



Camden Safeguarding  
Children Board

# **CSCB escalation policy**

## **Resolving professional differences**

### **2015**

## Introduction

In order to safeguard children and young people it is vital that there is close collaboration by all partner agencies working with the child and their family. However, there may be occasions where agencies working with children and families in Camden disagree on how best to keep children safe and promote their welfare. Disagreements may be about:

- decisions on levels of need and whether a child has met the threshold for a service or intervention;
- decisions on how the case should be conducted (ie: CIN or CP) or if a case should be stepped up to more robust intervention or closed;
- the roles and responsibilities of involved agencies;
- the actions or lack of action by any agency in progressing the child's plan;
- the level or quality of communication between agencies.

Professionals must not ignore any concerns they may have that the practice, action or lack of action of a partner agency may adversely impact on the safety and welfare of a child; all professionals have a duty to take action under this policy in order to ensure children are kept safe.

Where concerns about the progress of a case are linked to parental non-engagement or non-compliance in implementing the child's plan, this must be raised with the allocated social worker who will deal with the matter under the Family Services and Social Work policy "*Working with non-engaging, resistant and hostile families*".

## Purpose and scope of policy

Children's safety can only be assured and their welfare promoted where professionals work jointly, sharing responsibility for case management and decision making.

To ensure safe practice in multi-agency working, there must be a culture of constructive challenge and a mechanism that allows agencies to raise concerns about practice so that they feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously and appropriately addressed. This is in line with the recommendations of the Sir Robert Frances "Freedom to Speak Up" review of whistleblowing practice.

This escalation policy sets out what actions should be taken by agencies where there are professional differences around how to keep a child safe. It aims to ensure that the focus is kept on children's safety by providing a formal framework for the swift and satisfactory resolution of differences of opinion between members of a child's professional network.

It covers all members of the children's workforce in Camden who are working with children who are receiving an early help, child in need, child protection or looked after child service from Family Services and Social Work (FSSW) or who it is thought meet the threshold for a service.

## Principles

- The child's safety and welfare should be the key focus at all times and a dispute between agencies should never leave a child unprotected.
- Differences of opinion should be resolved at the earliest stage possible with escalation to the next stage only taking place where a satisfactory resolution cannot be found.
- Disputes should be resolved in an open and timely manner with all relevant issues identified for resolution. At each stage, resolution of issues should be reached within 1 working week or failing that, escalation to the next stage should take place within 24 hours.
- Where an issue arising from the dispute involves an operational issue between two or more agencies, for example the process of referring a case from one service to another, these agencies must be involved in finding a solution to the dispute.
- Where a dispute identifies an issue arising from strategic or policy issues, for example around the interpretation of statutory guidance, the matter should be referred to the CSCB Development Officer for consideration by the relevant board sub-group.
- Where a dispute involves a complaint about the behaviour or professional conduct of a worker, this should initially be reported to their manager or supervisor and dealt with under that agency's staff policies.

## Procedures for dispute resolution

This process should be followed only where there is no risk of immediate harm to a child with each step taking no longer than 1 working week before being escalated to the next stage if no resolution can be found.

***If a child is thought to be at imminent risk of harm, the matter should be referred immediately to Camden's Child Protection Co-ordinator on 020 7974 6999 to decide on any action needed to protect them while the dispute is being resolved. Only then should the steps set out here be followed.***

Whenever this process is begun, actions taken at each stage and the outcome should be recorded in the case notes section of the child's record held by the agencies involved. Case notes should clearly state:

- the date of and form of communication
- who was involved
- what was discussed
- what was the outcome, including any further escalation under this policy.

### **Stage 1: discussion between front line workers**

Whenever a dispute arises, the professionals directly involved should discuss the matter in the first instance. Often, differences in professional opinion can be based on lack of communication or a misunderstanding of agency policy and procedures and can consequently be resolved quickly. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, the parties should identify what the issues are and agree to move to the next step of the escalation process.

### **Stage 2: discussion between frontline managers**

The professionals involved in the dispute should contact their manager to consider the issues raised, what outcome they would like to achieve and how differences can be resolved. The front line managers should then contact each other to try to negotiate a settlement to the dispute or if this is not possible, clarify the issues before moving on to the next step.

