

01 Background

- Learning from Serious Case Reviews have identified an apparent reluctance to challenge inter-agency decision making
- Such reviews have identified one or more professionals who were concerned with a decision made by a different agency
- However, the learning has been that these concerns have not been followed up with robust professional challenge which may have altered the professional response & the outcome for the child

02 Why it Matters

- Leads to better outcomes for the child & their family
- Is healthy for professionals and parents
- Is a sign of good professional practice
- Shows confident multi-agency practice
- Ensures complacency doesn't take place

07 Remember

Decisions are fallible. To ensure correct outcomes, workers should constantly assess their decision making. It is especially important that workers are willing to admit they have made the wrong decision and feel they are in an environment where such an admission is supported. New evidence or changes to circumstances of a case should lead to a re-evaluation of the decision rather than new information being ignored or reframed so that the original decision can stand. Supervision and playing devil's advocate is essential to effective decision making.



03 What is Professional Challenge

- Professional challenge is a positive activity and a sign of good professional practice, a healthy organisation and effective multi-agency working.
- Being professionally challenged should not be seen as a criticism of the person's professional capabilities. Professional challenge is a fundamental professional responsibility. In this context it is about challenging decisions, practice or actions which may not effectively ensure the safety or well-being of a child, young person or his/her family.
- Learning from Serious Case Reviews have identified an apparent reluctance to challenge inter-agency decision making. Such reviews have identified one or more professionals who were concerned with a decision made by a different agency. However, the learning has been that these concerns have not been followed up with robust professional challenge which may have altered the professional response & outcome for the child

06 Escalation Process

- The purpose of the escalation policy is to ensure partner agencies have a quick and straightforward means of resolving professional disagreements (sometimes known as dispute resolution).
- Effective working together depends on resolving disagreements promptly to the satisfaction of workers and agencies and in the best interests of children and families.

[Escalation Process](#)

05 Being professionally BRAVER

Bold - Be bold in your professional approach.

Rational - Is there a clear rationale behind your thoughts /actions?

Assertive - Use assertion to ask the questions you are thinking of, no matter how silly or exaggerated you may think they are.

Verify/validate - Can you verify & validate the decisions that you & your organisation are making in line with a child centred approach?

Enquire - Enquire further if you are still unsure of how to manage a child's journey when in your care.

04 Skills checklist for Effective Challenge

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| Calm | Confident |
| Use local tools e.g. Graded Care Profile | Empowered to do it by agency |
| Communicating with other professionals | Clear – role/consequences |
| Considering the voice of the child | Polite |
| Not taking information on face value | Communicate with line manager |
| Gut Instinct – opportunity to unpick | Diplomacy |
| Facts | Respectful |
| Records | Negotiation |
| Evidence | Influencing |
| Not being personal | Reflective – for them to feel valued |
| Policy procedures – escalation or empowered professional challenge | |

