



RESOLVING INTER-AGENCY DISAGREEMENTS

Protocol for the Resolution of Professional Disagreement Between Agencies Working with Children in Blackburn with Darwen

Generally there are good working relationships between agencies, but occasionally there will be a difference of professional views. This protocol is designed with the intention of clarifying the actions required within Blackburn with Darwen where there is a professional disagreement.

What happens when agencies cannot agree?

Stage 1:

If professionals are unable to reach agreement about the way forward regarding an individual issue then their disagreement must be addressed by more senior staff.

In most cases this will mean the first line managers of the agencies involved discussing the issue of dispute and seeking to reach a resolution.

Stage 2:

If the issue cannot be resolved at this level then the matter must be referred up through each agencies line management structure without delay to a Service Leader or equivalent (e.g. named/designated safeguarding professional).

Stage 3:

If the issue cannot be resolved at Service Leader (or equivalent) level then consideration should be given to progressing the dispute through the further layers of more senior management up to, for example, Head of Service, Assistant Director or Director.

In situations where such senior officers have become involved in resolving disagreements between agencies and those disputes relate to the safeguarding needs of individual children, the LSCB Team (Safeguarding Unit) must be made aware of this. The purpose of such notification is to help monitor interagency safeguarding activity, and to identify issues which may benefit from any LSCB Quality Assurance scrutiny. The agency which found it necessary to escalate an

issue to such a high level in another organisation should advise the other organisation of their intention to advise the LSCB and complete Appendix A.

It is acknowledged that some organisations have flat management structures. Where this is the case, the same individual manager may have involvement in more than one of the above stages.

Each stage (1, 2 or 3) should be completed within 5 working days (15 working days maximum)

Where there is a need for intervention to prevent a life threatening episode (for example risk of suicide) immediate action to reduce the risk of harm will be required by all relevant parties whilst the dispute is ongoing. In such circumstances, where certain agencies maintain a position of non-involvement and other agencies disagree with this position, the Head of Safeguarding should be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Written records of all these discussions must be kept.

What happens when disagreements need to be resolved very quickly in order to safeguard a child's welfare?

Professional judgement should always be used.

For a variety of reasons there may be a delay in managers at levels 1 and 2 responding to telephone calls or emails. When this occurs careful consideration should be given to involving managers at the next level of the management structure by letting them know there is a disagreement, that a speedy response is required to safeguard the child's welfare and that in the absence of such a response, they will be contacted to help progress the disagreement further.

Exceptions

When there is disagreement about the need to convene a Child Protection Case Conference, the procedure at section 3.8 of LSCB policy and procedures should be followed.

**BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD
RESOLVING INTER-AGENCY DISAGREEMENTS**

Appendix A - Stage 3 Monitoring Information

The LSCB should be informed if a case reaches Stage 3 by returning this completed document to paul.lee@blackburn.gov.uk.

Or by post to *Paul Lee, Head of Operations & Safeguarding, 3rd Floor 10 Duke Street, Blackburn, BB2 1DH*

Date of Referral:		
Name of Referrer:		
Job Title:		
Address/Email Address:		
Family Details	<u>First name and Surname</u>	<u>DOB</u>
Parents:		
Children:		
Family Address:		
Agencies Involved:		
Issues of Concern/Nature of Disagreement:		
Dates and Outcome of Stages 1 and 2:		

Stage 3 Meeting/Discussion Date

Names of Senior Officers involved at Stage 3

Outcome