



Child Protection Policy

This document sets out the policy of Mentoring Plus and in section B provides a practical guide for staff and volunteers involved with children. Whilst detailed, this policy is not intended to be comprehensive and as such does not attempt to deal with **all** the issues of working with children and young people. This document should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies such as Safer Recruitment and Safer Working Practice.

Section A – Policy

1: Intent and introduction

1.1 Statement of Intent

Through its *Child Protection Policy*, Mentoring Plus is committed to promoting the well-being and enjoyment and protecting the health, safety and general welfare of young people, volunteers and staff.

1.2 Introduction

In promoting this policy Mentoring Plus is keen to take reasonable steps to:

- Provide a welcoming, secure and comfortable environment for the benefit and of young people, volunteers and staff;
- Keep young people safe from harm while in the care of its staff or volunteers;
- Comply with relevant statutory requirements;
- Support and protect the interests of staff and volunteers who have contact with, or access to young people.

1.3 Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely;

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

2: Scope of the policy and those affected

2.1 Mentoring Plus personnel affected

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers (including trustees), and others representing Mentoring Plus who have contact with young people.

2.2 Children and young people

In law a child is anyone under the age of 18, however older children, for example teenagers may prefer to be called young people.

2.3 Activities affected

Activities and involvement within the scope of this policy include:

- One to one work with young people either as staff or volunteers;
- Accompanying young people on visits;
- Holding meetings with volunteers and young people;
- Working with young people in project interest groups or activity days;
- Transporting young people to and from their home;
- Transporting young people to and from project interest groups;
- Working with young people in a residential setting;
- Working with young people during issue based training sessions;
- Any other activity that might involve substantial, unsupervised access to young people.

3: Guiding principles

3.1 In welcoming and working with young people Mentoring Plus aims to:

- 1) Provide a friendly welcome for them and promote their general welfare;
- 2) Adhere to, and adopt recent guidance issued by Bath & North East Somerset Council to all voluntary and community organisations of safer recruitment;
- 3) Recognise their rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect;
- 4) Plan activities involving young people with care to minimise risks to their health and safety;
- 5) Raise awareness of the dangers to which young people may be susceptible;
- 6) Develop appropriate procedures for responding to accidents, incidents and alleged or suspected harm.

Guidelines for good practice under each of the six points listed above are set out in **Section B**.

4: Implementation of the policy

4.1 Distribution of copies

Full copies of this policy will be distributed as a detailed reference guide to:

- Trustees
- Staff
- Volunteers

4.2. Self-Audit

An annual safeguarding “Self Audit” is carried out by Mentoring Plus using the audit tool provided by Bath & North East Somerset Council

4.3 Training

A training programme to support the policy and good practice will be delivered to appropriate Trustees, staff and volunteers. This will include training in safer recruitment as required by the Local Safeguarding Board (Bath & North East Somerset)

All staff and volunteers will receive training as part of their induction into Mentoring Plus. Child Protection forms an essential element of staff and volunteer induction and training.

No trustees, staff and volunteers will be allowed to take part in any recruitment processes unless they have received appropriate induction and training, including Safer Recruitment.

Appropriate trustees (Chairperson and nominated trustee with lead responsibility for safeguarding) and senior staff (Director) will receive training on the contents of “Working Together to Safeguard Children” (most recent copy kept on server and can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children). Training will also be provided to these persons on how to carry out investigations into allegations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the South West Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk) as set out under the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.

5: Other relevant Mentoring Plus policies, instructions and guidance

5.1 This policy should be implemented in conjunction with other policies, instructions and guidance, including:-

- (a) Risk assessments on individual young people referred to the Project
- (b) Risk assessments carried out on young people taking part in project activities
- (c) Recording disclosures or signs of abuse flow chart – attached as Appendix 2

- (d) Escalation policy recommended by the South West Child Protection Procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk) – attached as Appendix 3.
- (e) Use of the internet and social working networking sites (E- Safety and Acceptable Use Policy).
- (f) Policy and procedure for carrying out investigations into allegations.
- (g) Please also see our Personal Harassment policy.

Section B – Guidelines

1 Welcome and welfare

1.1 Promoting a friendly environment

As an organisation that values and encourages the involvement of young people and volunteers, Mentoring Plus aims to provide a welcoming, safe, secure and enjoyable experience for all of its volunteers and service users.

When working with young people, Mentoring Plus intends that staff and volunteers see themselves as part of a team sharing this common interest.

