



Redbridge Safeguarding Adults

Redbridge
Safeguarding Adults Board (RSAB)

Multi-Agency
Escalation &
Resolution Policy

2nd Edition

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to and is relevant for safeguarding partners as per the **Care Act 2014 guidance**:

- Redbridge Safeguarding Adult Board (RSAB) key partners
- Practitioners, managers and leadership within the Local Authority, Health (North East London CCG's/ ICB) and the Police
- Any other key staff working with adults in partner organisations including practitioners, managers and leadership within community providers, mental health services, the voluntary sector and any other agencies that work directly with adults.

The policy has been developed by RSAB to ensure that all agencies working with adults at risk in the Redbridge (including health, education, housing, adult social care services, probation, police and community and voluntary sector organisations), have access to a straight forward multi-agency policy to quickly resolve, and where necessary escalate, professional differences where there are concerns that the welfare and safety of adults are at risk of being compromised.

1.2 The aim of this policy is to promote a culture of partnership working within Redbridge, whereby all agencies working with adults at risk and their families feel confident, able and supported to professionally challenge situations where there are differences in professional judgements around the response to the safeguarding of adults at risk. This Protocol has been developed and agreed with partners represented on the RSAB, but the principles apply to out of area placements with providers based within the area of another Safeguarding Adult Board.

1.3 Problem resolution is a core activity of many of the agencies involved in safeguarding adults and all agencies must work together with the adult at risk in order to achieve the outcomes that they desire however, it is recognised that at times there may be differences of opinion regarding how a case should best be progressed. Occasionally situations arise where professional disagreements occur around the action, or inaction, of a particular professional or agency. Disagreements can be healthy and foster creative ways of working with service users. However, disagreements can also impact negatively on positive working relationships and consequently on the ability to safeguard adults at risk. Professional disagreement can result in dysfunction if not resolved in a constructive and timely manner. Disagreements always require resolution. This policy is based on the ethos that it is every professional's responsibility to 'problem-solve' and any issues should be jointly owned until resolved through co-operation. It is also an expectation that agencies will use their right to challenge respectfully, and that any responding agencies should not be defensive but be open minded and act proportionately.

1.4 The individual's safety and wellbeing must be the paramount consideration at all times and professional differences must not distract from timely and clear decision making. All professionals working with adults at risk have a duty to act assertively and proactively to ensure that safeguarding is seen as a priority at all levels of professional activity, as outlined in the **Care Act 2014** and **Care and Support**

Statutory Guidance, July 2018.

- 1.5 This policy is not designed to replace the statutory complaints processes, or other escalation procedures, established within individual partner agencies. All agencies are responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported and know how to appropriately escalate and resolve interagency concerns and disagreements about the response to safeguarding needs. The Policy is intended to complement the **London Multi-Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, April 2019** - Section 4.3.9 Dispute Resolution and Escalation (page 59).
- 1.6 Occasionally, those practitioners who are working predominantly with adult service users, may through their work with the wider family, become concerned about a child or young person within the home. If services are not already addressing any safeguarding concern relating to a child, a referral should be made to the Redbridge children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) via e-mail to **CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk** as detailed in the **Joint Working Protocol** between the Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) and the RSAB. If services are already working with the child or young person, but there is a disagreement about any aspect of this, this Policy can be used to escalate and seek resolution for those concerns.

2 Key Principles

- 2.1 In line with the safeguarding **Principles of the Care Act 2014** (empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership and accountability), professionals should always:
- Proactively seek to 'problem solve' in the best interest of the service user.
 - Share key information appropriately and often. There can be no justification for failing to share information that will allow action to be taken to protect an adult.
 - Seek to resolve the issue quickly and at the practice/operational rather than the management level.
 - Ensure that professional differences do not place adults at further risk by obscuring the focus on the adult or delay decision making.
 - Keep focus on the adult's safety and welfare at all times.
 - Familiarise themselves with the escalation routes within their agency for resolution and escalation.
 - Ensure accurate and contemporary recording on the adult's file of key decisions and conversations in relation to the resolution process.
 - Stay proactively involved; safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
 - Use RSAB resolution process when necessary set out below in **Section 4**.

3. Context

- 3.1 Disagreements between practitioners and agencies can arise at any stage in the safeguarding process and between any of the agencies involved. Some examples of potential areas of disagreement may include:

- Eligibility criteria and access to services
- Level of risk and its assessment
- Information sharing
- Concerns in relation to an agency's response to safeguarding concerns or implementation of a safeguarding plan
- Roles and responsibilities
- Intra/inter-agency communication
- Practice/case management issues including 'drift' or concerns relating to case closure

4. Process

4.1 In cases where there is a difference of professional opinion and a professional considers an adult is at immediate risk of significant harm, concerns must be escalated to a manager and/or safeguarding lead immediately. Names and contact details for senior safeguarding leads in partner agencies can be obtained from the **RSAB Manager**.

