Gateshead Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (GSCP)
Escalation and Challenge Protocol

Introduction

The purpose of this Protocol is to ensure a prompt, sensitive and professional response to the management of escalating issues and constructively challenging agencies regarding their practice in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Gateshead. (This includes children under all aspects of their journey - Family Help, Child Protection, Children in Our Care and so on.)

Who can raise issues using the GSCP Escalation and Challenge Protocol?

If you have immediate concerns for the welfare of a child, you must report this through a relevant referral.

If you have concerns regarding a professional who has placed a child at risk of harm, please follow the guidance in What is the role of the LADO and the LADO referral form.

All professionals have a responsibility to escalate issues and challenge other professionals where they are concerned about the welfare of a child or feel a child is not receiving the right level of intervention. This can be at any time in a child's journey, such as contact, referral, Strategy Meeting, or following a Child Protection Conference.

This is a different pathway to raising dissent in a Child Protection Conference (dissent policy)

If professionals have concerns **following** a Child Protection Conference about decisions made in the Conference or Plans stepped down, and the dissent process has not been followed, these should be raised in the first Core Group meeting which is an opportunity to reflect on the Plan. If concerns remain following the Core Group, the Escalation and Challenge process can still be followed and any plans reviewed whilst not changing the decision of the Conference.

This Protocol should be followed by professionals to ensure a speedy resolution to the issues. To determine what level of response, as detailed below, is required will be dependent upon the level of concerns the professional has.

Procedure for escalating issues via this protocol

The following is the process for escalating issues to another professional, however it must be noted that the issue may be of such significance and concern that it may immediately go to Stage 3.

All escalations and challenges made via this Protocol should be recorded on the child's file, in line with your agency's recording policy.

Stage 1 – Initial Resolution

The relevant professional should discuss the concern with their Line Manager. Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools should discuss with their Headteacher / senior lead within their Trust as appropriate. The Line Manager will contact their counterpart (the Receiving Manager) in the other agency to raise the concerns. There must be a discussion between the Receiving Manager and professional within 2 working days and a written record of this discussion will be provided in writing within 3 working days regarding what action is to be taken. The Referring Manager must acknowledge the response and confirm if they are satisfied with it within **2 working days** as. If they are not satisfied and believe the concern remains, they will escalate to Stage 2 of this Protocol.

Stage 2 – Resolution by Senior Manager

The Referring Manager will escalate the concerns and the action taken to date to their Senior Manager who will refer the issues to a Senior Manager in the receiving agency. The Receiving Senior Manager will explore the concerns with all involved through a reflective discussion and if any action taken is required. The Referring Senior Manager will share a written copy of the notes from this meeting within 5 working days. Professionals will save these on the child record.

The Referring Senior Manager will acknowledge the response and confirm if they are satisfied with the agreed outcome within **2 working days**. If they are not satisfied, they will escalate to Stage 3 of the protocol within the 2 working days.

If the challenge is concluded at Stage 2, the referring manager must notify the GSCP Business Unit via the following link of this challenge, to collate for learning and future development opportunities for the partnership. These will be reviewed within the Scrutiny and Assurance Group (SAG).

Stage 3 – Resolution by Service Director (or equivalent)

At Stage 3 the Service Director (or equivalent) will have a meeting to discuss the concerns with the relevant Designated/Named or Lead Professional in the Referring Agency. The Receiving Service Director has 3 working days to acknowledge and chair a restorative meeting to review the concerns and outline what action will be taken as a partnership. This will include the GSCP Business Manager. The notes of this meeting will be shared within 2 working days and a record placed upon the child's file.

If the referrer remains concerned with the action taken, this will be passed to the GSCP Business Manager to be addressed at Stage 4 within **2 working days**.

If the challenge is concluded at Stage 3, the referring manager must notify the GSCP Business Unit via the following link of this challenge, to collate for learning and future development opportunities for the partnership. These will be reviewed within the Scrutiny and Assurance Group (SAG).

Stage 4 - Formal Consideration by GSCP

Upon receipt of the information:

1. The GSCP Business Manager will acknowledge receipt of the issue and inform the referrer of the planned action within **2 working days** of receipt of the issue being raised.

2. The GSCP Business Manager will arrange a reflective meeting with the GSCP Independent Scrutineer, Director of Children Services and equivalent for partners to review all revenant documents and notes of challenge meetings to determine how the issue should be addressed.
3. The notes of the agreed outcome will be shared with all relevant professionals and placed upon the child's record within **5 working days.**
4. The GSCP Business Manager will ensure any learning will be recorded on the GSCP Escalation Challenge Risk Register. This will ensure an accurate record of all challenges and the outcomes. Any themes will be considered on a 6 monthly basis by the GSCP Board for development and learning.
5. Any learning will be collated by Childrens Services and shared with the GSCP partnership.

Gateshead Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (GSCP)
Escalation and Challenge Protocol (LADO)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) ESCALATION PROCESS

This process applies situations where an allegation has been made under the Allegations against Staff or Volunteers who work with Children procedure.

Where the outcome of an allegations Management Meeting is disputed, the following escalation procedure should be followed.

Stage 1- Initial Resolution

The challenge will be discussed with between the professional making the challenge and LADO and any outcome should be shared in writing within 2 working days. Any advice and guidance or relevant training can be discussed and agreed at this stage. If this includes support to any of the partnership agencies, the GSCP will be notified to support in rolling out additional learning.

Stage 2 – Resolution by Senior Manager

If this challenge remains this will escalate to the IRO Service Lead and investigated within 5 working days. The outcome shared within 5 working days of the escalation of the challenge. Any further escalation should be made within 2 working days of the receipt of the outcome.

Stage 3 – Resolution by Service Director (or equivalent)

At Stage 3 the Service Director will review all information and provide a professional judgement on the outcome.

Stage 4 - Formal Consideration by GSCP

In the event that the referrer still does not agree with the decision they should escalate the matter to the Safeguarding Children Partnership via the Business Manager where the Director of Childrens Services will review the information and cascade any learning, training opportunities to the relevant parties. If the professional challenge is upheld the outcome will be shared with the relevant parties and any additional training or guidance will be shared within 5 working days.