The project endeavours to provide an environment where anyone who may be vulnerable feels able to raise any concerns they may have and discuss anything they may be unhappy about.

1.2 Welfare paramount

The fundamental principle, both in law and good practice, is that whenever the interests of young people are involved, their welfare must always be paramount. Mentoring Plus recognises this and all staff and volunteers should seek to implement this principle.

2: People as individuals

2.1 People as individuals

Mentoring Plus recognises how we must all be aware of each person's needs and capabilities.

Time should be taken to get to know each person individually in order to make their experience with Mentoring Plus more rewarding. It also enables Mentoring Plus to be more responsive should a young person be suffering harm.

2.2 Children and young people's rights

The Children's Act 1989 gives children and young people certain rights, including the right to be listened to and to talk about any worries they may have, as well as the right to be protected if they are in danger, or at risk of harm.

Young people should feel able to approach a Mentoring Plus representative (staff or volunteer) for help, without fear of recrimination. As a result they should be better able to protect themselves.

3: Selection of employees and volunteers

Mentoring Plus will adhere to, and adopt recent guidance issued by Bath & North East Somerset Council to all voluntary and community organisations on safer recruitment. These guidelines have been incorporated into our policies and procedures on selection of trustees, staff and volunteers. This includes keeping a centralised record of DBS checks.

Mentoring Plus will take appropriate steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people wherever possible. A thorough selection procedure for positions, both paid and unpaid, is the most effective way of assessing a person's suitability, and may act as a deterrent to potential abusers.

It should be noted that **anyone** who applies to work or volunteer with Mentoring Plus may have the potential to cause harm, whether they are a member of staff, a volunteer, service user, or other.

In appointing any new member of staff or any volunteer, Mentoring Plus will follow the procedures and rigorous checks as laid out in its Safer Recruitment Policy. All members of staff and all volunteers will receive supervision as stated in the supervision section of our Safer Working Practise policy.

4: Planning activities to minimise harm

4.1 Risk assessments and other general considerations

Health and safety requirements must be carefully considered when planning and carrying out activities involving young people. Mentoring Plus's Health and Safety Policy applies to volunteers as well as employees.

All employees and volunteers should carry out thorough risk assessments prior to undertaking events/activities with young people in accordance with the Mentoring Plus Safer Working Practice.

All employees and volunteers should maintain the standard of behaviour expected from them as outlined in Mentoring Plus' Behaviour Code for Adults Working with Children.

All children and young people should be made aware of Mentoring Plus' Behaviour Code for Children and Young People so that they know what behaviour is expected of them when attending and using the facilities of Mentoring Plus. This code of conduct aims to ensure that children and young people are treated fairly by all adults engaged by Mentoring Plus and working with them.

5: Raising awareness of dangers

5.1 Types of harm

- **Physical** – where children or young people receive physical hurt or injury;

- **Neglect** – where adults fail to care for children or young people and to protect them from danger, seriously impairing their health, well-being or development;
- **Emotional** – where children and young people are harmed by a constant lack of love and affection or intimidated by threats or taunts;
- **Sexual** – where children and young people are encouraged or forced to observe or participate in any form of sexual activity by adults or children. This also includes the use of sexualised language.

Common sense should be relied upon to recognise the warning signs. However, it is essential to rely on facts rather than opinions and not jump to conclusions.

5.2 Who can harm

An abuser is often known to the person being abused, whether a parent, sibling, other relative, family friend or neighbour. Not only adults can harm. Children and young people can also suffer abuse from their peers. Sometimes the abuser may be an adult who holds a position of authority over a young person. There is no certain way of identifying a would-be abuser, they can be people of any background and do not appear different from the rest of society.

6: Responding to accidents, incidents and harm

6.1 Responding to accidents / incidents

In the event of an accident to an individual, first-aid should be administered, preferably by a trained first-aider and the situation managed to ensure the welfare of the individual and the safety of others. The emergency services should be called for where appropriate.

An Accident/Incident Report Form should be completed. Where appropriate the circumstances to the accident should be investigated to establish the cause and to identify what remedial action should be taken to minimise the possibility of a recurrence.

Fatal accidents, major injuries and dangerous occurrences should be notified without delay to the appropriate line manager, after alerting the appropriate authorities.

Where an accident/incident involving young people has been narrowly avoided employees and volunteers should detail its nature and pass the information on to their line-manager / supervisor.

