

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Safeguarding Concerns Resolution Policy

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Cross Reference	Blackpool Children's Services Assessment and Planning Framework – Single Assessment

Purpose of this document

If Aspired Futures (AF) are not satisfied with the response from Children's Social Care Services in relation to a safeguarding concern and concerns continue about a child/young person (CYP), the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding will ensure that the procedures are followed in order to achieve a satisfactory solution.

Details of Policy

Any escalation referral felt necessary by AF would be conducted following the Blackpool Children's Services Assessment and Planning Framework – Single Assessment guidelines (http://blackpoolchildcare.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/app_2_frame_flow.pdf).

Initial referral

Before a referral is made AF would speak with the parent/carer first in regards to the cause for concern and inform them that a referral will be made unless to do so would place a CYP at increased risk of significant harm.

When a designated safeguarding person from AF makes a referral to Blackpool Children's Social Care:

- The Record of Concern form should be signed off by the strategic lead for safeguarding and kept in the CYP/family electronic file
- A record of the date and time of the referral should be kept on the CYP/family electronic file; including the name and designation of the person that you spoke to (if referral made by phone).
- Referrals made by telephone should be followed through in writing using the appropriate local referral forms within 48 hours. A copy of the referral form should be kept on the CYP/family electronic file. (Note: It is advised to make a telephone referral first, followed by an email to the named person to ensure the referral has been received on that day and in order to secure a named recipient).

Feedback from initial referral

- Blackpool Children's Social Care should acknowledge receipt of the referral within 1 working day of receiving it, and advise the next course of action. This may be an onward referral for a Child in Need/Child Protection plan, or recommendation of an Early Help/support establishing if a Getting it Right for Every child and Family In Blackpool meeting or single agency targeted support, will meet the child's needs. If the decision is to undertake an initial assessment it must be completed within 10 working day or no further social care involvement.
- A record of the referral acknowledgement should be kept on the family electronic file. A feedback form should be kept if one is received; if feedback is given verbally - note the time, date and person have spoken

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to, as well as the actions children's social care have taken or have indicated they will take and ask for a written referral acknowledgement to be sent as soon as possible.

If you have not received confirmation that your referral has been received

- It is important that a record is kept not only of your referral, but of Blackpool Children's Social Care's acknowledgement of that referral. If this has not been received within 3 working days, you should contact Blackpool Children's Social Care again, recording the time and date of your enquiry on the CYP/family file, and the name of the person that you have spoken to. An email should also be sent at this point copying in the section manager to ensure a reply.
- Referral acknowledgment to be kept on the CYP/family electronic file, as above.

If Blackpool Children's Social Care decide no further action is needed, and AF continues to have concerns about the welfare of a child/young person

Whilst it is the responsibility of Blackpool Children's Social Care to assess each situation and determine the most appropriate course of action in the circumstances, from time to time, AF may have significant concerns about a decision and if this is the case:

- Record on the CYP/family electronic file the decision of Blackpool Children's Social Care and the reasons you were given.

What should happen when other professionals or partner agencies' views differ and it has not been possible to resolve this with Blackpool Children's Social Care?

Stage 1

If professionals are unable to reach agreement about the way forward regarding an individual issue, then their disagreement must be escalated to the allocated social worker's first line manager within 5 working days in order that there can be further consideration of the issue of dispute and resolution can be sought. The allocated social worker's Practice Manager (First Line Manager) is required to contact the professional or agency raising the concern within 5 working days. A written record must be kept of concerns raised and resolution reached.

Stage 2

If the issue is not resolved following contact with the allocated social worker's Practice Manager, then within 5 working days the matter must be referred up through Blackpool Children's Social Care's structure to the Group Manager (Second Line Manager) responsible for the service area or the Group Manager covering their absence without delay. The Group Manager is required to consider escalated concerns and contact the professional or agency raising the concern within 5 working days. A written record must be kept of concerns raised and resolution reached.

Stage 3

If the issue cannot be resolved with the Group Manager, then consideration should be given to progressing the dispute to the Head of Children's Social Care within 5 working days. The Head of Children's Social Care is required to consider the escalated concern, alert the Director of Children's Service and contact the professional or agency raising the concern within 5 working days. A written record must be kept of concerns raised and resolution reached.

As outlined in the PAN Lancashire Policy and Procedures for Resolving Professional Disagreements, where those disputes relate to the safeguarding needs of individual children, the LSCB Team must be made aware of this. The purpose of such notification is to help monitor interagency safeguarding activity, and to identify issues which may benefit from an LSCB Quality Assurance scrutiny. The agency which found it necessary to escalate an issue to such a high level in another organisation should advise the other organisation of their intention to do so and complete a Stage 3 Monitoring Information Form and then return it to the LSCB Team.

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What happens when disagreements need to be resolved quickly in order to Safeguard and Promote a Child's Welfare?

Professional judgement must always be used and the safety and wellbeing of a child/young person is paramount. In circumstances where there is a delay in receiving a response at Stage 1 or 2, careful consideration should be given to involving managers at the next stage in the protocol. The aim of this contact is to let them know that there is a disagreement, that a speedy response is required to safeguard the child's welfare and that in the absence of such a response, they will be contacted to help progress the disagreement further.

Where there is a need for more immediate social work intervention to protect a child who is at immediate risk of serious and potentially life threatening Significant Harm, immediate action to reduce the risk of harm will be required by all relevant parties whilst the dispute is ongoing. In such circumstances, where Children's Social Care maintain a position of non-involvement or involvement at a level that is not deemed to promote and safeguard the child or young person's welfare then the professional or partner agency who is in disagreement with this position should inform the LSCB at the earliest opportunity.