

City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership

Escalation Practice Guidance

Key words: dispute resolution, professional challenge, decision-making, professional judgement

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Revision Group or Person Date Comments

- 1- CYSCP Business Unit - 13/04/23
- 2- Updated by the CYSCP Business Unit
- 3- Reviewed by Dave Ellis (NYP), Jacqui Hourigan (ICB) and Danielle Johnson (CSC)
- 4- SAPP Sub-Group - 16/07/24 - Approved
- 5- Reviewed for Families First by Sophia Lenton-Brook, Jacqui Hourigan, Emily Noble - May 2026
- 6- SAPP

1. Purpose

This practice guidance sets out how concerns about professional disagreement, decision-making, threshold application, or safeguarding practice are escalated within the City of York Children Safeguarding Partnership to ensure children's safety and timely, effective intervention.

2. Scope

This practice guidance applies to all partner agencies and their staff involved in safeguarding children, including statutory (children's social care, police, health and education), voluntary, community, and commissioned services.

3. Families First Principles

- A system that never gives up on a child
- We treat everyone with kindness, dignity and care
- We have a collective commitment to be families led
- We promote partnerships and respectful relationships
- Real honesty to get through professional disagreements

Child-centred: Escalation must always prioritise the safety and welfare of the child.

Professional respect: Differences of opinion are expected and should be addressed constructively and with curiosity.

Timeliness: Concerns must be escalated without delay where risk is identified.

Transparency and accountability: Decisions and outcomes must be recorded.

4. When to Escalate

Escalation should be used where there are concerns about:

- A safeguarding decision, action, or inaction that means a child and their family is not getting the right help at the right time or a child is at risk.
- Disagreement about which services should be involved.
- Delays in response or lack of engagement from another agency.
- Failure to follow agreed safeguarding procedures or plans.

Escalation must not delay urgent protective action, please [refer to the partnership website for further information](#).

5. Roles of Professionals and Agencies

- Share information appropriately when required.
- Up to date organisation structures should be available to other partners, including relevant contact details of professionals/teams and their managers.
- All professionals have a responsibility to raise issues proactively and promptly by working with professionals who need to be involved.

- All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are adequately trained and supported when raising a concern.
- Ensure accurate and contemporary recording on the child's record of key decisions and reasons for the decision.
- Regardless of the role/level of expertise, all individuals concerned about a decision/plan have a duty to challenge if they think a child's safety or welfare has been compromised.

6. Process for Escalation

Step 1

Practitioner to Practitioner

- Discuss the concern directly with the relevant practitioner.
- Aim to resolve informally and promptly.
- Record the discussion and outcome.

Step 2

Line manager

- If unresolved, escalate to your line manager/supervisor in 1 working day.
- Managers should liaise with their counterpart in the other agency.
- Agree actions (e.g. interim safety measures) and timescales; record the decision. Resolve in 5 working days.

Step 3

Senior Management

- If unresolved, escalate to senior managers.
- A multi-agency discussion should take place between the statutory safeguarding leads of the partnership and relevant professionals involved with the family, (where appropriate) to resolve
- Agree actions and timescales; record the decision. Resolve in 5 working days.

Step 4

Partnership Escalation

- If concerns remain unresolved or are systemic, senior management should refer to the Safeguarding Partnership via the business unit, email: cyscp@york.gov.uk.
- Include a synopsis or written record of effort made to resolve the matter.

- The Partnership Executive may seek further information and will make recommendations to agencies for the resolution of the matters within 15 working days of the issue being brought to their attention.
- The Safeguarding Partnership expects that the recommendations will be acted upon.

7. Resolution and Outcomes

- Outcomes must be clearly communicated to all relevant parties.
- Any changes to plans or decisions must be implemented promptly and recorded clearly in the child's file.
- Any multi-agency learning and themes should be shared with and by the Partnership to highlight good practice or share practice improvements, email: cyscp@york.gov.uk.