### **Stage 3: discussion between named/designated safeguarding leads/operational managers**

Stage 3 disputes should be passed to the relevant named safeguarding lead officer for the agencies involved. These named officers should discuss the issues identified and try to find a solution that is child focussed and ensures their safety and welfare. If this is not possible, the matter should be escalated to the next stage.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Named officer</b>
Adult Social Care/Safeguarding	Vivienne Broadhurst, Head of Adult Social Care and Safeguarding
Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust	Trust Safeguarding Manager (currently vacant)
Camden Clinical Commissioning Group	Deborah Hodes, Designated Doctor Designated Nurse, Designated Nurse Claire Taylor, Named GP
Camden Safety Net	Rachel Nicholas, Safety Interventions Manager
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust	Jane Thorogood, Named Nurse, CNWL Provider Services
Early help service	FIF/Early help CAF team cases: Elaine Dunning- Acting head of service
Early years	Jane Hutcheson, Locality Teams (Family Support) and Anthony Keen, Child Care and Early Education
FSSW	CIN cases held by the Hospital or Assessment teams: Jennette Evans CIN cases held by long term CIN teams: Patricia Williams CP cases: Bodil Mlynarska – Child Protection Co-ordinator LAC and 16+ cases: Jane Carroll – Acting Head of Service
GOSH	Jan Baker, Named nurse for child safeguarding
Housing	Denise Pittaway, Principal Strategy Officer Jo Adams, Service Development Manager
Metropolitan Police Service, London Borough of Camden	DI Anthony McKeown, Head of Camden & Islington Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT)
Probation CRC	Sarah Walbank Senior Probation Officer (18-25) cohort  Tony Foy Senior Probation Officer (26-49) cohort.
Probation NPS	Mary Pilgrim, Assistant Chief Officer, National Probation Service
Royal Free Hospital	Helen Swarbrick, Named Nurse for child safeguarding
Schools	Designated safeguarding lead for the school/head teacher
Tavistock and Portman NHS FT	Sonia Appleby, Named Professional
UCL Hospital	Polly Smith, Named Nurse for child safeguarding
Voluntary sector CAMHS providers	Named professional
Youth Offending Service	Ric Kashman, Service Manager, Integrated Youth Support Service

#### Stage 4: referral to a named senior manager/Assistant Director

Stage 4 disputes should be referred to named senior managers within the relevant agencies to negotiate a resolution to the dispute.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Named officer</b>
Adult Social Care/Safeguarding	Tim Bishop, Assistant Director for Adult Social Care and Joint Commissioning
Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust	Associate Divisional Directors Andy Stopher – Recovery and rehabilitation Peter Carlidge – Services for ageing mental health Keith Mc Coy- Community Mental Health including personality disorder, assessment team and complex depression, anxiety and trauma Aisling Clifford- Acute Services including crisis teams Peter Kane- Substance Misuse Services
Camden Clinical Commissioning Group	Neeshma Shah Director of Quality & Safety
Camden Safety Net	Tom Preest, Head of Community Safety Services
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust	Michelle Johnson, Divisional Director of Nursing, CNWL
Early help service	Anne Turner – Assistant Director
Early years	Debbie Adams, Head of Integrated Early Years' Service Paul Senior, Interim AD resilience and Prevention
FSSW	Anne Turner - Assistant Director
GOSH	Peter Lachman, Named doctor for child safeguarding
Housing	Angela Spooner, Head of Tenancy Services Shaun Flook, Head of Housing Needs Group
Metropolitan Police Service, London Borough of Camden	DCI John Foulkes, responsible for MPS North Region Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAIT)
Probation CRC	Sam Rosenguard Head of Partnerships and Stakeholders, London CRC Rehabilitation Directorate
Probation NPS	Sara Robinson Deputy Director, National Probation Service – London
Royal Free Hospital	Susie Gabbie, Named Doctor for child safeguarding (shared) Ben Lloyd, Named Doctor Child Safeguarding (shared)
Schools	Peter Dudley, Assistant Director Raising Achievement and Aspiration
Tavistock and Portman NHS FT	Rob Senior, Named Doctor/ CSCB Lead
UCL Hospital	Jo Begent, Named Doctor for child safeguarding
Voluntary sector CAMHS providers	Named Doctor
Youth Offending Service	Eugene Griffin, Acting Head of Integrated Youth Support Service

## Stage 5: The CSCB Dispute Resolution meeting

At final stage, a decision should be made that settles any dispute and ensures that there is a clear way forward for the case and that this solution ensures a continued high level of partnership working in Camden that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children.

This decision will be made at a specially convened CSCB Dispute Resolution meeting involving:

- the CSCB chair,
- the Director of Children's Services
- the Assistant Director of FSSW or Early Help
- senior managers of the relevant agencies/services.

The meeting will consider the issues raised and look at earlier efforts to resolve differences. When deciding on the solution, the meeting will take into account the impact of their decision on future partnership working and service delivery. The meeting may also agree changes to thresholds, policies, working practices and the operation of joint protocols in consultation with all board partners.

# Camden Safeguarding Children’s Board – Escalation Procedure flowchart

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