



# One minute guide

## Multi-agency concerns resolution process

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### What is the multi-agency concerns resolution process?

In Leeds, we expect that our workforce will act [restoratively](#), and where there are differences of opinion about how to respond to an identified concern about a child, young person or family they will use positive, restorative approaches with each other to discuss these differences.

Disagreements can be a sign of developing thinking, and the value of exchanging ideas from different perspectives should not be under-estimated. However, disagreements may disadvantage the child or family involved if they are not resolved constructively and in a timely manner. Throughout our work, the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is the primary concern, and professional disputes must not obstruct this.

If a practitioner feels that another worker or an agency is not acting in the best interests of the child, young person, or family, they have a responsibility to respectfully challenge that practitioner or agency. In Leeds, the [Leeds Safeguarding Childrens Partnership \(LSCP\)](#) has developed the [Concerns Resolution Process](#) to support practitioners to carry out that challenge.

### How does it work?

There are clear steps to follow when concerns arise, as set out below. This process should always start with practitioners openly discussing their concerns restoratively with each other. However, some disagreements may need to be escalated up to first line managers and/ or safeguarding leads (and beyond if appropriate).

**Step one** - Discuss with your line manager, safeguarding lead and other colleagues to clarify thinking and seek advice before contacting the relevant practitioner to attempt to resolve any disagreement as soon as possible. Should disagreements be in relation to processes whereby there is a lead professional/ [Independent Reviewing Officer](#) (IRO)/ chair of a multi-agency meeting involved, they should be informed in writing for information and monitoring. Outcomes should be clearly recorded. If there is no resolution from this discussion, inform your line manager and/ or safeguarding, along with any lead professionals/ IRO/ Chair of multi-agency meeting who has been previously informed.

**Step two** – if the concern is not resolved, refer to your line manager who should contact their equivalent in the other agency and seek to resolve restoratively. If there is still no resolution following this stage, the LSCP must also be notified.

**Step three a)** – if the concern remains unresolved, your line manager should escalate through the management structures of the agencies involved, with agreed timescales for responses.

**Step three b)** - If the disagreement still cannot be resolved, the Head of Service/ Senior Manager for each agency will raise this at Director/ Assistant Director level (or within health, the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children).

**Step 4** - If the disagreement cannot be resolved within the three step process set out above, this should be referred to the LSCP Executive who will take action with both parties to resolve.

## What are the principles of concerns resolution?

When trying to resolve disagreements practitioners should work to the following principles:

The **safety and wellbeing** of the child or young person is paramount. If the child is considered to be at risk of significant harm, Children's Services [Duty and Advice](#) team should be contacted;

Keep the **child, young person, and their family** at the centre of all professional discussions;

Ensure that the **right conversations are had with the right people at the right time**, taking place face to face where possible;

Use a **restorative approach** which includes appropriate challenge;

Disagreements must be resolved in a **timely manner**; and

Concerns, actions, responses, and outcomes **must be recorded**.

In addition, clear written records should be kept by everyone at all stages, which must include written confirmation between the parties about agreed resolutions and the proposed follow-up of any outstanding issues.

## How long should the process take?

Timescales for resolution for each step of the process should be agreed with the practitioner raising the concern, and a timescale for response from the other line manager should also be agreed.

Where possible this should not exceed 10 working days between stages and one month for the whole process to be completed.

## Key contacts

You can contact the LSCP at [LSCP.Info@Leeds.gov.uk](mailto:LSCP.Info@Leeds.gov.uk).

Practitioners can contact [Duty and Advice Team](#) at the Front Door on tel: 0113 376 0336 and [Emergency Duty Team](#) out of hours on tel: 0113 535 0600.