

Guidance for All Agencies about raising and addressing concerns about children in our care.

Option 1: Make a referral to C-SPA

This is ALWAYS your first port of call for concerns about a child.

Agencies raising the concern	Agencies responding to concerns
<p>If you are concerned about a child in your care who you feel may be suffering from Harm, Neglect or Abuse and you are worried about their safety and wellbeing, then you should raise this with the Surrey Children’s Single Point of Access (CSPA). This is the umbrella term for the front door to support, information and advice for residents, families and all those agencies that work with children and families in Surrey.</p> <p>Phone: 0300 470 9100 (Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm) Out of hours phone: 01483 517898 to speak to our emergency duty team. Email: cspa@surreycc.gov.uk</p> <p>Please do this by using the EFR Form found by following this link</p>	<p>C-SPA have their own processes for processing and responding to referrals but as a minimum the following is recommended:</p> <p>Agencies who have made the referral should be notified when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A referral has been received – acknowledgement of receipt. b) A decision has been made and what that decision is. c) The proposed actions that will be taken d) How and if the referring agency can provide any further support

Option 2: Making a Complaint

This option often gets overlooked because only families and those receiving the service that they are complaining about, can raise a complaint. If you feel this is appropriate and you can persuade the family to make a complaint if they are unhappy with a service/response, then this is an excellent route to take. If they give you permission to make a complaint on their behalf, then that can work too.

Agencies raising the concern

If a child is already known to Children's Services but the family are unhappy with the service they are receiving and complain to you about it then the best thing to do is to advise the family to make an official complaint or ask if they would like YOU to make the complaint on their behalf.

The person who makes a complaint must either be the person receiving the services or a person who has been nominated by the family to complain on their behalf. This can include children and young people, their parents, carers or legal guardians or someone who has the permission of the person receiving the services to represent them.

All complaints now go through the Customer Relations Team. They would ideally like you to use the online complaint form so that one team is able to track and monitor all complaints coming into the Local Authority. All relevant details can be found [here](#).

Alternatively for children and families who do not want to complete an online form they can email their complaint details to be.heard@surreycc.gov.uk

Option 3: COMPLAINTS and General Disagreements BETWEEN AGENCIES

To provide families and children with effective, timely and appropriate support, professionals across the partnership will often need to work closely together to deliver this service to families. There are times when there may be a breakdown in communications, when standards and expectations may not be realised or procedures and policies may not be followed in the appropriate and timely way. If this happens then it is right that a complaint is raised with the agency or team concerned so that things can be put right. Leaving issues unresolved can often lead to bad feelings, frustrations and a complete breakdown in relationships. When this happens it is most likely that it will be the child and family who suffer the most.

Remember this is not personal, something is not working within the procedures we are using and we need to identify what this is and find a resolution.

Agencies raising the concern	Agencies responding to concerns
<p>So what steps should you take if this happens?</p> <p>STEP 1: Make contact with the relevant safeguarding team within the agency concerned and ask for them to tell you who the best person/manager is to talk with to resolve the issue. You will find the contact emails here: Local Contacts Directory</p> <p>STEP 2: Raise the issue directly with the person that has been identified in the other agency. Ask to speak with them so that you can agree a resolution together.</p> <p>STEP 3: If things don't change or you don't get a response then return to the safeguarding team for that agency Local Contacts Directory and ask for the details of the senior manager in the appropriate team. You may need to ask your Line Manager to get involved at this stage. Hopefully any issues will then be resolved quickly.</p>	<p>When issues are raised with you, please (a) acknowledge receipt of the email and (b) arrange to talk through the issue directly with our partner in the other agency.</p> <p>Unlike the FaST process there are no time restrictions on when actions need to be completed but where possible please agree a plan of action and give estimated completion dates (if appropriate) with the other party. It is best to put this in writing via an email. Keeping a record will help if the matter gets escalated further to your manager. Your Manager is likely to ask you for the background to the FaST request and actions that have been taken so far.</p> <p>Please address all concerns in a timely way – this process should be done in a courteous way and to the benefit of all concerned.</p>

Agencies raising the concern	Agencies responding to concerns
Remember there are safeguarding contacts listed for all agencies in the Local Contacts Directory .	

