



& our Partners,

Committed to Safeguarding Adults



Harrow Local Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB)

Safeguarding Adults Multi-Agency Escalation and Resolution Procedure for Individual Cases

POLICY & PROCEDURE (2015)



in partnership with:



Say **NO** to abuse



“Harrow is a place where adults at risk from harm are safe and empowered to make their own decisions and where safeguarding is everyone’s business” (HSAB Vision)

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Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the adult at risk of harm is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage.

If an adult who has care/support needs is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage of the process is initiated, consult with your line manager or safeguarding lead wherever possible.

If the disagreement is between you and your manager then you should consider using your agency's whistle-blowing process.

1. Introduction

Multi-agency working is the basis of good safeguarding adults work. Partner agencies each have their own roles to play in the safeguarding adults process as set out in the pan London multi-agency policies and procedures. It is important that partner agencies are accountable for delivering their part of the safeguarding adults process to a high standard.

However strong the joint working arrangements are, there will be occasions where staff in one partner agency have concerns about the way in which staff in another partner agency is/are delivering their part of the safeguarding adults process.

The Harrow Local Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) is committed to the principle that appropriate challenge and escalation is an essential part of being a learning partnership, achieving high standards and challenging poor practice in order to get the best possible outcomes for ¹adults at risk.

This policy has been developed and agreed by Harrow's Local Safeguarding Adults Board drawing on SCIE's "Protecting adults at risk" Pan London Guidance and examples of good practice elsewhere. This guidance is intended to sit alongside the internal whistle-blowing policies/procedures; complaints and quality assurance arrangements of individual agencies and does not seek to reproduce or replace any of these.

¹ Adult at risk or vulnerable adult are terms used in this document to describe "an adult who may be in need of care and support" as per the terminology in the Care Act 2014

2. Scope of this procedure

This procedure provides for the resolution of professional disagreements/issues in casework relating to the safety of adults at risk of abuse, is applicable to all agencies who have a role in the safeguarding process and supports the London Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Procedures, as adopted by Harrow.

Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to be about differing views of thresholds; lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities; the need for action possibly as a result of drift; issues of communication, including feedback; refusal to share key information; or where it is decided that there is no further involvement required from Adult Social Care (or any other involved agency).

3. Key Principles

It is every professional's responsibility to "problem solve". The aim must be to resolve a professional disagreement at the earliest possible stage as swiftly as possible, always keeping in mind that the adult at risk's safety and welfare is the paramount consideration.

The HSAB is clear that there must be respectful challenge whenever a professional or agency has a concern about the action or inaction of another. Similarly agencies/professionals should not be defensive if challenged. Practitioners and managers should always be prepared to review decisions and plans with an open mind and act proportionately.

Timely and appropriate resolution

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the vulnerable adult is protected.

Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage, however if a vulnerable adult is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated to ensure the most urgent resolution.

The dignity safety and well-being of vulnerable adults is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the vulnerable adult and inform the need to resolve the difference to best effect as soon as possible.

If a vulnerable adult is thought to be at immediate risk of harm, the designated safeguarding lead of the individual agency should be informed.

If there are resource implications, then the discussion should involve managers of the relevant agencies who have the authority to make decisions about the allocation of resources.

4. Process (see appendix 1)

4.1 Stage One

Involve the worker from the other agency/service (professional to professional)

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported. This discussion can take place face to face or with a telephone call.

It is important that a clear record is made and particularly that any points of difference are clearly and objectively recorded.

4.2 Stage Two

Involve line managers/supervisors (manager to manager)

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate (and has been unable to resolve the disagreement at stage 1 above), should consult a supervisor/manager. They should clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem; be specific as to what the disagreement is about; and what they aim to achieve. They should also be able to evidence the nature and source of their concerns and should keep an accurate record of all discussions. The supervisor/manager should raise the concerns with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency. It is important to keep a clear and objective record of the discussion and the basis for any decision about next steps.

4.3 Stage Three

Involve designated safeguarding leads/senior managers (SAB lead to SAB lead)

If the problem is not resolved at stage two, the supervisor/manager should contact their organisation's HSAB Board member, or that Board member's designated deputy.

