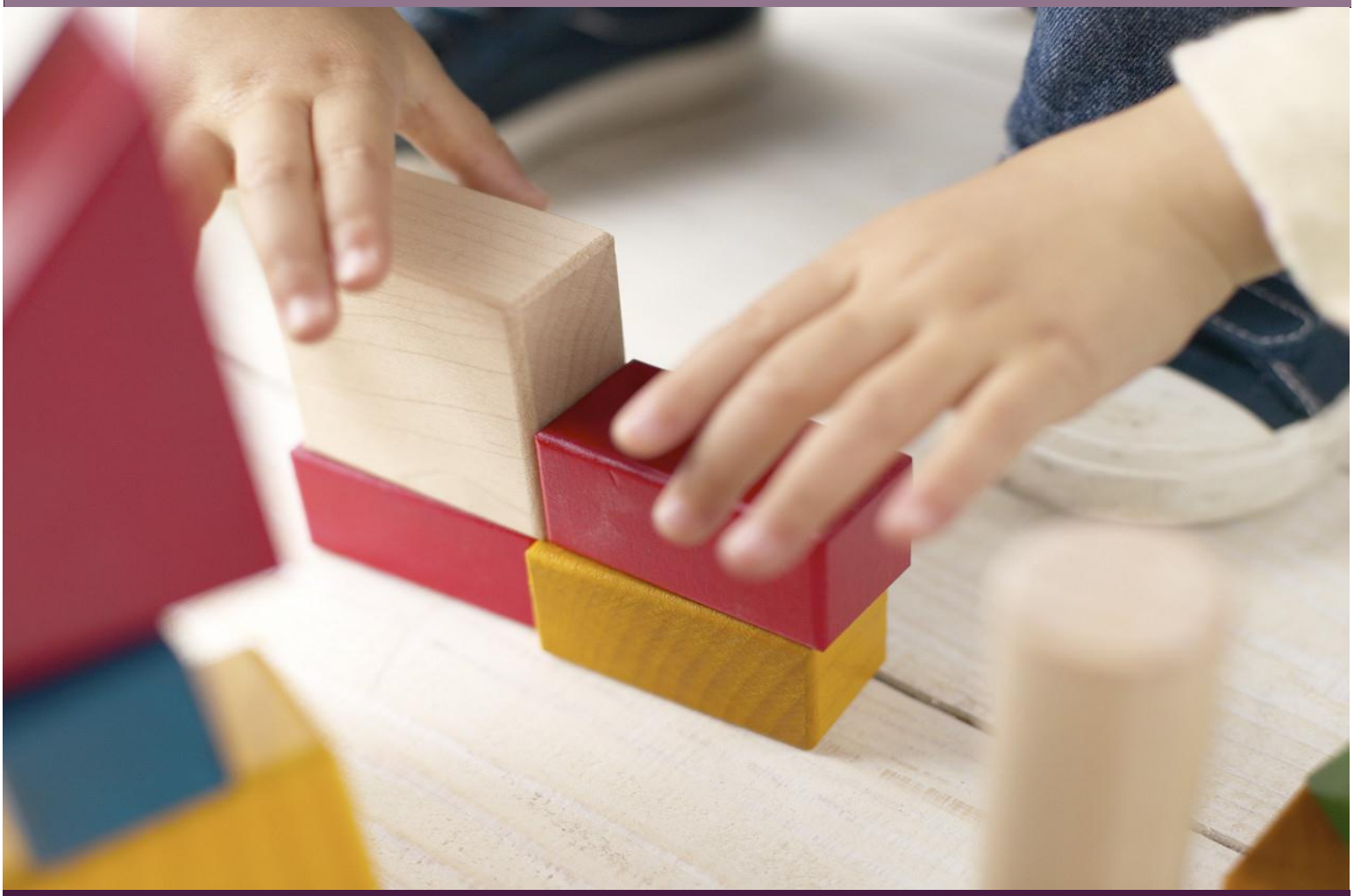
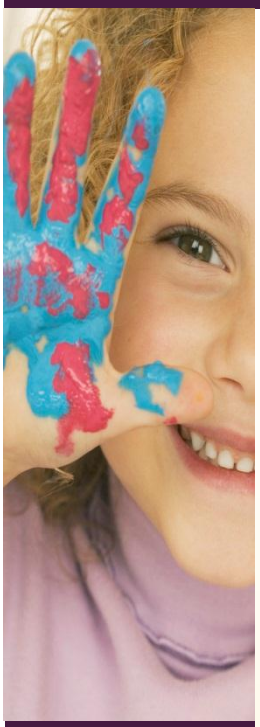
Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board
Inter-agency Escalation Policy



