# **Professional Challenge and Effective Resolution Process.**

All agencies have a duty to work co-operatively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Effective partnership working is vital to ensure that outcomes for children and families are central to all assessment, planning and intervention. This includes the need to consider differing views and experiences which enhance the value of exchanging ideas and developing critical thinking in how best to achieve effective outcomes.

There will be times when disagreements occur which require professional challenge and debate to achieve resolution. This process applies to all professionals working with children and families across Rochdale and details the steps that must be taken to resolve professional differences of opinion about actions taken, or decision making, in respect of arrangements for helping or protecting children.

## **Principles in Practice:**

* Challenge is positive and should always be focused on the desired outcome for the child and family.
* The safety and wellbeing of the child is always paramount. At no time must professional disagreement detract from ensuring that the child is safeguarded.
* Where a professional/ agency believes that another professional/ agency is not meeting their responsibilities, or that a child is not being safeguarded, they have a responsibility for raising concerns through these agreed procedures.
* This procedure should be applied at all stages of the safeguarding pathway. Ensure your safeguarding lead is consulted and updated throughout the challenge process.
* Transparency, openness, willingness to understand and respect of individual and agency views are core aspects of safe and effective multi agency working.
* Challenge should be restorative and relationship based. Language should be respectful and discussions between practitioners should always take place first.
* Challenge and escalation should be resolved in a timely manner, clearly recorded on agency systems and framed around meeting the child’s needs.
* If you have an immediate concern regarding the safety of a child, this should be reported following local safeguarding reporting mechanisms (Rochdale EHASH)
* Should a professional believe a situation needs urgent resolution, it maybe appropriate to begin the resolution process at a senior manager level of the procedure. Should urgent resolution be required, the onus is on the professional/ agency invoking the escalation to contact the relevant person/agency by telephone, not waiting for a response to an email.

Please attempt to resolve any disagreements informally, before initiating the formal process, in line with the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures Manual:

[Resolving Professional Differences/Escalation Policy](https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/resolving-professional-differences-escalation-policy?search=escalation)

**Resolving professional differences in individual cases.**

Where a professional/agency believes that another professional/ agency is not meeting their safeguarding responsibilities, and that safeguarding arrangements and procedures are not being appropriately applied, they have a duty to challenge and resolve this using the following staged process.

There may be situations where the quality and effectiveness of the help and support being provided to a child and their family is at the core of the difference of opinion and there are other mechanisms to address this within individual agencies and a discussion may be required between line managers or senior managers internally.

**Stage 1 – Practitioner to Practitioner**

Initial attempts to reach a solution should be at a practitioner/ case worker level between agencies. The initial attempt to resolve the difference of opinion should be within a timescale that safeguards the child, prevents things from getting worse, and when needed, protects the child from harm.

The respective workers must identify explicitly what is expected, why they believe that the safeguarding arrangements are not being applied and what needs to be done to ensure that this is achieved.

Both practitioners should ensure that any agreed outcome is clear, that both have the same understanding of the agreed solution and that this is recorded clearly and consistently on each agency’s case record.

**Stage 2 – Line Manager to Line Manager**

If unresolved, the concern should be referred by each worker to their respective line manager who should discuss this with their counterpart in the other agency.

Line managers should attempt to resolve the disagreement and ensure that clear records are kept at all stages, including written confirmation between the parties about the nature of the challenge and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

## **Stage 3 – Formal stage Senior Manager to Senior Manager**

If professional disagreements remain unresolved, following discussions between respective managers, then this should be stepped up to senior managers within each organization, using RBSCP Resolution Notice in **Appendix A**. A copy of which should also be sent to the RBSCP on [RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk)

This forms the formal stage of the challenge / escalation procedure. Senior Managers from respective agencies will agree the next steps to resolve the issues and update RBSCP on progress within a timely manner. RBSCP will monitor Stage 3 challenges to assist in identifying emerging themes and safeguarding practice issues.

**Stage 3 - Multi-Agency Discussion**

If professional challenge remains unresolved at a senior management level, there will be a need to arrange a multi-agency discussion to review the case with all appropriate practitioners and managers involved. The Head of Safeguarding is to be included and consider if they should chair the multi-agency meeting independently, to support resolution.