These two senior managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion. They will keep a clear record of their discussion and any points of difference.

4.4 Stage Four

Safeguarding Adults Board Resolution Panel review

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences at the earlier stages, a Safeguarding Adults Board Resolution Panel will be instigated by the Chair of the HSAB and chaired by an independent file auditor. The Panel must consist of representatives from at least three agencies from the HSAB's membership, not concerned in the professional differences.

The panel will receive representations from those involved in the disagreement and make a decision as to the next course of action, resolving the professional differences concerned. The decision of the Panel is binding on all agencies concerned.

The Chair of the Panel will report the issues back to the HSAB and an annual summary will be submitted to the HSAB.

Additional note – threshold decision making

In the specific circumstances where agencies do not agree with the safeguarding adults team threshold decision made after a concern is raised:

- further discussions should be held with the Team Manager
- if agreement cannot be reached then the case will be raised with the Manager Safeguarding Adults and DoLS Services who will review the decision within one working day
- if the Service Manager is not available or agreement still cannot be reached then the case will proceed immediately to a safeguarding adults enquiry and be the subject of a Strategy Meeting. The meeting should be attended by the referring agency where concerns can be more carefully explored and a decision taken about next steps
- if no agreement is reached then the process should move to stage 3 of this procedure

Learning from disagreements

This process may highlight wider learning points or gaps in policies and procedures. Any general issues should be identified and referred to the agency's representative on the HSAB for consideration by the relevant sub-group e.g. Training and Development to inform future Best Practice Forums/training events.

It may be helpful for individuals to be offered a debrief with appropriate specialist supervisors following some disputes, in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

5. Differences at Strategy Meetings and Case Conferences

NB. This procedure is for disagreements amongst professionals. Where family members or users have a complaint about the safeguarding adults process, reference should be made to *“Complaints in Relation to Child Protection Conferences and Adults Safeguarding Strategy Meetings and Conferences” (Harrow HSAB - 25th August 2011)*

If a professional has concerns about the process, outcome or management of a Strategy Meeting or Safeguarding Adults Case Conference, this should be explicitly noted by the Chair of the meeting and recorded in the minutes. Whilst the complaint or dissent is being resolved, the conference decision stands to avoid “drift” in case work.

If a professional and their line manager cannot resolve this disagreement, this HSAB escalation and resolution policy/procedure should be used.

If a professional considers at the end of a safeguarding adults case conference that a decision made or omitted places the subject at risk, they should raise this with the Chair before leaving the meeting and ask that their concerns be recorded. They should also inform their agency safeguarding adults lead of their actions and their reasons, seeking reference to this resolution policy/procedure.

6. References and further reading

“London Multi-agency safeguarding adults procedures”

“Harrow Multi Agency Complaints in Relation to Child Protection Conferences and Adults Safeguarding Strategy Meetings and Conferences” - August 2011

Whistle-blowing Policy – relevant policies and procedures from HSAB member/partner agencies as appropriate

7. Further information/contact details

All the reports referred to in this document, the HSAB policy/procedures, publicity, training events and other related information is available via this web link:

http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/200184/adults_at_risk/734/harrow_s_safeguarding_adult_s_board_hsab

To raise a safeguarding concern:

ahadultsservices@harrow.gov.uk

(for older people and adults with a disability/learning disability)

Tel: 020 8901 2680 (Access Harrow golden number)

cnw-tr.mentalhealthsafeguardingharrow@nhs.net

(for people over 18 years with a mental health difficulty)

Tel: 0800 023 4650 (CNWL single point of access)



Adult abuse - break the silence
REPORT IT

If you or someone you know is being abused, hurt or exploited, please call Harrow Council's Safeguarding Adults Service

Abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, psychological, discriminatory or neglect.

Safeguarding Adults Service

during office hours:

tel: **020 8420 9453**

at all other times

020 8424 0999

fax: **020 8416 8269**

email: **safeguarding.adults@harrow.gov.uk**

web: **www.harrow.gov.uk/safeguardingadults**

Appendix 1

