



NSSCP

NORTH SOMERSET
Safeguarding Children Partnership

Issue Resolution Policy

April 2025 - April 2027



Avon and Somerset Police
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North Somerset
Council



Healthier Together
Improving health and care in Bristol,
North Somerset and South Gloucestershire



**Bristol, North Somerset
and South Gloucestershire**
Integrated Care Board

Introduction

The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSSCP) believes that continual feedback is an important part of self-improvement and raising standards.

Listening and responding to differing viewpoints and perspective enables us to reflect, adjust and improve services and systems. Providing a pathway for these views to be expressed and taken seriously is one way in which we can demonstrate our respect for each other's views.

In an effective and healthy inter-agency working culture, respectful challenge is a key feature and is therefore welcomed.

This policy is for all agencies across the Partnership both statutory and third sector, to facilitate agency to agency resolution. We are committed to being transparent and to undertake issue resolution respectfully, recognising that having differing views is not about proving who is right or wrong but seeking to resolve issues in the best interest of the child or young person.

Purpose Of Procedure

To provide a clear pathway for the resolution of professional differences, facilitating a timely resolution ensuring that the needs of the child or young person being discussed are met and their safety and wellbeing is promoted throughout. The local procedure is intended to augment the guidance provided by the [South West Child Protection Procedures](#) and provides a local process to be followed.

Aims Of Procedure

1. To support the development of a shared understanding concerning the level of need children and young people have, ensuring we offer the right service at the right time. This is supported by the multi-agency training delivered by the NSSCP.
2. To promote the best multi-agency practices, all practitioners should be able to question decision-making. This is both their right and responsibility.
3. To provide practitioners with the means to raise questions they have about decisions made by other professionals or services by:
 - Resolving issues and professional differences that may hinder the progress for the child or young person quickly and openly.
 - Overcoming problematic areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity.
 - Promoting effective resolutions by considering required amendments to organisational protocols and procedures.

4. To resolve differences within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child or young person's current safety is understood and promoted.

Timescales

It is in the child's best interests that timely decisions are made, therefore differences of opinions should always be resolved quickly. This will of course be determined by the complexity of the issues and the perceived risk a child is experiencing. The primary focus throughout will be to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the child/young person is always central.

It is the responsibility of each agency to ensure decisions regarding children, where appropriate, are shared or sought. The best people to raise and resolve issues are those who work directly to support the child and their family.

We expect that the majority of issues will be resolved through good communication and **within 5 working days** through Stages 1 to 3 of the process as outlined in the procedures section. In the unlikely event that disagreement continues and issues remain unresolved, the next stage is to refer this to the Safeguarding Partnership. The Safeguarding Partnership will respond within a further 3 working days.

For the purposes of this policy, we consider a working day to be Monday through to Friday (excluding bank holidays). If annual leave or end of shift is imminent it is the practitioner or manager's professional responsibility to ensure this is handed over to an appropriate colleague.

Issues

There is not an exhaustive list of issues that fit within this policy area; that is down to individual practitioners and managers to determine and raise. However, some typical issues that could be raised via this policy are:

- Decisions made by an agency that another agency feels is not in the child's best interests such as offering an alternative or no service.
- The length of time accessing a service is potentially going to take and the adverse impact of the wait upon the child/family.
- The impact of a reduced service on wider aspects of the child's life such as family or placement breakdown.
- Children receiving a service that maybe doesn't reflect the perceived level of need.

What is crucial throughout this is the impact on the child and the evidence that supports this.

Recording

At all stages of the process, actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, beginning with the practitioner who raised the issue and their line manager. This must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome from the conversations, and how any outstanding issues will be followed up, with agreed timescales.

For Stage 1 issues, the practitioners raising the issue will need to record this in writing along with any subsequent discussions and the resolution. This should then be shared via email with all agencies involved. Each agency is responsible for uploading /filing this onto the child's record (electronic or paper).

For Stages 2, 3 and 4 a recording tool is attached as Appendix 1. The agency raising the issue remains responsible for the recording throughout the process until resolution. It may be useful for a reflective debrief to be facilitated following discussion to promote continuing good working relationships. However, it is not within the remit of this policy to detail what this needs to look like.

Procedure

Stage 1: Initial issue resolution from practitioner to practitioner (within 1 working day)

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem peer to peer. Any practitioner who feels that a decision or action is inappropriate, is not safe, or creates a significant issue, should initially attempt to resolve differences through discussion with the other practitioner(s) involved, unless the child, young person or adult is at immediate risk. This should be done **within 1 working day**. They should evidence the difference of opinion in writing via an email, including the rationale and resolution. This record must be shared and agreed by all parties involved. A record must be kept on the child/young person's file. When this occurs, it is essential that the **practitioners exchange both line manager and senior manager details** to ensure there is no delay later in the process.