6.2 Responding to alleged or suspected harm

If a person wants to talk about harm

If a young person wants to talk about harm, it is essential that the employee or volunteer:

- Listens carefully to what the person says, keeping calm and looking at them directly;
- Let them know that to help them someone else must be told;

- Reassures them that they are not to blame;
- Is aware that they may have been threatened;
- Does not push them for information;
- Reassures them that they are right to talk about it and what they say is accepted;
- Let them know what will happen next and undertakes to let them know the outcome.

Dealing with alleged or suspected harm

When young people sign a contract with Mentoring Plus, the clause relating to confidentiality explains that neither volunteers nor members of staff can maintain a confidence relating to harm or abuse. This is also true of suspected harm or abuse. If a young person has talked about harm, or harm is suspected, the employee or volunteer must do two things:

1. Explain to the young person what action they are required to take. This would in the first instance be informing the relevant Practitioner, Director or designated Trustee. The young person also needs to know that if the Director has grounds to believe that the young person is suffering from harm or abuse, this must be reported as below. It is vital to reassure the young person that this is a caring procedure, designed for their protection. This is not a punishment.
2. **Notify the appropriate project representative, giving them the completed proforma/written information.**

It is very important that employees and volunteers notify the appropriate project representative, so that if necessary, they can then inform and liaise with the relevant authority or agency (Social Services Child Protection Unit or Police Family Liaison Officer). Mentoring Plus representatives are, in the first instance the Director and in his/her absence the Trustee with responsibility for Child Safeguarding.

Mentoring Plus is aware of the necessity in certain cases, in order to secure the safety and welfare of a young person, of sharing information with other agencies over issues of confidentiality.

Where a nominated representative is unavailable, and the vulnerable person is in imminent danger, employees or volunteers should contact the relevant authorities themselves. They should then inform the representative as soon as possible on their return.

In all cases a pro forma for recording disclosures or signs of witnessed abuse must be completed as described in 6.4 below (form attached as Appendix 1).

Dealing with incidents of harm is difficult for any individual so employees and volunteers **should not:**

- Act alone;
- Start to investigate; or
- Make any assumptions about the persons involved.

Any employee or volunteer who is involved in a disclosure of any kind may feel that they need to speak to a child care professional to reassure themselves that they have

done the right thing. The NSPCC operates a 24 hour help line for anyone concerned about a child or young person. It is primarily for use by adults and can be used anonymously: **0808 800 5000**.

6.3 Dealing with alleged or suspected harm involving an employee or Mentoring Plus volunteer

Where it is suspected that an employee or volunteer may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers should let the appropriate Mentoring Plus representative know as soon as possible. The employee or volunteer should be immediately removed from access to young people, but be assured that no presumptions have been made and that the allegation will be fully investigated by the relevant authorities.

Where it is suspected that the Director or Practitioners may be involved in the abuse, employees and volunteers should let the alternative staff representative or Board Member (Chairperson or nominated trustee for safeguarding) know as soon as possible. Allegations made against staff, volunteers or freelancers should be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding – contact details can be found on page 9. If the chairperson or nominated trustee for safeguarding is invited by the Link Officer or Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding to attend a meeting to discuss any allegations against the Director or Practitioners, they should do so only after consulting other trustees for advice and guidance. In line with procedures for undertaking investigations they should not inform or discuss the matter with the Director or Practitioners.

Appropriate trustees (Chairperson and trustee responsible for Child Safeguarding) and senior staff (Director) should receive training on the contents of “Working Together to Safeguard Children”. They should also be trained on how to carry out investigations into allegations. Mentoring Plus has approved a policy and procedure for undertaking investigations based on the above guide.

If gross misconduct is reasonably suspected, it may be appropriate to ask them not to attend the office or property at all while the matter is under investigation (suspended on full pay if an employee). Once the relevant authority’s enquiry has concluded, the Mentoring Plus Board should decide what further action is appropriate in conjunction with Mentoring Plus’s other relevant policies

6.4 Accurate notes

Full and accurate notes (i.e. **word for word**) must be written as soon as possible, using the pro forma if available (Appendix 1). Where a pro forma is unavailable notes should include:

- The date and time of the alleged incident or disclosure;
- The parties involved;
- What was alleged; and
- The action taken.

Records should be as accurate as possible as they may be invaluable to the investigation and used as evidence in court. A copy should be kept by the appropriate Mentoring Plus representative.

