



Safeguarding Matters

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Welcome to this 4th edition of 'Safeguarding Matters'. I hope you continue to find these interesting and useful. This edition follows the recent Safeguarding forum which was once again oversubscribed and focussed on the theme of neglect, which is one of the key safeguarding risks here on the Isle of Man. We had two excellent guest speakers (Cath Erin and Antonio Bilfulco) who really brought the subject matter alive and covered both practice and research based themes in relation to children and adults services.

Other themes included an overview of the recent Domestic Abuse needs assessment process, and a very powerful workshop where Christine shared her life journey and the impact of neglect can have on the rest of your life.

We have also been very busy with the Business Plan mid-year review and finalising the 2016/17 Annual Report which we hope to publish in December. You will also be aware of the recent Jersey Inquiry in the media, the SCB's Serious Case Review Panel have quality assured the Isle of Man against the 10 failings and 8 recommendations as part of a submission to the Social and Policy Review Committee.

Planning is also now underway for the second wave of compliance audits across both Children and Adults safeguarding areas; this will include the Voluntary Sector and build on the success of the initial Safeguarding compliance audit completed last year. We aim to evidence continuous improvement and identify areas for further development.

This will be the last newsletter of 2017, so will just add a final season's greetings and happy new year 2018.

Paul Burnett

Independent Chair of Safeguarding Children Board and Safeguarding Adults Partnership



What is neglect

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse, but it isn't always easy to identify. Over 26,000 children were identified as needing protection from neglect in 2016 (*source: Child protection register and plan statistics for all UK nations for 2016*)

A child may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care.

A child may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm. They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents.

A child who's neglected will often suffer from other abuse as well. Neglect is dangerous and can cause serious, long-term damage - even death. Neglect is a factor in 60% of serious case reviews (*source: Brandon, M. et al (2013) Neglect and serious case reviews: report from university of East Anglia commissioned by NSPCC*)

Signs, indicators and effects

Neglect can have serious and long-lasting effects. It can be anything from leaving a child home alone to the very worst cases where a child dies from malnutrition or being denied the care they need. In some cases it can cause permanent disabilities.

Having one of the signs or symptoms below doesn't necessarily mean that a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple, or persistent, signs then it could indicate there's a serious problem.

Children who are neglected may have:

Poor appearance and hygiene

They may:

- be smelly or dirty
- have unwashed clothes
- have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
- seem hungry or turn up to school without having breakfast

Health and development problems

They may have:

- untreated injuries, medical and dental issues
- repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision
- recurring illnesses or infections
- poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- thin or swollen tummy
- tiredness
- poor language, communication or social skills

Things you may notice

If you're worried that a child is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviour.

- withdrawn
- suddenly behaves differently
- anxious

- misses school

Who is affected by neglect?

Any child can suffer neglect, but some are more at risk such as children who:

- are in care
- live with a parent who
 - has problems with drugs or alcohol
 - suffers from mental health problems is in a domestically abusive relationship

Identifying and acting on child neglect

Neglect is the biggest reason for child protection authorities to become involved in family life. Yet, it isn't easy to detect because it can happen for many underlying reasons.

As it's often not about identifying a one-off incident but instead an accumulation of incidents over time, it can be difficult for professionals working with children to identify the point when they should be making a referral or escalating action.

Without the appropriate assessment and intervention, neglect can seriously affect the physical, social and emotional development of children from birth onwards.

We all have a shared responsibility to safeguard children from neglect. The first step to get help is to talk to someone you trust this could be a teacher or family friend.

Building relationships to prevent neglect

By listening to children's experiences and helping families create positive change, we can stop neglect and prevent it from reoccurring.

Giving children a voice

Building safe and trusting relationships with children is vital so they can speak out about their experience at home. This involves:

- teaching children what neglect is and how they can get help. This could be done as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum
- professionals providing parents with good information and advice, emotional support and practical strategies that will minimise harm.

