A logo for a company

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**Escalation and Resolution Conversations Protocol**

For resolving professional challenges when working with adults

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# 1 Introduction

1.1 When working with practitioners across professional disciplines and agencies, at times there will be differences in opinion, concerns about professional practice, or issues in difficulty in communication. This procedure seeks to set out a standard of communication expectations alongside a pathway to resolve or escalate concern.

1.2 Please note, if at any point you feel a practitioner or agency is not clearly acting in an evidence-based way that is in the best interests of the individual, you have a responsibility to respectfully communicate this and raise with the relevant practitioner or agency. If resolution cannot be achieved, this needs to be escalated in a timely manner.

1.3 This protocol does not seek to replace statutory complaints processes, but to enable and empower professional discussion and appropriate challenge.

# 2 Key Principles of Effective Communication

2.1 The following key principles should direct communication and be embedded within all professionals working with adults:

* The individual’s safety and welfare are paramount;
* Promoting positive communication and relationships between multi-agency partners;
* Seeking to avoid any drift or delay for individuals with acute needs;
* Timely response and expectations on transition;
* Communicating well is everyone’s responsibility;
* Clear line of accountability to seek effective and timely resolution.

2.2 This communication protocol aims to contribute towards effective information sharing, supporting transition protocols and managing complex risk in an effective manner.

2.3 Key expectations to enable effective resolution conversations:

2.3.1 Telephone or direct face to face discussion should always be the primary initial form of communication between professionals. This should be initially focused on communication between team members with case management responsibility or direct involvement; to ensure clarity of current involvement and detail of concerns.

2.3.2 Telephone conversation should be followed up through brief emails confirming the discussions held, to ensure clarity and consistency of recorded expectations.

2.3.3 Notification and communication of any concerns regarding an individual who is believed to be at increasing risk should be held within 48 hours to avoid any drift or delay. Where there is potential imminent risk to an individual, discussion should be held the same working day.

2.3.4 Should dispute over communicated concerns or transition be found, the below dispute resolution should be commenced.

2.3.5 Consent from the individual prior to information sharing should be explicitly gathered wherever possible and reasonable to do so, except where the immediate safeguarding of an individual overrides this requirement.

2.3.6 Communication should promote confidence and engage in open dialogue at every stage. Factually correct information should be made available swiftly and detail clarity.

2.3.7 A flattened hierarchy should be promoted amongst all partner agencies, allowing professional challenge and escalation of concerns.

2.3.8 Agencies are expected to monitor dispute and escalation themes and provide regular updates to [Tameside Adults Safeguarding Partnership Board (TASPB)](https://www.tameside.gov.uk/socialcare/adultabuse/tasp) to allow recurrent themes to be addressed.

2.3.9 Multi-agency reflective sessions can be considered for cases in which progress is slow and drift is evident. The purpose of multi-agency reflective sessions is to provide an opportunity for a core group of professionals to reflect on a case they are working with and provide the opportunity for increased collaboration and support. Multi-agency reflective sessions are NOT intended to replace an individual’s supervision.

# 3 Dispute Resolution Pathway

3.1 Communication throughout any dispute remains the key priority; ensuring that direct discussion is the primary remit of communication and this is an understanding by all agency representatives. The pathway below should be followed wherever practitioner to practitioner resolution has not been effective. The pathway promotes escalation within both/all agencies at each stage.

3.2 For clarity, agreed outcomes will be recorded and shared via email to ensure decision making captured on each agency’s electronic recording system.

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| **Stage 1:** Direct discussion should be held between the relevant team managers or agency equivalent as a first option to try to resolve any dispute. This should be held through either telephone or face to face discussion as a priority and key points confirmed in writing. |
| **Stage 2:** If through direct discussion between team managers, a resolution or agreement cannot be reached, then contact will need to be established between allocated senior managers or heads of service within **5 working days**. Key points should be confirmed in writing. |
| **Stage 3:** If within **10 working days**, a resolution has not been achieved then responsibility will transfer to the responsible Assistant Directors/Senior Managers to seek direct discussion in order to achieve resolution. Focus again will remain consistent on direct discussion first and foremost. |
| **Stage 4:** If at any point risk escalates or a resolution cannot be achieved, engagement with TASSPB to support resolution should begin through contact with the Business Manager. |

**Stage 1:** Team managers or agency equivalent

**Stage 2:** Heads of Service or agency equivalent

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**Adapted by Tameside Policy Procedure Task and Finish Group Policy, Procedure and Workforce Development Sub Group**

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**Stage 3:** Assistant Directors or agency equivalent

**Stage 4:** Escalation to TASPB