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Professional Challenge and Professional Curiosity

There are many Safeguarding Adult Reviews, including those carried out by the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board, where practitioners involved in raising safeguarding concerns miss opportunities to challenge practice. This can be due in part to staff not being fully aware of the safeguarding adults policies and procedures that are in place to support them, and/or the safeguarding arrangements that could or should have been out in place.

The briefing provides professionals with information and guidance on professional curiosity within their day-to-day practice and how to use TSAB's Professional Challenge procedures if there are questions raised which are not resolved.

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Why Professional Challenge?

- It promotes a learning culture.
- It promotes positive, professional and good practice.
- It creates open and transparent multi-agency working.
- It promotes good outcomes for adults at risk of or experiencing abuse.

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Examples of Types of Dispute

- Response to a safeguarding concern.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Mental Capacity issues.
- Decision-making.
- Service provision.
- Information sharing and communication.

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Stages of the Professional Challenge Process

Stage 1: Professional to professional discussion.

Any practitioner who is unhappy with a decision, action or inaction of another professional or agency should contact the person or agency who made the decision and express their views and attempt to resolve the issue

Stage 2: Escalate to Line Manager/ Safeguarding Lead.

If the dispute is not resolved at Stage 1, both parties should alert their line managers to the issues of the dispute. The line manager of the person raising the dispute should review the concerns and if they feel they are justifiable raise these with the line manager for the professional receiving the challenge and convene a meeting to discuss and attempt resolution.

Stage 3: Escalate to Senior Managers

If the dispute is not resolved at Stage 2, the line managers of both agencies should escalate to senior management to attempt resolution

Stage 4: Escalate to Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board.

It would be unusual for the dispute to reach this stage, and in considering the challenge, TSAB will consider wider lessons learned from the process.

5 Professional Curiosity

Be flexible and open minded.

Think the unthinkable, believe the unbelievable.

Use communication skills; review records and check facts.

Use case history and explore information from the adult and those close to them.

Pay attention to how people look and behave.

Never assume and be wary of assumptions.

Obtain multiple sources of information and not accepting a single set of details you are given at face value.

Be nosy.

6 Getting Support

Recognise it may be difficult to challenge other professionals.

Be good to yourself and look after your own well-being.

Use the support available to you: supervision, management support, peer support.

Be familiar with policies and procedures.

7 Additional Resources and Training Materials

Please take a look at TSAB Safeguarding Adult Review reports for additional learning from reviews:

<https://www.tsab.org.uk/professionals/>

TSAB Policies and Procedures, including the Professional Challenge procedure: <https://www.tsab.org.uk/key-information/policies-strategies/>

Waltham Forest SAB video: [Bitesize Guide: Professional Curiosity - YouTube](#)

Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board Guidance: <https://www.norfolksafeguardingadultsboard.info/protecting-adults/working-with-adults-at-risk/professional-curiosity/>

With thanks to Norfolk SAB and Waltham SAB for sharing their materials.