Empowering parents to make a positive change

Professionals can help to generate hope and confidence in families by giving them access to their own skills and resources by:

- developing long-term positive relationships with parents
- taking time to understand a family's needs.

Enabling communities to support families

Communities have an important role to play in preventing and intervening early in child neglect. To make a difference, we need to make sure everyone in our communities can:

- recognise the signs of child neglect
- understand why it happens and what they can do to help

Important policy revision: Previous children services 'Escalation Policy' replaced with the Multi-Agency Reflection Discussion (MARD) Process.

A previous Serious Case Review report identified the need to review the 'escalation policy' and combine the multi-agency supervision process into one document to ensure front line workers and managers are clear about the appropriate stages of escalating professional disagreements regarding cases, as well as having the opportunity to reflect on own and others practice in such a way that future partnership working can be further strengthened in reviewing case outcomes.

There are 2 elements to this process, firstly where a professional disagreement concerning a case exists, colleagues are always encouraged to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity, however this is not always possible and more formal approaches are sometimes required to ensure a mutually agreed resolution between partner agencies can be sought, this may need to involve senior management when disagreements regarding cases, particularly challenging and complex cases, exist.

It is the responsibility of professionals involved to reach a resolution to the disagreement.

The following process map identifies the various stages and roles and responsibilities involved (**see page 5**)

The second element of this process is for a facilitator, preferably from an agency that is not involved in the case to provide an opportunity for professionals involved to reflect on the multi-agency approach to a particular case. It is important to note that this discussion is not aimed at challenging or changing a case decision, moreover to ask the question, what happened here? What are our reflections? And can we do anything different in the future? This adds a further dimension to the Safeguarding Boards Reporting and Learning process led by the Quality Assurance Group.

We are intending to create a pool of MARD facilitators to build capacity and deliver this process, coupled with, expanding opportunities for staff of all levels to develop their own supervisory skills and input. Additional guidance for facilitators is also available which provide tools to undertake this function.

Should you require further details on this please contact Gary McManus
gary.mcmanus@gov.im

'Resolving Professional Differences in Safeguarding Policy – Multi Agency Reflection Discussion (MARD) Process'

What a good outcome looks like:

Specific issues identified and resolved, no further mediation required, service user safeguarded, professionals feel parity of esteem in discussing their concerns, multiagency reflection and learning informs future interventions

