**What is the change?**

A defensible decision is a decision that is:

* Evidence based and which uses all the information available/discoverable to you at the time (while being aware that we rarely have all the information).
* Formed using a professionally curious approach where a practitioner explores and proactively tries to understand what is happening for an individual or within a family rather than making assumptions or taking a single source of information and accepting it at face value.
* Where the information has been thoroughly evaluated and analysed.
* Which has weighed up different outcomes and options before deciding.
* Which evidences the rationale for the decision, including anyone consulted (e.g. your manager).
* Follows policy and legislative responsibilities/duties.
* Is recorded in a way which evidences all the above.

Staff from across the multi-agency workforce make complex decisions on a daily basis which involved collecting, weighing up and considering information from an often wide range of sources in order to assess an individual’s needs, risks and desired outcomes.

Defensible decision-making means having a clear rationale recorded for the decisions you make and a clear record of the evidence that led to that decision.

 Team leaders and managers have a responsibility

 to support staff in making defensible decisions.

 Management oversight including rationale for

 signing off on decisions should be evident within

 case records.

 Records.



Disagreements can arise in several areas, but are most likely to occur around risk thresholds, roles and responsibilities, the need for action and communication or service provision. Professional disagreement is often reduced by clarity about roles and responsibilities and networking. Disagreement should be resolved at the earliest possible stage between the people who disagree. Any worker who feels that a decision is unsafe should consult their line manager immediately.

 The Staged Escalation Process

Stage 3:

Where no resolution can be reached or when an identified service cannot be provided, placing the person at increased risk, then it must be referred to the Heads of both Adult and Older People Services and Children and Justice Services for discussion. If required, the Heads of both services will discuss with Chief Officers Group, Public Protection (COG PP) if concerns are significant enough to merit high level intervention.

The Staged Escalation Process

 Stage 2:

 If the concern continues about professional disagreement or service provision then the line manager should refer the case to a more senior Manager within their organisation and a discussion should take place as soon as possible between all agencies involved with the adult to ensure their safety and wellbeing. A written record must be kept of all discussions. It is important that timely feedback is given to the person who raised the concern as to what action has taken place.

The Staged Escalation Process

Stage 1:

 If professionals are unable to reach agreement about the way forward in an individual case, then they must escalate this to a manager within their service, highlighting the areas of concern are and how they can be resolved.

**South Lanarkshire’s APC and CPC Escalation**

**Guidance for High Risk or Complex Cases can be found at the link below:**

[Employee guide Downloads - Adult Protection (southlanarkshire.gov.uk)](https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/adultprotection/downloads/file/399/sl_apc_and_cpc_escalation_guidance_for_high_risk_or_complex_cases_children_young_people_and_adults)

Local and national learning reviews have highlighted the need for practitioners and managers across all agencies to have a clear understanding about their roles and responsibilities, including professional challenge and to how to escalate concerns. Whilst there is clear evidence of good working relationships between partners, occasionally disagreements may arise which require timely resolution so as not to delay decision making.

Defensible decision making, escalation protocols and management oversight

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