6.5 Confidentiality and sensitivity

When dealing with personal and emotive details of this nature, confidentiality must be maintained at all times since the allegations or suspicions may prove to be unfounded. Notes and records should be kept in a secure place and shared only with those who need to know about the incident or allegation.

A sensitive approach should be taken with the accused to explain why an investigation has to take place and to reassure them that the matter will be handled discreetly and even-handedly by Mentoring Plus.

No assumptions of guilt should be made unless and until an actual conviction has been obtained in the proceedings. Impartial contact will be maintained by a nominated Mentoring Plus staff member during this process.

Internal Contacts for Child Safeguarding

Staff contact

Jamie Luck

Director / **Child Safeguarding Officer**

jamie.luck@mentoringplus.net

01225 429694 / 07410 181667

Michelle Kelley

12-21 Mentoring Manager/ **Deputy Child Safeguarding Officer**

01225 429694 / 07714 254014

Trustee contact

Simon I'Anson

Trustee with responsibility for Child Safeguarding

simongianson@gmail.com

07764 678447

External contacts

B&NES Children's Social Care Services

ChildCare_Duty@bathnes.gov.uk

01225 396312 or 01225 396313

Emergency out of hours: 01454 615165

B&NES Local Authority Designated Officer

The LADO Designated Officer will be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases of allegations of abuse made against those who work with children.

01225 396810

Police - 101

Last reviewed: April 2016

Next review: April 2017

Appendix 1: Recording disclosures or signs of abuse of Children and Young People

To be completed by person receiving disclosure

Disclosures are to be logged on the Young Person's record on Mentoring Plus' secure database, by the relevant Practitioner or Director.

The person receiving disclosure or witnessing signs of abuse must:

- 1 Phone their relevant Practitioner to report the following:
 - a) name of person disclosing or displaying signs of abuse
 - b) date and time disclosure received/signs of abuse witnessed
 - c) detail of disclosure

- 2 Complete and return clarification of:
 - a) what the person said (word for word) or signs of abuse witnessed
 - b) other observations or commentsas requested by email from Practitioner following conversation in 1 above.

Appendix 1 (cont.): Internal process for recording disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed by Mentoring Plus Representative

Disclosures are to be logged on Young Person's record on Mentoring Plus' secure database and note the following as a 'contact' in the Safeguarding Project:

- 1 Name of person disclosing or displaying signs of abuse
- 2 To whom have they disclosed information to/or who has reported any display of signs of abuse?
- 3 Date and time disclosure received/signs of abuse witnessed
- 4 Detail what the person said (word for word) or signs of abuse witnessed – from phone conversation and emailed detail
- 5 Any other observations
- 6 Any actions taken by Practitioner
- 7 Set an 'Action' on the database for the Director, Jamie Luck

New Referral for: 'Safeguarding'

[◀ Go back to Client record](#)
[◀ Go back to Project Selection page](#)

FILL THE DETAILS OF THE CONTACT BELOW:

Date of Contact

Referred By

Contact Method

Details of Contact
[Click here to expand](#)

Done By

IF SOMETHING NEEDS TO BE DONE, FILL IN THE SECTION BELOW:

Further Action Needed
[Click here to expand](#)