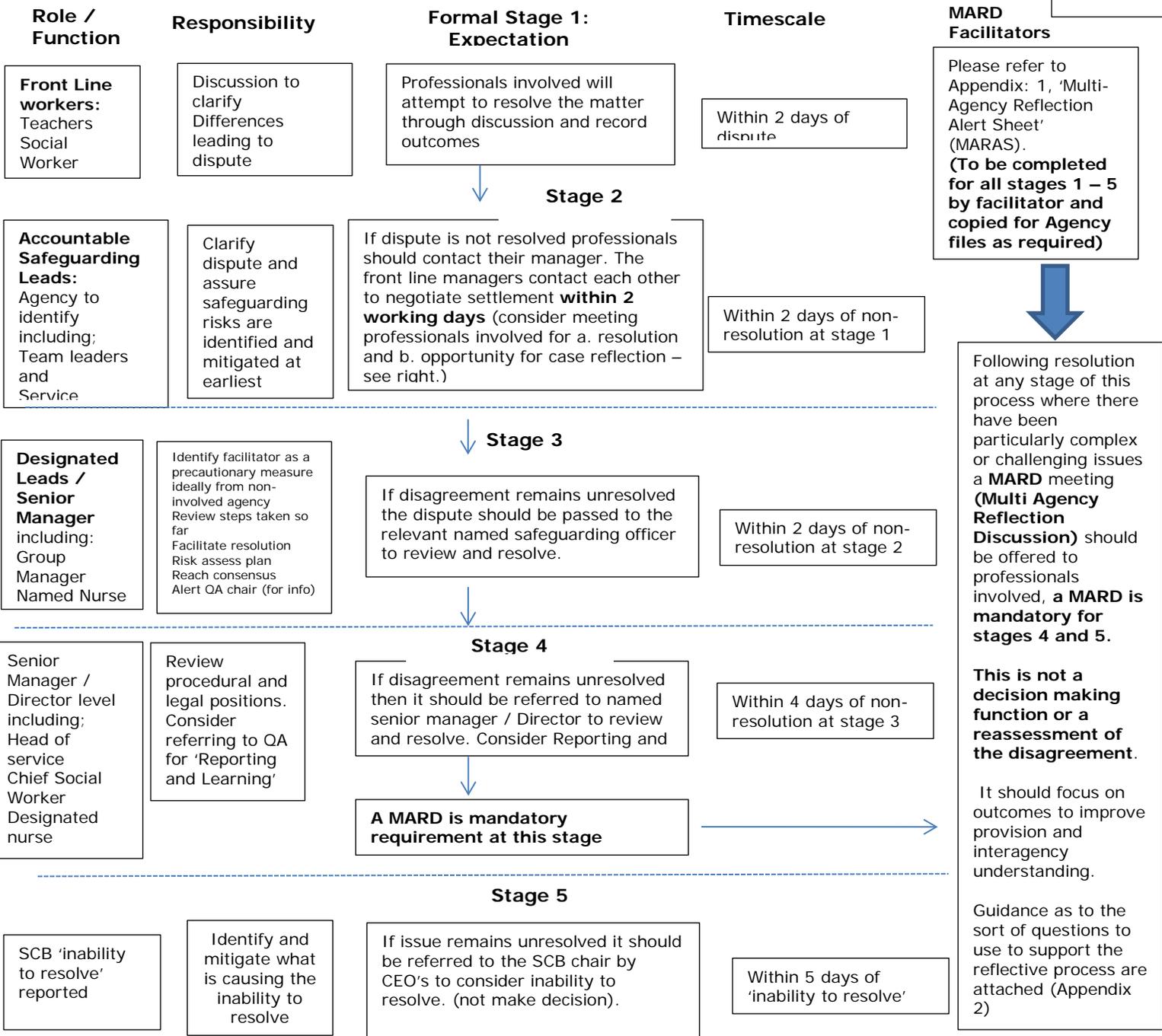
Difference of **PROFESSIONAL** opinion

- Dissent Criteria under this policy:**
- Referral not meeting thresholds/eligibility criteria
 - Professional disagreement on course of action
 - Agency not completed agreed action / key aspect or plan
 - Agency feels plan does not meet needs
 - Short notice responses (complex and high risk cases)

Informal Stage

Formal Stages

Disagreement: arises where you consider that action / inaction / decision by another agency fails to safeguard a child / young person



Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

Stage 5

A MARD is mandatory requirement at this stage

The IOM Neglect Pathway

Introduction:

The neglect pathway provides guidance on what action should be taken, when, how and by whom to prevent children and young people experiencing neglect, and to intervene at the earliest possible opportunity to protect children and young people from the impact when neglect happens.

The pathway also starts to identify training and competency needs, key tools for assessment and intervention and, services to support prevention and intervention. A scoping exercise should be undertaken to establish what is available and what needs to be further developed, and the SCB will need to determine effective strategies to map and measure the impact of neglect and, evaluate the impact of interventions along the continuum of need

Definition:

This definition of neglect encompasses the importance of a child and young person's need for psychological and emotional care as well as physical care.

" Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate food, clothing and shelter (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs". (*Working Together to Safeguard Children*)

Context:

Analysis of serious case reviews shows that neglect was a serious factor in 60% of them, and public inquiries of deaths from neglect include Victoria Climbié, Daniel Pelka, Khyra Ishaq. It also identifies adolescent neglect as a feature often overlooked. Neglect was a significant factor in a recent SCR (Serious Case Review) on the Isle of Man.

Please follow the link below to access the complete Isle of Man Neglect Pathway:

<https://www.gov.im/media/1358660/neglect-pathway.pdf>