

Escalation Process

What is Escalation?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults is a responsibility shared by all agencies. Working Together 2023 states 'Strong leadership and clear accountability are crucial for effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements'; therefore, we believe that effective communication is extremely important and is the key to resolving professional misunderstandings or disagreements. The aim must be to resolve a difference of opinion at the earliest possible stage, as swiftly as possible, always keeping in mind that the priority must be keeping the child or adult safe.

Concern or professional disagreement may arise over another professional's decisions or actions, during the life of a case. Professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion and/or meeting that occurs in a timely manner and that does not add to delay for the child or adult. If the professionals are unable to resolve differences within the timescale, their disagreement must be addressed by more experienced/senior staff, i.e. their line manager or relevant Head of Service. 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 and adults.

Professional Disagreement

Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need for a child or adult
- Referrals not being accepted/cases are closed/concerns not progressing to enquiries
- Roles and responsibilities of professionals
- Sufficiency of actions taken or not taken by professionals
- Care planning
- Lack of communication and information sharing

Ensuring the safety of individual children and adults is the paramount consideration in resolving any professional disagreement. Any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the subject child or adult. All professionals should be encouraged to be curious about why decisions are made and question if they do not feel this is right. Staff from any agency should feel confident and able to challenge decision-making; they will have a professional responsibility to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice and therefore raising such concerns is an entirely legitimate activity. Those receiving any professional challenge should be encouraged to see this as an opportunity to reflect and give their rationale, which supports good decision making.

The Escalation Process

What to do when you are concerned about a decision or practice in a case involving a child, young person or adult with care & support needs, including those which are complex.

Arrange a meeting with relevant professionals, within 7 days of the challenge being raised, with the aim of reaching a shared understanding and agreeing necessary action.

Document the concerns and actions

If the issue is not resolved and there are still concerns, discuss these with your line manager/safeguarding lead.

Document the concerns and actions

Where significant concerns remain, the manager/safeguarding lead should discuss with their Head of Service within their organisation*. The Head of Service will discuss the concerns with the Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service within the organisation concerned with the intention to resolve the situation. The relevant HoS should meet no later than 10 days after the initial professionals meeting. Feedback on the outcome will be given to the professionals who raised the original concern 48 hours after the relevant HOS have met.

*Within education, this will be the Head of Children's Quality Assurance, Youth Justice and Performance and the Head of School Improvement.

If the above processes have been followed and the concerns still remain, it may be necessary to refer to the MK Together Safeguarding Partnership Assurance Board Chair for multi-agency discussion, who will take it to the three safeguarding leads.

Email: MKTogether@milton-keynes.gov.uk FAO Assurance Board Chair

The Chair of the MKTSP Assurance Board will share the outcome with the professionals who raised the original concern.

A clear record must be kept at all stages, by all parties

Please visit for more information:

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/children-young-people-families/milton-keynes-multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash>

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/safeguarding-people-at-risk/adults-at-risk>

www.mktogether.co.uk