

# Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

## Escalation Policy - Updated May 2014



### Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need case is not a safe decision. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Communication

The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.

All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice. This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage. However if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

## Stages of the Policy

### Stage One

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a supervisor/manager to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem, and be specific as to what the disagreement is about and what they aim to achieve. Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.

### Stage Two

If the problem is not resolved at stage one the concerned worker should contact their supervisor/manager within their own agency who should raise the concerns with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency. The manager should also notify the GSCB Business Manager, who will keep a record of all ongoing disagreements.

### Stage Three

If the problem is not resolved at stage two the supervisor/manager reports to their respective operations manager or named/designated safeguarding representative. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion. The GSCB Business Manager should be advised of any outcome.

### Stage Four

If it is not possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned the matter should be referred to the Chair of the GSCB, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct, or to convene a Resolution Panel. The panel must consist of GSCB representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences, where possible).

**GSCB Contact Details** Email: [mail@gscb.org.uk](mailto:mail@gscb.org.uk) Tel: 01452 583629

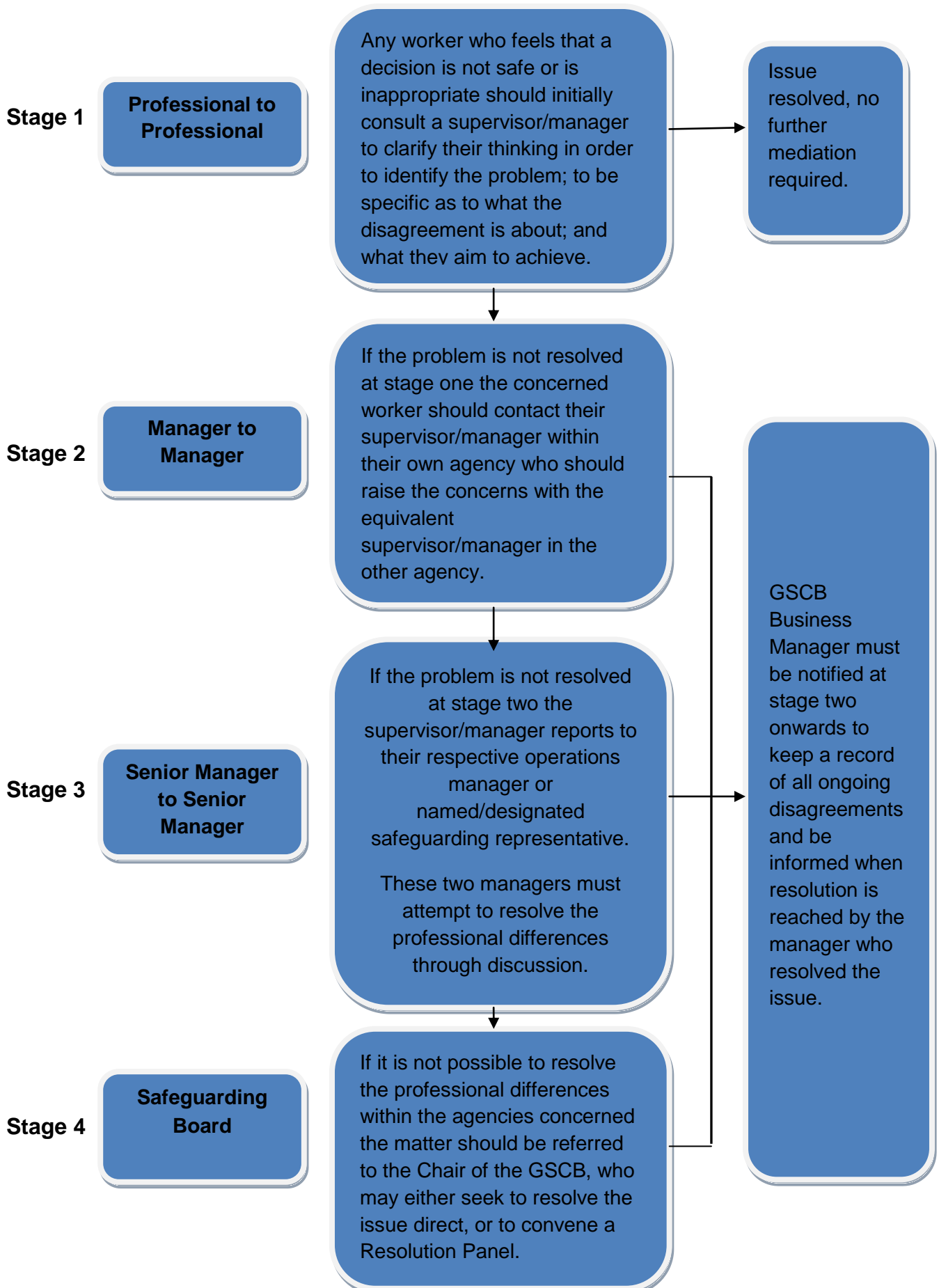
### Additional Notes

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

# Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board - Escalation Procedure

Website: [www.gscb.org.uk](http://www.gscb.org.uk) Email: [mail@gscb.org.uk](mailto:mail@gscb.org.uk) Tel: 01452 583629



## Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board

### Escalation Policy – Monitoring Form

**A tool to record decisions and to monitor the effectiveness of the Escalation Policy**

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency, about a child or young person, is not a safe decision. Problem resolution is an integral part of working together to safeguard children. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage, and resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. If a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm, discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated. **This form to be used at stage two and at each further stage of the Escalation Policy.**

#### Checklist

- Have you consulted a supervisor/manager, to seek advice about resolving your concern?
- Have you made clear initial attempts to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level?
- Did the supervisor/manager raise the concerns with their equivalent in the other agency?
- If this did not resolve the concerns, has the Operations Manager or Named/Designated Safeguarding representatives attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion?
- If this did not resolve the professional differences, are you seeking a meeting between the agencies concerned and the GSCB Resolution Panel convened by the Independent Chair?

**Action Note:** A copy of this form is to be held on child/family file in all agencies involved in resolution of professional difficulties. If escalating to next stage, use this form as a basis for reporting to the manager at the next stage. Please send a copy to the GSCB Office on completion – email to [mail@gscb.org.uk](mailto:mail@gscb.org.uk). Expand as much as required.

<b>Child/Family Name</b>			
<b>Summary of reason for dispute – include views of all agencies concerned</b>			
<b>Agreed outcomes or actions if satisfactorily resolved – includes escalation to next stage if unresolved</b>			
<b>Signature of challenger manager</b>		<b>Name</b>	
		<b>Designation</b>	
		<b>Agency</b>	
		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signature of challenged manager</b>		<b>Name</b>	
		<b>Designation</b>	
		<b>Agency</b>	
		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Stage at which resolution achieved, noting how effective the policy/practice was in resolving the issue</b>			
<b>Time taken to reach resolution</b>			