parker@thamesvalley.police.uk</a>  Mobile: 07974 973924</p>
Voluntary Sector Organisations – Reading	<p>Rachel Spencer, CEO,  Reading Voluntary Action  <a href="mailto:rachel.spencer@rva.org.uk">rachel.spencer@rva.org.uk</a>  0118 9372273  Mobile: 07460 244432</p>
Voluntary Sector Organisations – West Berks	<p>Rachel Peters, CEO,  Volunteer Centre, West Berkshire  <a href="mailto:rachel@vcwb.org.uk">rachel@vcwb.org.uk</a>  07789 794481</p>
Voluntary Sector Organisations – Wokingham	<p>Philip Bell, CEO,  Involve Community Services  <a href="mailto:Philip.Bell@involve.community">Philip.Bell@involve.community</a>  01344 304404</p>
West Berkshire Council	<p>Paul Coe, Service Director, Adult Social Care,  West Berkshire Council  <a href="mailto:Paul.Coe@westberks.gov.uk">Paul.Coe@westberks.gov.uk</a>  Mobile: 07876 391174</p>
West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board	<p>Business Unit  West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board  SABWestofberkshire@reading.gov.uk  Mobile: 07718 120601</p>
Wokingham Borough Council	<p>Lorna Pearce, Service Director – Safeguarding, Quality &amp; Governance,  Wokingham Borough Council  <a href="mailto:Lorna.Pearce@wokingham.gov.uk">Lorna.Pearce@wokingham.gov.uk</a>  0118 2378200</p>

## Appendix 2

### Form for submitting cases for escalation and resolution to the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAB) – Stage 4

Please ensure that you have considered [Resolving Professional Disagreements in cases that meet the statutory criteria for Safeguarding Adults](#) before completing the form

**Only cases that meet the statutory criteria for safeguarding adults can be considered for this process.**

<b>Name of Adult:</b>	
<b>Date of Birth:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Local Authority Area:</b>	
<b>Name of Manager who escalated concern at Step 2, Role and Agency:</b>	
<b>Name of Manager who escalated concern at Step 3, Role and Agency:</b>	
<b>Date that Step 3 was concluded</b>	
<b>Name of Board Members, Roles and Agencies Involved:</b>	
<b>Brief details about the disagreement:</b>	
<b>What was the methodology used to resolve the disagreement?</b>	

<b>Views of the adult at risk:</b>	
<b>Please submit this form to:</b>	<a href="mailto:sabwestofberkshire@reading.gov.uk">sabwestofberkshire@reading.gov.uk</a>