The senior managers will agree who will chair the meeting and a written record will be made of the key areas of discussion, disagreement, agreements and actions. Children’s Services and all agencies involved will retain such record on the child’s file.

**Stage 4 – Safeguarding Partner and Independent Scrutineer**

In the unlikely event issues remains unresolved, senior managers will refer the matter to the Rochdale Safeguarding Children Partnership for discussion and resolution.

The original referral should be updated to explain the outcome of Stage 3 activities and outstanding matters for exploration and sent to [RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk) copying in the Senior Managers involved at Stage 3.

The RBSCP Business Manager will explore the matter with the Executive Partners. The Independent Scrutineer may be requested to facilitate a mediation meeting with the relevant senior managers, practitioners &/or managers involved.

This process is to be used in conjunction with the following:

* Greater Manchester Resolving Professional Differences /escalation Policy

[Resolving Professional Differences/Escalation Policy](https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/resolving-professional-differences-escalation-policy?search=escalation)

* Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures Manual on: <https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/>
* Rochdale Whistleblowing & Raising Concerns at Work Policy <https://greatermanchesterscp.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/whistleblowing-or-raising-concerns-at-work>

**Stage 3**

Formal Challenge / Escalation

**Concerns/issues unresolved/case escalated.**

Go straight to Stage 3-4 if resolution requires this level of response.

[Escalate to your line](https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_resolv_prof_dis.html#LSCB) manager. Yo[ur line manager shoul](mailto:SSCP@SALFORD.GOV.UK)d contact their equivalent in the other agency.

**Stage 2**

Line manager – Line manager

# **Professional Challenge and Effective Resolution Process**

Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership

If the matter cannot be resolved between the agency management in a suitable timescale paramount to the outcome for the child, the matter will be formally referred to the RBSCP, via an updated Resolution Notice, noting the steps taken at Stage 3.

[RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk)

The RBSCP will utilise the role of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and Independent Scrutineer to achieve resolution.

If stage 2 does not resolve the disagreement, the RBSCP Resolution Notice (**Appendix 1**) should be used and the escalated to next level of management in the organization, copying in Rochdale Safeguarding Partnership on [RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk)

The matter should proceed through agency management hierarchies and fully recorded; they may require multi-agency meetings, independently chaired by Head of Safeguarding to support timely resolution.

Rochdale Safeguarding Partnership should be informed at Stage 3 and updated until the matter is resolved. RBSP will monitor Stage 3 matters, to review themes & support safeguarding practice.

**Timescales**

Discuss with your designated lead for safeguarding at each stage.

Timescales should be agreed at each stage, ensuring the outcome for the child drives the agreed timescales. Each stage should not exceed 10 working days.

A clear record should be kept by everyone at all stages in relevant recording systems

**Stage 4**

[Matter raised](https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_resolv_prof_dis.html#LSCB) by practition[er to practitioner either in writing or](mailto:SSCP@SALFORD.GOV.UK) verbally (undertake discussions verbally so all viewpoints can be understood but recorded). Attempt to resolve as soon as possible. Inform the lead professional/ chair at this stage.