Option 4: Activating the FaST resolution process.

This process is for addressing Professional disagreements where a child is believed to have been put at risk as a result. If you can respond “**Yes**” to ALL of the following THREE questions, then starting the FaST resolution process is your best course of action:

- Are you concerned about a decision or practice related to a child or young person that you are working with?
- Is the child or young person being put “at risk” of harm as a result?
- Have you already raised your concern through normal channels (e.g., referral to C-SPA, raised your concern in a child protection meeting or team around the child meeting) but not achieved the resolution you wanted for the child?

You can read the full FaST Resolution process [here](#). Please familiarise yourself with the process before you commence.

Agencies RAISING a FAST request.

What you should do	What you shouldn't do
<p>Once you have agreed with your manager that FaST is the appropriate approach then please make contact with the appropriate safeguarding team in that agency – contact emails are listed for all agencies in the Local Contacts Directory.</p> <p>Use the email templates set out below – especially the Subject Line as this will grab the attention of the person you are addressing it to.</p> <p>Be clear about what you believe the current RISK TO THE CHILD is. Keep a record of each stage and what happened – you may need it for Stage 5</p> <p>Keep going until you reach a resolution that you are happy with – which keeps the child safe. Only allow 2 working days for each stage of the process and if you have not received a positive response /reached a resolution in that time, then go back to the Agency's Safeguarding Team and ask for the name and contact details of the next Manager in seniority. Local Contacts Directory</p> <p>Remember – it is your responsibility to initiate each new stage of the process.</p> <p>Be Brave – this is not personal – there is a child who needs you!</p>	<p>Don't Stop the process because key people are on leave in the other agency – if you don't get a resolution in 2 working days then move on to the next stage.</p> <p>Don't be put off using FAST because the other agency says it is not applicable – this is your process to drive.</p> <p>Don't ask the agency if you can start the FAST process – this is for you to decide not them.</p> <p>Don't miss out any of the stages – it slows things up in the longer term because Senior Managers and the SSCP will want to know that all key managers have been consulted.</p> <p>Don't let the timescales drift otherwise you will need to start again. At its maximum, this process should take no longer than 10 working days to complete.</p>

Agencies RESPONDING to the FaST request.

What you should do	What you shouldn't do
<p>Act as quickly as you can – you only have 2 working days, from the date the request was sent, to review the request and contact your colleague in the other agency to see if, together, you can find a solution that is mutually acceptable.</p> <p>Pick up the phone and talk this through if you can. Hearing a voice can be reassuring and helps avoid misunderstandings. It also helps to forge stronger relationships and trust. But remember to follow up with an email afterwards.</p> <p>Keep a record of when the request came in and what you did. What was your decision and why? This is important because if the other agency chooses to escalate their concerns on to the next stage of FaST then your manager will come to you first to find out what your responses was and why.</p> <p>Be kind, patient and as helpful as you can. It takes courage for an agency to start a FaST request and they just have the best interests of the child at heart. Talking to you may just put their mind at rest and reassure them that everything is fine.</p>	<p>Please don't take the request personally – a colleague in another agency is genuinely concerned about a child who they believe is at risk – FaST gives you both an opportunity to take a look again at the case and make sure that everything that can be done is being done.</p> <p>Don't ask to delay the process because colleagues are on leave. If they are not around to respond themselves then it is the responsibility of their line manager or the person covering in their absence, to respond instead. You only have 2 working days before the matter will move up to the next stage of escalation.</p> <p>Please don't ignore the email when it comes in – it can't wait for another day.</p> <p>Don't refuse to take it any further because YOU don't feel the child is "at risk". Send them a response explaining why you feel the child is not "at risk" and what action has been taken to ensure the child is safe. If the agency still does not agree, then they will escalate their concerns to the next stage of the process but at least you will have a record of what you have done and why. Your Manager will need this.</p>

Template examples for emails when raising a FaST request.

