Care Stream Risk Escalation Policy:

*Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of individual*

# Introduction

* 1. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard Vulnerable Individuals and Adults.
  2. Professional disagreement is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.
  3. Disagreements could arise in several areas, but are most likely to arise around thresholds, roles and responsibilities, and the need for action and communication. Some examples may include:
     + Where one professional disagrees with the action of another around a particular course of action, such as closing involvement with people receiving support within Care Stream.
     + Where one worker or agency considers that another worker or agency has not completed an agreed action for no acceptable or understood reason.
     + Where one agency considers that the plan is inappropriate and that an individuals’ needs are not being best met by the current plan. This could include a disagreement that a particular agency does not feel it needs to be involved, but another does.
     + Where a member of staff or an agency considers that the individuals safeguarding needs are better met by a local authority Protection Plan and have requested that a Safeguarding Protection Conference be called and feel that this has been refused.

# Aim and Objectives

* 1. It is important to:
* avoid professional disputes that puts all individuals at risk, obscure the focus on the individual, or delay decision making
* resolve difficulties (within and) between agencies quickly and openly

identify problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity

2.2 The safety of individuals and the focus on individuals are the paramount considerations in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be escalated with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the individual.

* promote resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

# Escalation Policy

* 1. Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies.
  2. Effective working together depends on resolving disagreements to the satisfaction of workers and agencies, and a belief in a genuine partnership.
  3. Professional disputes are reduced by clarity about roles and responsibilities and airing and sharing problems in networking forums.
  4. The process of resolution should be as simple as possible.
  5. The aim should be to resolve difficulties at all professional levels between agencies.
  6. Attempts at problem resolution may leave one worker/agency believing that the individual remains at risk of significant harm. This person/agency has responsibility for communicating such concerns through agreed channels.
  7. The following stages are likely to be involved:
* recognition that there is a disagreement over a significant issue which impacts on the safety and welfare of an individual.
* identification of the problem and clarity about the disagreement in addition to what you aim to achieve.

These two stages could involve consulting a colleague to clarify thinking.

* 1. Initial attempts should be made to resolve the problem. This should normally be between the people who disagree unless the individual is at immediate risk.
  2. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported.
  3. If unresolved, the problem should be referred to the workers’ own line manager or individuals’ advocate (if in place), who will represent the individual in the event they would need to have their voice heard.
  4. If the problem remains unresolved, the line manager will refer ‘up the line’ (see flow chart).
  5. If the matter is still unresolved, an agreement needs to be reached in terms of the best outcome for the individual which is in the best interest for all concerned.
  6. A clear record should be kept at all stages, by all parties. In particular, this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued. All records should be retained on the individuals’ case file / Care Stream database.
  7. At each stage, it is important that the person who originally raised the concern is given feedback on what action has been taken in response. It is the responsibility of the person to whom the issue is referred, to ensure that clear and timely feedback is provided.
  8. When the issue is resolved, any general issues should be identified and referred to the allocated worker for the individual
  9. It may also be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships and identify possible training needs.

Please note that this Policy does not apply to cases where there may be concerns about the behaviour or conduct of another professional that may impact on an individuals’ safety and well-being. In such cases, reference should be made to the agency’s own Whistleblowing Policy.

General principle – all cases raised under this policy, will receive the quickest possible response in accordance with the specific circumstances of the case.