4.2 When there is a disagreement over a significant issue, which potentially impacts on the safety and welfare of an adult but the adult is not considered at immediate risk, the respective professionals must identify explicitly the issue they are concerned about, the risk to the adult, the nature of the disagreement and what the respective professionals aim to achieve.

4.3 The professionals involved in the conflict resolution process must contemporaneously record each intra and inter-agency discussion they have, approve, and date the record and place a record on the adult's file together with any other written communications and information. The agreed outcome of discussions and how any outstanding issues will be pursued must be recorded. A flowchart is available illustrating the process on **page 6** of this Policy.

4.4 Stage 1

In the first instance the professional with concerns should raise the matter with the relevant professional in the other agency verbally or in writing **within two working days** of the disagreement or receipt of a decision.

The professional with concerns should provide clear evidence-based reasons for their disagreement. The receiving professional must read and review the case file and **must speak to the concerned professional within three working days** and attempt to find a mutually agreeable way forward sought via discussion or meeting.

The matter must be resolved more quickly if delay would fail to protect the adult from harm.

Where a resolution is reached the receiving professional will confirm the outcome with the professional who has raised the concerns in writing within a further **two working days**.

4.5 **Stage 2**

If the professionals are unable to resolve the matter satisfactorily within the timescale, the concern or difficulty should be escalated to their respective line managers **within the same working day** and a resolution should be achieved **within a further five working days** or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less). These first line managers should, where necessary, seek advice from their agency's designated safeguarding adult professional.

Where a resolution is reached the receiving line manager will confirm the outcome with his/her counterpart in the agency raising concerns within a further **two working days**.

4.6 **Stage 3**

If agreement cannot be reached following the involvement of first line managers **within a further five working days or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less)**, the issue must be referred without delay to the relevant senior manager (e.g. Service Manager, Detective Inspector, or other designated senior manager). Alternatively (e.g. in health services), input may be sought directly from the named safeguarding adult doctor or nurse in preference to the use of line manager.

The **RSAB Business Manager** should be copied into disagreements that have escalated to this level (Stage 3). The RSAB Business Manager will advise the relevant SAB Business Manager in the case of an out of area placement.

Following referral to senior managers, a resolution should be achieved **within a further five working days** or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less). The managers dealing with the issue will involve the Head of Service in their agency if required. Where a resolution is reached the senior manager in the agency receiving the concerns will confirm the outcome with his/her counterpart in the agency raising concerns within a further **two working days**.

4.7 **Stage 4**

In the unlikely event that the professional disagreements remain unresolved following discussions between respective Heads of Services and/or the discussion raises significant policy issues, the matter must be referred to the Independent Chair of the Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board (RSAB). The **RSAB Business Manager** should be copied into disagreements that have escalated to this level (Stage 4).

4.9 Should the matter remain unresolved within the timescales, the matter will be referred directly to the Chair of the RSAB via the RSAB Business Manager **within the same working day**.

The RSAB Chair may seek further written information and will confer as necessary with senior managers/named/designated professionals in the agencies involved, and others as required, and will make recommendations to the agencies for the resolution of the matter. The RSAB Chair will make recommendations

within **five working days** of the issue being brought to his/her attention.

The RSAB is not an operational body and cannot direct the actions of partner agencies. However, the RSAB as a body has a strong expectation that the recommendations of the RSAB Independent Chair will be acted upon.

Flowchart

Concern or Disagreement arises with another agency

Stage 1

Mutually agreeable way forward sought between practitioners to resolve the issues **within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less)**

Issue Resolved

Resolution outcome in writing to referring practitioner / agency **within 2 working days**

Stage 2

Concern or difficulty should be escalated to line managers to resolve the issues **within 5 working days or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less)**

Issue Resolved

Resolution outcome in writing to referring agency **within 2 working days**

Stage 3

Concern or difficulty to be referred to the relevant senior manager without delay to resolve the issues **within 2 working days or a timescale that protects the adult from harm (whichever is less)**

Issue Resolved

Resolution outcome in writing to referring agency **within 2 working days**

Stage 4

Issue to be referred to the RSAB Chair via the [RSAB Business Manager](#) for the Chair to make recommendations to the agencies involved for the resolution of the matter. The RSAB Chair will make recommendations **within 5 working days** of the issue being brought to his/her attention