



Child Protection Conference Chairs Escalation Process

**THE MID AND WEST WALES
SAFEGUARDING BOARD**

Version	Revision Date	Owner	Date approved by Exec Board	Review Date
V1		Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board	21/04/2026	21/04/2029

Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board for children, CYSUR, Child Protection Conference Chairs Escalation Process.

Context and Purpose

The Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board has an active and productive Child Protection Conference Chairs Conference Network. This forum is supported by the regional safeguarding board and comes together on average three times a year, to work on areas of mutual interest and to support practice development, including the development of common and consistent documentation and templates used in Child Protection Conferences. The forum considers findings from national publications where relevant to the role and this has included the Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements in Wales, undertaken by CIW, Estyn and HIW in 2023, in response to the learning identified in the Logan Mwangi Child Practice Review. Several recommendations were made as part of this review that relate to practice in respect of Child Protection Conferences. The forum considers the development of a consistent escalation process across the region, to be used by conference chairs where appropriate, would support and aid positive safeguarding professional practice in this area.

Unlike the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer for Children Looked After, there is no statutory guidance underpinning the role of the Child Protection Conference Chair within the context of escalation responsibilities if practice concerns are identified. This process therefore sits under the governance of the Regional Safeguarding Board for Children, CYSUR, and its purpose is to support existing internal quality assurance processes alongside inherent checks and balances for children known and identified to be at risk of significant harm.

A Child Protection Conference Chair and their line managers will ordinarily be qualified social workers with significant practice experience in child protection work. They are in a unique position that enables them to have a detached and objective overview of presenting risk, practitioner and agencies understanding and response to this risk, as well as professional response and intervention to the identified risk as part of the Child Protection Care and Support Plan.

It is important to note case management responsibility and accountability for decision making rests with the social worker and their line managers, alongside the statutory agencies working to support the family as part of the Child Protection Care and Support Plan. This protocol is not intended to undermine or confuse this, and will act solely as an alert mechanism from the conference chair to team managers, senior managers and ultimately the Head of Childrens Services/ or equivalent in situations where:

- Practice may have fallen **significantly** short of expectations and/or where it is considered the level of response and intervention by agencies via the Child Protection Conference is not proportionate to the level of risk identified.
- There has been a **significant** and unacceptable level of drift and delay in implementing and progressing work as part of the Child Protection Plan.
- The chair identifies an **immediate high risk of harm** to the child that has not been acknowledged or recognised by the statutory agencies supporting the family as part of the child protection plan.
- A key agency has not shared relevant information appropriately in the Child Protection Conference.

- There is a clear lack of multi-agency co-operation in delivery and implementation of the child protection plan **significantly impacting the level of risk to the child** and/or implementation of the child protection care and support plan.
- The conference chair is of the view agencies participating in the child protection conference have made **a significant error of judgement** in their decision in respect of whether to place or remove a child's name from the child protection register.
- There is **identified significant gaps** in visits undertaken by an agency as part of the child protection care and support plan in between conferences.

This protocol is intended to be used, by exception, in the above situations and scenarios to support constructive, helpful dialogue internally and across agencies where there is increased risk or practice shortfalls and is not intended to be adversarial. The Chair will need to exercise sensible professional Judgment in how and in what circumstances it is applied. It does not replace the regional process for [the Resolution of Professional Differences](#), this is a separate process and should continue to be used and instigated by practitioners, managers, and agencies when there is a professional difference of opinion that cannot be resolved informally. In the event the chair has escalated an issue from a child protection conference and an agency remains unhappy or concerned about the response and decision, then the Resolution of Professional Difference Protocol should be used where needed and appropriate to resolve the issue. Any serious unresolved concerns or issues raised by practitioners or managers in the conference regarding individual conduct needs to be progressed as part of that agency's complaints process.

What Are the Benefits of a Regional Escalation Process

The Mid and West Wales safeguarding Board has an established history of developing multi-agency safeguarding guidance, policies, and protocols with a suite of these available on its website alongside resources to support safeguarding practice and intervention for children at risk and in need. Several workstreams across the board sub-groups continue to support the development of consistent multi-agency agency practice and responses to children and families where this is possible and appropriate. Having a clear regional consistent process that is implemented and understood by all conference chairs, practitioners and managers across Mid and West Wales, will support a consistent regional response, timely intervention ensuring any concerns are addressed promptly, provide clarity and confidence for practitioners and help support a culture of respectful challenge and professional curiosity. It will aide and complement existing internal QA process's and provide an additional safety net for children at risk of significant harm, particularly in complex high-risk cases and/ or where risk management is finely balanced.

Who does the escalation process apply to?

This process applies to all statutory partners of the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board including Dyfed Powys Police, Hywell Dda University Health Board, Powys Teaching Health Board, Public Health Wales and the National Probation Service, Carmarthenshire Local Authority, Ceredigion Local Authority, Pembrokeshire Local Authority and Powys Local Authority. Governance, accountability, and oversight sit under the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board as part of regional safeguarding partnership arrangements. It is acknowledged many voluntary and third sector organisations provide services to children and their families who are subject to a child protection care and support plan and whilst these are not statutory partners of the Regional Board, they play a critical role in keeping children safe. Therefore, in the spirit of multi-agency working and

collaboration, they are expected to comply with this process in the event an issue is identified in respect of a service they provide.

Process for Escalation

It is acknowledged responsibility and accountability for decision making rests with social care and the multi-agency group supporting the family. The local authority is therefore the lead agency in the implementation of any child protection care and support plan and the custodian of this process. Any issues therefore as outlined above, identified by the Child Protection Conference Chair in respect of any agency or service, should be escalated through the local authority's line management structure who will lead on resolution.

Stage 1: Informal Resolution

Direct discussion between the conference chair and social worker (keyworker). CP Chair alerts the team manager and the team manager of the conference team to the issue and outcome of the discussion and any agreed actions via internal recording systems. Discussion and agreed resolution to take within 48 (working) hours.

Stage 2: Line Manager Involvement-

If Stage 1, does not resolve the issue and/or there is disagreement between the CP chair and social worker (keyworker) about the issue raised and/or best way to resolve this, CP chair alerts their line manager who will discuss the issue the team manager. Conference team manager will alert the respective senior managers to the issue and any agreed outcome via internal recording systems. Discussion and resolution to take place in 72 hours (working- 5 working days from when issues first identified).

Stage 3: Senior Manager Involvement

If Stage 2 does not resolve the identified issue and/or there continues to disagreement between the between the respective team managers, the identified issues the issues will be escalated to the respective senior managers. Discussion and resolution to take place within five working days (10 working days from when the issues were first identified) and the outcome to be recorded on internal recording systems.

Stage 4- Head of Service/ Or equivalent

If stage 3 does not resolve the issue and/or there continues to be disagreement at a senior management level and a resolution cannot be reached, the matter will be escalated to the Head of Childrens Service/ or equivalent for consideration and resolution. Discussion and resolution will take place within the five working days (15 working days from when the issues were first identified). Final responsibility and accountability for any decision rests with and will be made by the Head of Children's Service/ or equivalent. The outcome and final decision, along with any agreed action should be recorded on internal recording systems.

Immediate Safeguarding Concerns

In the event the conference chair identifies an immediate high level of risk to a child as part of the child protection conference, and the care and support protection plan is not considered to be proportionate to the identified level of risk, then this must be escalated to the respective senior managers responsible for the case management and the Independent Reviewing Team. This will be done by and with the agreement of the Independent Reviewing Senior team manager, following discussion with the Child Protection Conference Chair.