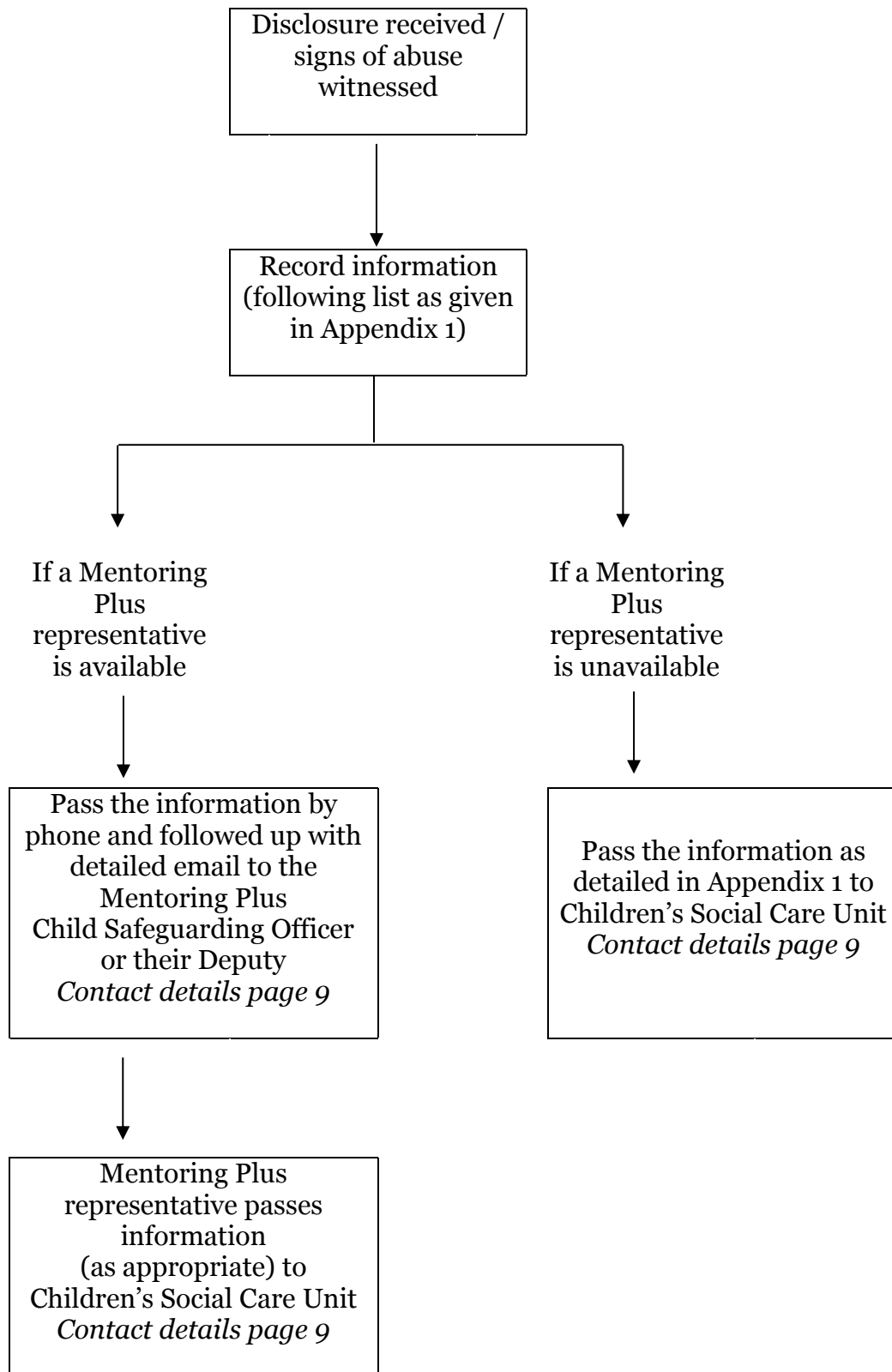
Response Method

When By?

Who By?

SAVE AND GO TO...

Appendix 2: Flow chart for dealing with disclosures or signs of abuse witnessed



Appendix 3: Escalation Policy – Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children

This policy is directly in line with the Escalation Policy as described on South West Child Protection Procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk).

1.1 Introduction

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need case is not a safe decision. Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of Need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Communication

The safety of individual children 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 child.

All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice. This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage however if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

1.2 Stages of the policy

1.2.1 Stage One

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a supervisor/manager to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem; to 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 a record of all discussions.

1.2.2 Stage Two

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.

1.2.3 Stage Three

If the problem is not resolved at stage two the concerned worker should contact their supervisor/manager within their own agency who should raise the concerns with the equivalent supervisor/manager in the other agency. The manager should also notify the Safeguarding Children's Board Manager (or equivalent), who will keep a record of all on-going disagreements.

1.2.4 Stage Four

If the problem is not resolved at stage three the supervisor/manager reports to their respective operations manager or named/designated safeguarding representative. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion. Safeguarding Children's Board Manager should be advised of any outcome.

1.2.5 Stage Five

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct, or to convene a Resolution Panel.

The panel must consist of LSCB representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences, where possible).

The panel will receive representations from those concerned in the professional differences and make a decision as to the next course of action, resolving the professional differences concerned.

1.3 Timescales

Some matters may be resolved very quickly, and this will be determined locally by the complexity of the issues. In all cases, the matter will be resolved as speedily as possible, and the primary focus will be on ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child concerned is assured whilst discussions take place.

1.4 Additional Notes

At all stages of the process actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.