If the practitioner feels the child or young person is at risk of immediate harm, they must raise this with their line manager immediately following their agency's safeguarding procedure. In addition, they should consider what they can do to offer immediate support whilst other services are contacted for support and/or advice. It cannot be assumed other agencies will share your views and will therefore respond. This remains the ongoing responsibility of the practitioner in the absence of an alternative working safety plan.

Stage 2: Discussing the issue resolution between services or agencies (within 2 working days use Appendix 1 recording form)

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter at practitioner level, the matter should be referred without delay to each practitioner's line manager.

The issue will then be considered at line management level, or with the designated or named professional for safeguarding within and between each agency **within 2 working days**.

Every effort should be made to resolve the concerns at this level. Records still need to be kept of the resolution communicated to all parties in writing and the child/young person's file must be updated. **The Recording Form (Appendix 1) needs to be used** to evidence the process. The person responsible for recording is the agency raising the issue. **A copy of this must also be sent to the NSSCP Business Manager.**

If the issue is not resolved, Stage 3 will need to commence and the line manager will need to share the recording form with their senior manager.

Stage 3: Discussing the issue resolution between services or agencies from senior manager to senior manager (within 2 working days using Appendix 1 recording form)

The matter should be referred to an appropriate level of management within the organisation, who will discuss with peers from the other agencies involved **within 2 working days**.

At this level, conversations **must continue to be recorded on the Recording Form** (Appendix 1) that started at Stage 2.

An agreed written record must be shared amongst this group for their respective recording purposes. **A copy of this must also be sent to the NSSCP Business Manager and your own agency Head of Safeguarding.**

If the issue is not resolved, Stage 4 will need to commence.

Stage 4: Referring unresolved issues to the safeguarding partnership representative (within 3 working days)

On Day 5 or when it becomes clear that the issue cannot be resolved through stages 1 to 3, a referral should be made to the Safeguarding Partnership via the Business Manager. They will refer the matter to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) who will consider the information provided and respond **within 3 working days by Day 8**.

The Independent Scrutineer may support their discussion. The decision at Stage 4 will be made by the DSPs and is final and binding for all organisations involved.

Appendix 1: Recording Form Issue Resolution

This form is to be used at Stage 2, 3 and 4 of the issue resolution policy, it needs to be stored on the child/young person's record for each agency and **submitted to the Business Manager upon resolution.**

The completion of this form is the responsibility of the agency raising the issue resolution.

Child's Name:		Date Stage 2 started	
Child's Date of Birth:			
Names of those involved: Copy these boxes as necessary	Name:		
	Designation:		
	Agency:		
	Date and Stage:		
	Name:		
	Designation:		
	Agency:		
	Date and Stage:		
Summary of the issue at Stage 2, include views of all agencies concerned and impact on child.			
Agreed outcomes or actions, with timescales. (Actual date not ASAP)			
If this requires progressing to Stage 3, please explain what remains unresolved.			

Summary of the issues discussed at Stage 3, include views of all agencies concerned and impact on child.		
Agreed outcomes or actions, with timescales. (Actual date not ASAP)		
If this requires referral to Stage 4, please explain what remains unresolved.		
Summary of the issues discussed at Stage 4, include views of all agencies concerned and impact on child.		
Agreed outcomes or actions, with timescales (Actual date not ASAP)		
Please complete for monitoring purposes		
Stage at which resolved. (Delete) 2 3 4	Time taken to resolve (Delete) 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 days	Please note how helpful or unhelpful. This policy was in supporting the resolution and add ideas for development.
Additional Notes:		

Appendix 2: Issue Resolution Stages Summary

Stage 1

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem peer to peer. This should be done within 1 working day. They also need to evidence the difference of opinion in writing via an email, including the rationale and resolution. A record must be kept on the child/young person's file. It is essential that the practitioners exchange both line manager and senior manager details to ensure there is no delay later in the process. If, at Stage 1, the issue is deemed to have been resolved then no further action needs to be taken.

Stage 2

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter at practitioner level, the matter should be referred without delay to their line managers for the issue to be considered at line management level within 2 working days. Every effort should be made to resolve the concerns at this level. The Recording Form (Appendix 1) should now be used to evidence the process and recorded on the child/young person's record. A copy of this must also be sent to the NSSCP Business Manager. If issue is not resolved, Stage 3 should commence.

Stage 3

The matter should be referred to an appropriate level of management within the organisation, who will discuss with peers from the other agencies within 2 working days. At this level, conversations must continue to be recorded on the Recording Form and placed onto the child/young person's record. A copy of this must also be sent to the NSSCP Business Manager and your own agency Head of Safeguarding. If the issue is not resolved, Stage 4 will need to commence.

Stage 4

On Day 5, the Recording Form should be updated, a copy placed on the child/young person's record and the matter should be referred to the agency's nominated NSSCP representatives (DSPs) via the Business Manager. Once sent to the DSPs, this will determine how the matter can be resolved.

The decision at Stage 4 is final and binding for all organisations involved.