The Resolution of Professional Inter-agency Disagreements about Safeguarding Children

GREENWICH safeguardingchildren BOARD



Inter-agency Escalation Policy

Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Disagreements are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need/thresholds
- Roles and responsibilities
- Decisions made at a Child Protection Conference or Core Group meeting
- Progressing plans
- Communication

All professionals have a duty to act assertively and proactively to ensure that a child's welfare is the paramount consideration in all professional activity.

Therefore all professionals must challenge the practice of other professionals where they are concerned that this practice is placing children at risk of harm.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage however if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm the designated safeguarding lead in your agency should be informed immediately.

Stages of the policy

Professionals should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within a timescale that protects the child from harm.

Stage One – involving your line manager

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a supervisor/manager to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem, to be specific as to what the disagreement is about, and to identify the desired outcome.

Stage Two – involving the worker from other agency/service

The people who disagree have a discussion to resolve the problem. This discussion must take place as soon as possible and could be a telephone conversation of a face to face meeting. There may be instances where disparity in perceived status or experience may inhibit the ability of some workers to resolve the disagreement without support.



Stage Three – escalate line manager to line manager

If the problem is not resolved at stage two the worker should contact their supervisor/manager within their own agency who should have a discussion with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency.

Stage Four – escalate to named/designated safeguarding leads or senior operational manager.

If the problem is not resolved at stage three the supervisor/manager reports to their respective operations manager or named/designed safeguarding representative. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Stage Five – escalate to operational directors/assistant directors

If the problem is not resolved at stage four, the operations manager or named/designated safeguarding representative reports to their respective operational directors/assistant directors who must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion.

Stage Six – resolution by Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board (GSCB) Chaired meeting.

Operational issues must be resolved by the agencies directly involved in the case. When a resolution has not been achieved at stage five, the Chair of the GSCB should be approached to identify a Board member from an uninvolved agency to chair a meeting of the most senior managers with operational responsibility for the case. This meeting will review the issues at hand and provide a final opportunity for the involved agencies to ensure that there is a full understanding of the issues before the decision is finalised.

The Chair of this meeting will then report on issues from this process to the GSCB SCR Work Group.

Important Additional Notes

At all stages of the process actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. This must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued. If the process highlights gaps in policies and procedure this must be brought to the attention of the chair of the GSCB.

Key Contacts

Greenwich Children's Social Care

Multi-agency
Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 020 8921 3172
Out of Hours 020 8854 8888

Safeguarding Co-ordinator for Schools 020 8921 4438
07805 704 113

Early Help Manager 020 8921 4590
Adults' Services 020 8921 2304

Metropolitan Police

Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) 020 7230 3700

Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group

Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children 07958339120
Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children 07880055383
Named GP for Safeguarding Children 020 8305 3003

Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

Named Nurse Safeguarding Children 020 8836 5370

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (including CAMHS)

Head of Safeguarding & Lead Named Nurse

01322 625009 / 07771 767102

Named Nurse Greenwich

020 8921 4420 / 07879 635510

Consultant Paediatrician & Named Doctor

020 8294 3144 or 020 8836 8621

GREENWICH safeguardingchildren BOARD

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