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### Introduction

When professional differences occur that cannot be resolved informally, it is essential that all individual professionals or staff members are able to constructively and critically challenge the practice and decision of others.

Managers are therefore responsible for ensuring that their staff are supported when they want to report concerns and disagreements within their own organisation and/or between agencies.



## Resolution of Professional Differences Regional Protocol

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### Common reasons for Professional Differences

Common reasons within a safeguarding context include:

- Criteria for referrals/thresholds
- Outcomes of assessments
- Roles and responsibilities of workers
- Service provision
- Timeliness of intervention
- Information sharing and communication
- Practice case/management issues

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### Process for Resolution – Stage 3 cont.

- The meeting will decide on an outcome of the dispute and record this
- All parties should accept the outcome of the dispute resolution meeting

#### Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- The Regional Safeguarding Board will monitor, periodically review and audit the number of cases in which dispute resolution protocol has been instigated to help identify themes.



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### The Resolution Process

Professional differences of opinion should always be resolved in a constructive and time limited manner. It is therefore necessary for all parties to ensure that the resolution process does not adversely affect a child or adult's circumstances.

It is important to note this protocol encourages any professional differences that are identified to be resolved via discussion and resolution wherever possible as opposed to unnecessary escalation.

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### Process for Resolution - Stage 3

- If not resolved at Stage 2, the matter must be reviewed by an agency Senior Manager within 10 working days of completion of Stage 2, or a timescale that protects the child from harm, whichever is sooner.
- The senior managers will arrange a meeting and invite relevant professionals/staff members with responsibility for safeguarding children/adults in the respective agencies
- The identified lead agency senior manager will chair and provide admin support
- The senior managers have the discretion to instigate an internal management review within their own agency

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### Process for Resolution - Stage 2

- If not resolved at Stage 1, or within 10 working days, matter should be brought to the attention of their respective line managers who will then discuss/meet.
- The managers should access/review any relevant information and a record of the disagreement and agreed resolution should be recorded within the child/adult's file held by respective agencies and should be communicated to the LOG Chair via email.

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### Process for Resolution - Stage 1

- Individual professionals should initially attempt to resolve differences together.
- The professional should put their concerns in writing to the individual they have a professional difference with and ask to discuss/meet within 5 working days or a timescale that ensures that a child/adult is safeguarded from harm, whichever is less.
- A record of the disagreement and agreed resolution should be communicated to the local safeguarding lead via email