SSCP Stage 1 of the FaST Resolution Process:

This is where your concerns are discussed internally with your own line manager to see if they are in agreement that your concerns warrant the use of the FaST Resolution process. If agreement is reached, then move on to Stage 2.

SSCP Stage 2 of the FaST Resolution Process – email template

Send an email to the Senior Manager identified.

Title: SSCP Stage 2 FaST Resolution request – Urgent response required within 2 working days

Dear (NAME)

Having spoken with my Line Manager we have agreed that it is appropriate to activate the Stage 2 FaST resolution process as the following child is believed to be “at risk” because of a decision or action that has been taken by your Service. In line with the Surrey FaST Resolution process a response and resolution now needs to be agreed between our 2 services within the next 48 hours (2 working days). Please see the details of our concerns below.

(Please give a short summary of the child and family you feel are “At Risk” at the moment, what that risk is and what action you feel needs to be taken.)

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards

(Your name, position and telephone number)



If you do not receive a response within 2 working days) then you must ACT FAST and commence Stage 3 of the process straight away. Remember if you have commenced the FaST Resolution process then it is your responsibility to see it through within the timescales set. If you commence Stage 2, 3 or 4 and then leave it for a week or more between Stages, you will need to start the process again at Stage 2.

If you don't know WHO to contact next then please use the [Local Contacts Directory](#) and the person/team identified will identify the right manager for you to escalate up to.

Stage 3 of the FaST Resolution Process -email template

Send an email to the Senior Manager identified.

Title: SSCP Stage 3 FaST Resolution request – Urgent 48-hour response required

Dear (NAME)

On (DATE) I submitted a FaST Resolution Stage 2 request to (NAME OF PERSON) regarding Child/Family (GIVE NAMES) but (delete as appropriate) I have not received a response / I am not happy with the response I have received. I am therefore escalating my concerns up to you and activating STAGE 3 of the FaST Resolution process.

(Explain who responded to Stage 2, what they said/did and why you are not happy with this response)

I believe that (NAME OF CHILD) is still “at risk” and would therefore like to discuss this with you as a matter of urgency.

(Please give a short summary of WHY you feel the child/ family are “At Risk” at the moment and what action you feel needs to be taken.)

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards

(Your name, position and telephone number)

If you do not receive a response within 2 working days, then you must ACT FAST again and commence Stage 4 of the process straight away. This is the Assistant Director/Director level. Remember if you have commenced the FaST Resolution process then it is still your responsibility to see it through within the timescales set. If you commence Stage 2, 3 or 4 and then leave it for a week or more between Stages, you will need to start the process again at Stage 2.

If you don't know WHO to contact next then please use the [Local Contacts Directory](#) and the person/team identified will identify the right manager for you to escalate up to.

Stage 4 of the FaST Resolution Process – email template

Send an email to the Senior Manager identified.

Title: SSCP Stage 4 FaST Resolution request – Urgent 48-hour response required

Dear (NAME)

On (DATE) I submitted a FaST Resolution Stage 3 request to (NAME OF PERSON) regarding Child/Family (GIVE NAMES) but (delete as appropriate) I have not received a response / I am not happy with the response I have received. I am therefore escalating my concerns up to you and activating STAGE 4 of the FaST Resolution process.

(Explain who responded to Stage 3, what they proposed and why you are not happy with this response)

I believe that (NAME OF CHILD) is still “at risk” and would therefore like to discuss this with you as a matter of urgency.

(Please give a short summary of WHY you feel the child/ family are still “At Risk” at the moment and what action you feel needs to be taken.)

I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards



If after 2 Working Days you have not reached a resolution at Stage 4 then you must complete the FaST Resolution Form (see attachment below) and send it to the SSCP Partnership at the following email address partnership.escalation@surreycc.gov.uk Don't Delay as it is important to keep to the timescales – a Child is At Risk!



FaST Resolution
Form for Stage 5.docx

You can read the full FaST Resolution process [here](#)