

Portsmouth Safeguarding Adults Board



One Minute Guide

4LSAB Safeguarding Adults Escalation Protocol

What is the 4LSAB Safeguarding Adults Escalation Protocol?

The [4LSAB Safeguarding Adults Escalation Protocol](#) provides a framework to manage professional disagreements about safeguarding practice. It was developed because the learning from several Safeguarding Adults Reviews showed that staff were unable to escalate or navigate around difficulties in communication between partner organisations. The Escalation Protocol has been adopted by the Portsmouth, Southampton, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Safeguarding Adults Boards so all partners involved in safeguarding adults in the area are committed to using it.

When to use the Escalation Protocol

At times professionals may disagree about the decisions or actions taken to keep an adult at risk safe. A culture of professional co-operation and open partnership working means that sometimes we need to raise concerns about the practice or decisions of staff working for another agency. All staff have a duty to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of service users and to act promptly.

Possible areas of disagreement could include:

- Whether the threshold has been met to take action in response to a safeguarding concern
- Concerns about safeguarding case management
- Case closure or lack of action by an agency
- Lack of engagement of key partners in the multi-agency risk management process

The benefit of using the Escalation Protocol is that the dispute can be resolved quickly, with the adult's needs and views at the centre and without putting the adult at further risk.

This Escalation Protocol is only to be used for disputes about safeguarding practice. It does not cover other matters such as assessments, care management or funding for care and support needs. It should not be used to raise concerns about the practice of colleagues within your own organisation - you should use your own internal policies for this.

How to use the Escalation Protocol

Before raising the concern using the Escalation Protocol, you should involve the adult and/or their representative (for example a family member or advocate). Remember that the adult's safety and wellbeing is the most important consideration in any disagreement.

In line with the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal you should always involve the adult and respect their views, wishes and desired outcomes.

Sometimes the views of the adult may be at odds with those of professionals. If the adult has mental capacity, they have the right to make unwise decisions which may place them at risk of harm. The [4LSAB Multi-Agency Risk Management Framework](#) provides guidance on how to manage this. If there is disagreement between professionals or family members about a best interests decision for an adult who lacks mental capacity, the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice should be used. It may be necessary to refer to the Court of Protection.

Practitioners and managers should always be prepared to review decisions with an open mind and should avoid being defensive when they are challenged.

At all stages:

- Check back to make sure there is shared understanding of what has been agreed
- The agreed actions and decisions must be recorded in writing by all agencies. Include a review date. If there are still outstanding areas of disagreement, these should be recorded along with confirmation of how they are going to be resolved.
- The decisions must be shared with operational staff, including the person who initially raised the concern.
- Don't forget to check back to ensure agreed actions have been fully implemented.

Stages of Escalation

Stage 1 - Practitioner to practitioner

Stage 2 - Line manager to line manager

Stage 3 - Senior manager to senior manager

Stage 4 - Heads of Service (or equivalent) AND the Safeguarding Adults Board Chair

Always try to resolve the issue at the earliest stage possible, but use your discretion if the adult is at risk of immediate harm. If a case is particularly complex or high risk and there are serious disagreements between agencies, multi-agency oversight of the case involving senior managers should be started early on. The [4LSAB Multi-Agency Risk Management Framework](#) can be used.

Where can I get more information?

The Escalation Protocol is available on the PSAB website:

<http://www.portsmouthsab.uk/procedures/>. It includes a flowchart to help understand the process and a template to use to record the reasons for the dispute and the outcomes agreed.

You can contact the PSAB team and the PSAB Independent Chair at PSAB@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.