



TEA-BREAK GUIDE



When do Professionals Disagree?

It is natural for professionals to sometimes disagree about a case / child welfare sometimes. The NSCB Conflict Resolution Policy provides a procedure to follow where a disagreement cannot be resolved by professionals at front line level.

At no time must professional disagreement detract from ensuring that the child is safeguarded. The child's welfare and safety must remain paramount throughout.

There is by no means provides an exhaustive list of areas professionals may disagree but provides some of the main areas where disagreements occur:

- A referral not considered to meet the threshold for assessment by Children's Social Care;
- Children's Social Care conclude that further information should be sought by the referrer before a referral is progressed;
- There is disagreement about whether child protection procedures should be invoked;
- Children's Social Care and the Police place different interpretations on the need for significant agency response in relation to a child protection enquiry;
- There is a disagreement over sharing of information and/or provision of services; or
- There is disagreement about the outcome of an assessment and whether an appropriate action plan is in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

[Full NSCB Conflict Resolution Procedure](#)

The Stages to Resolving a Disagreement

Stage One – Prevention

Most disagreements can be resolved through discussion and negotiation. The professionals involved should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within one working day, but if they are unable to do so, their disagreement must be reported to their line managers or equivalent. With respect most day-to-day issues, the relevant line managers will be able to resolve the disagreement.

Stage Two – Informal Resolution

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter at front line management level, the matter should be referred, without delay, to second tier management, with direct communication taking place between designated professionals or the named professionals for safeguarding within the individual agency.

Stage Three – Formal Resolution

The matter should be referred to the appropriate Head of Service within the wider children's workforce, who will consider the matter with their equivalent level of management within the agency with whom there is a dispute. At this stage a decision will need to be reached where agencies agree a way forward and where the interests of the child take precedence over possible professional stalemate.

Stage Four – Remaining Disagreements

In the unlikely event that the professional disagreement remains unresolved, the matter must be referred to the Head of Safeguarding for Safeguarding & Quality Assurance who will determine a course of action, including reporting the matter to the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board Chair via the Business Office.