**Stage 1**

Practitioner – Practitioner

Single Point of Contact (SPOC) List Rochdale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Contact details** |
| **Rochdale Borough Council’s Children’s Social Care** | Escalations should be directed to the relevant team in Children’s Social Care:  Head of Service EHASH, Duty & Assessment  [Tracy.Chatterton@Rochdale.Gov.UK](mailto:Tracy.Chatterton@Rochdale.Gov.UK)  Head of Service, Family Support & Protection [Michelle.Rhodes@Rochdale.Gov.UK](mailto:Michelle.Rhodes@Rochdale.Gov.UK)  Head of Service, Cared for Children  [rachel.meyrick@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.meyrick@rochdale.gov.uk)  Head of Service, Cared For Children Resource [Tracey.Johnson@Rochdale.Gov.UK](mailto:Tracey.Johnson@Rochdale.Gov.UK)  Head of Service, Youth Justice and Complex Safeguarding  [Tracey.staines2@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:Tracey.staines2@rochdale.gov.uk)  Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance & PSW  [Bev.Paris@Rochdale.Gov.UK](mailto:Bev.Paris@Rochdale.Gov.UK) |
| **Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Unit** | FOA Business Manager  [RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk) |
| **Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHASH)** | [ehash@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:ehash@rochdale.gov.uk)  01706 925 879 |
| **Pennine Care Foundation Trust** | [pcn-tr.safeguarding@nhs.net](mailto:pcn-tr.safeguarding@nhs.net)  0161 716 3785  Escalations should be directed to the named nurse for safeguarding children and cared for children. |
| **Rochdale Care Organisation** | [srh-tr.hmrchildprotection@nhs.net](mailto:srh-tr.hmrchildprotection@nhs.net)  0161 716 5979  Escalations should be directed to the relevant named safeguarding professional. |
| **Greater Manchester Police** | [Rochdale.publicprotection@gmp.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Rochdale.publicprotection@gmp.pnn.police.uk)  All escalations to GMP must include a telephone call to ensure the correct officer is being contacted. |
| **NHS GM IC HMR** | [gmicb-hmr.safeguarding@nhs.net](mailto:gmicb-hmr.safeguarding@nhs.net)  01706 664180  Escalations should be directed to the designated nurse for safeguarding children. |

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| --- | --- |
| **Education Establishments** | **Stage 1 escalations:** school designated safeguarding lead **Stage 2 escalations:** school head teacher (if different to DSL)  **Contact to be made with the school to clarify designated safeguarding lead arrangements**  **Any other escalations:**  [early.help@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:early.help@rochdale.gov.uk)  Please direct to Education Safeguarding Officer. |
| **Rochdale Borough Council Adult Care** | [adult.care@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:adult.care@rochdale.gov.uk)  0300 303 8886 |
| **Rochdale Boroughwide Housing** | [asb.reports@rbh.org.uk](mailto:asb.reports@rbh.org.uk)  Escalations should be directed to RBH Safeguarding Team. |
| **Early Break** | [hedwards@earlybreak.co.uk](mailto:hedwards@earlybreak.co.uk)  Main office number: 0161 723 3880 |
| **Probation Service** | [GMPS.rochdale@justice.gov.uk](mailto:GMPS.rochdale@justice.gov.uk)  0161 676 6200  Escalations should be addressed to the Assistant Chief Officer for Bury Rochdale |

Please contact [RBSB.admin@rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.admin@rochdale.gov.uk) with any updates that are required to the SPOC list.

**With thanks to Salford Safeguarding Children Partnership for allowing Rochdale to adapt this document.**

**APPENDIX 1**

**Professional Challenge & Effective Resolution Notification**

**THIS DOCUMENT MUST BE SENT/STORED SECURELY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date of Notification** |  |
| **Name of Child/Young Person** |  |
| **D.O.B** |  |
| **Agency Reference Number** |  |
| **Professional Challenge Notice Completed by:** | |
| **Name** |  |
| **Role** |  |
| **Agency/Team** |  |
| **Contact Details** |  |
| **Notification has been sent to:** | 1.  2.  Copy in - [RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk) |
| **Stage of Challenge** | **Stage 3** (highlight / delete as appropriate) |
| **Stage 4** (highlight / delete as appropriate) |
| **Summary of Challenge** | |
|  | |
| **Evidence of Informal Challenge at Stages 1-2 and the Outcome.** | |
|  | |
| **If this is a Stage 4 Notification, please record all steps taken at Stage 3 and what elements have not been resolved?** | |
| ONLY Complete if Stage 3 has not achieved resolution | |
| **Detail desired outcome and resolution, required from this professional challenge?** | |
|  | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Date Outcome Resolved** | **Supporting Evidence**  Embed written confirmation between parties about the agreed outcome |
| **Stage 3** |  |  |
| **Stage 4** |  |  |

Please update [RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk](mailto:RBSB.Admin@Rochdale.gov.uk) with outcomes from Stage 3 and 4 Notifications.

Please ensure all discussions are formally recorded on agency case records.