



North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board

Practice Guide

Managing Complaints in relation to the Child Protection Conference

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this practice guide is to ensure a sensitive and professional multi-agency response to the management of complaints arising from the functioning of the North Wales Safeguarding Board's multi-agency child protection processes.

1.2 The practice guide reflects the statutory guidance in relation to Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Wales Safeguarding Procedures to the following aspects of the Board's multi-agency safeguarding functions:

- Child Protection Conferences

1.3 Any other complaints about the child at risk processes should be directed to the relevant local authority.

1.4 This practice guide does not replace individual agencies' own complaints procedures and will not address complaints that include:

- Any other concerns or complaints about a single agency's processes
- Services that are delivered by agencies to the child, young person at risk, or
- Complaints about an individual's professional practice or conduct of an officer attending a safeguarding meeting,
- Complaints in relation to the contents of written record of the conference which will be dealt with by the person who chaired the conference or complaints directly against the Chairperson
- These complaints should be made via the relevant agencies complaints process.

2.0 Who can make a complaint?

2.1 Anyone directly involved in the child protection process can make a complaint which will be considered by the Safeguarding Board. If the complaint is deemed not appropriate, then an explanation will be made in writing outlining the reasons for this decision by the Safeguarding Board Business Unit.

2.2 Information, which explains the process for making complaints, will be made available to parents, caregivers and children/ young people invited to the conference. At each conference, **the chair will check** that this has occurred, and this should be noted in the conference minutes.

3.0 Child Protection Conferences

3.1 Parents, caregivers and children/young people who are involved in the conference process may wish to raise a complaint in respect of one or more of the following aspects of the functioning of the child protection conference:

- The process of the conference in terms of adherence to the Wales

- Safeguarding procedures;
- The registration decision, including the category
- The decision to register or not

4.0 Stage 1 - Resolution by the Conference Chair

- 4.1** The North Wales Safeguarding Board is committed to resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity and at a local level where this is possible. Many issues can be resolved at this stage of the process by the Conference Chair.
- 4.2** A complaint should be made in writing, by telephone or in person to the Conference Chair within 14 working days of receiving the full conference minutes. The Chair will attempt to resolve the complaint within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. If the matter is resolved, the Conference Chair will send a response letter to the complainant confirming the agreed resolution.
- 4.3** The local authority Manager for Child Protection will keep a log of all complaints and their outcomes.
- 4.4** If the complaint is not resolved, the local authority Manager for Child Protection will provide the complainant with an opportunity to proceed to the next stage of the procedure and make the referral to the multi-agency Safeguarding Board Complaints Panel.
- 4.5** The complaint at this stage will need to be in a written format. The person making the complaint may need to be assisted in putting their complaint in a written format (see Appendix 1).

5.0 Stage 2 Multi-agency Complaints Panel

- 5.1.** If the complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1 then the Manager for Child Protection will share all information about action taken to resolve the complaint with the Safeguarding Board Business Manager.
- 5.2** The Business Manager will convene a meeting of the multi-agency Complaints Panel. The panel should consist of a minimum of three representatives from the Board, one of whom will act as chair. The Panel shall not include any representatives that has had direct involvement in the case being heard or where circumstances indicate a conflict of interest
- 5.3** The Business Manager will circulate all relevant documentation from the original meeting to members of the panel including the original complaint and any action already taken to resolve the complaint under Stage1, any relevant reports and the written record(s) of the meeting in question.
- 5.4** The complainant will be advised of the meeting and be provided with an opportunity to attend. They will be entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choice.

5.5 At the Panel meeting the chair will be responsible for:

- Introducing the meeting and explaining its purpose
- Explaining what the Panel will and will not consider
- Outlining any previous measures that have attempted to resolve the complaint and any background issues.
- Providing the complainant with an opportunity to make a statement in person or in writing to the panel and call evidence relating to his/her complaint.
- The panel should call the Chair of the Conference to provide information regarding the conference

5.6 The Panel has 25 working days from the date that the complaint was signed to inform the complainant of their findings.

6.0 Decision of the Panel

6.1 The Complaints Panel will determine:

- Whether the process followed adhered to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures;
- Whether the decision that is being complained about followed reasonably from the proper observation of the procedures;
- Whether the decision that is being complained about followed reasonably from the information available to the original conference.

6.2 The Complaints Panel cannot change the decision of the conference, but can reconvene the child protection conference to take account of the Panel's findings.

6.3 The Chair of the Multi-agency Complaints meeting will write to the complainant informing them of the decision of the panel. Copies of the letter will be sent to:

- The child, if appropriate to their age and understanding
- Any other parent or caregiver with parental responsibility
- The Chair of the Child Protection Conference, subject to the complaint
- The local authority Manager for Child Protection
- Any other relevant person involved in the case that is identified by the Panel

6.4 If any part of the complaint is upheld and the Complaints Panel is of the view that this has affected the decision of the conference, the Complaints Panel will recommend that the Conference be reconvened.

6.5 A different conference chair must be nominated and the conference reconvened within 15 working days of the panel decision. The original conference decision will remain in place until the reconvened conference has taken place.

- 6.6 If any part of the complaint is upheld but the Complaints Panel is of the view that this has not affected the decision of the conference, they may make recommendations for future learning, including raising the matter in the Local Delivery Group Sub Group, or about specific issues to be addressed in any subsequent conference.
- 6.7 In some cases complainants may raise concerns about individual agencies during the course of the Panel meeting, should this happen and the information provided raises concerns about the quality of practice within that agency, the Chair of the Panel will discuss these with the designated senior manager of the agency concerned immediately following the Panel meeting.
- 6.8 No further complaints / appeals can be made to the Safeguarding Board following the decision of the panel.

Stage 1 Informal Resolution Meeting Template

Date of Meeting	
Venue	
Present	
Areas of Complaint Discussed	
Resolutions Suggested	Resolution Agreed/Not Agreed
Further Action Required - Yes/No	

Issues to be addressed through Formal Stage 2 Panel

**Please specify which of the above aspects of the
strategy
meeting/ case conference process is/are being complained
about**

- Whether the process followed adhered to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures;
- Whether the decision that is being complained about followed reasonably from the proper observation of the procedures;
- Whether the decision that is being complained about followed reasonably from the information available to the original meeting/ conference.

Signed Complainant	Signed Chair
Date	Date

If during their assessment and/or enquiries social services become aware that more serious neglect has occurred, that warrant criminal investigation, Police will be informed and a strategy discussion/meeting will be held to decide if a section 47 enquiries should be undertaken.