

Hampshire County Council Channel Panel

Escalation of Concern Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1 Hampshire County Council has developed this Escalation of Concerns Procedure to ensure timely resolution for any issues that impede effective planning or the allocation of resources. The Channel Chair, Channel Panel member or Channel partner are responsible for activating the Escalation of Concern process, even if this step may not be in accordance with the panel members or the child or adult's wishes or feelings, but may, in their view, be in accordance with the efficient working of the Panel and/or the best interest and welfare of the individual, as well as his/her human rights.

1.2 Where problems are identified, and in order to support their satisfactory resolution, the Channel Chair will initially be required to communicate directly with a Manager who has the necessary level of seniority to seek resolution. This may be escalated more swiftly through the Escalation of Concern stages if this is necessary to meet the needs of the individual, including a referral to the Home Office's Office for Homeland Security as a final stage if the Local Authority or its partners are unable to resolve the issue, and it is appropriate to do so.

1.3 This document will be reviewed every 2 years.

2. Statutory Basis

2.1 The Prevent Duty

Sections 36 to 41 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 set out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism. This is detailed in the Channel Duty Guidance which is statutory guidance for Channel Panel members and partners of local panels.

[Revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

3. Channel

3.1 Channel is part of the UK Government's Prevent strategy [Prevent review \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk). Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are assessed as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Channel may be appropriate for anyone who is vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism, to ensure that children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist activity.

3.2 Channel focuses on providing support at an early stage. The programme uses a multi-agency safeguarding approach to protect those at risk of being drawn into terrorism by:

- identifying individuals at risk;
- assessing the nature and extent of that risk;
- working alongside the individual to develop the most appropriate multi-agency support plan for them;
- implementing the multi-agency support plan.

3.3 An effective Channel programme should enable the Local Authority and its partners to achieve improved outcomes for adults, children and families who are assessed as being vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism.

3.4 In Hampshire the Channel Panel Chair and every member of the Channel Panel should feel confident in his/her role and personal authority and understand his/her responsibilities to monitor and review the case and, where necessary, challenge poor practice as well as highlighting good practice.

3.5 Hampshire County Council requires the Chair of the Channel Panel to take a range of actions if there are concerns about the progress of a Channel support plan, the practice and management of the case or the allocation and deployment of resources, including attendance at Panel. This applies to any agency involved in the Channel Panel. The interventions available include:

- Discussion with the Local Authority nominated Prevent/Channel Lead in HCC;
- Discussion with the Local Authority Chief Executive or other Corporate Director;
- Discussion with the Chief Executive or other Director of any Channel Panel member or partner or their equivalent;
- Discussion with the Home Office Channel Office for Homeland Security if the concern cannot be resolved with the Local Authority, Channel Panel member or partner service.

4. Principles and Aims

4.1 While formal processes exist, these should not replace professional dialogue. It is expected that the reviewing processes and professional discussion should be utilised to resolve issues before a formal alert is raised, unless the risk is such that to do so would place an individual adult or child at risk.

4.2 The aim of any escalation of concern is to ensure the welfare of the individual remains of paramount importance and to secure the best outcome. **This is a shared objective for all professionals working with the individual and their family within the Channel Programme. Resolution of any escalation acknowledges that all professionals are working in the best interests of the individual adult or child and the efficient working of the Channel Panel.**

4.3 It is important for the Channel Chair to have a collaborative relationship with all Channel Panel members and partners, and their service management. When the standard of practice or allocation of resources impacts on the implementation of plans or outcomes, the Channel Chair should ensure that they negotiate with management up to the highest level, if necessary, in order to resolve the concern by negotiation. Usually, these alerts will initially be raised at Informal stage and move to formal Escalation of Concern if not resolved. Alerts will be escalated where there is no response received or the response does not adequately address the concern.

5. Escalation of Concern Process

5.1 Informal Escalation of Concern Process

Whenever possible, issues of concern about planning, the implementation or quality of the plans or decisions relating to it, resources or poor practice should be raised informally by the Channel Chair with the allocated worker, their manager or the Channel Panel agency representative, whichever is felt to be the most appropriate to the situation. This should be done preferably through face-to-face discussions, and then followed up with an e-mail to confirm what was agreed.

Should this not secure a resolution, then the following formal process will take place:

5.2 Formal Escalation of Concern Process

Stage 1: Where the Channel Chair, Channel member or partner has identified significant issue(s) during/or outside a Channel meeting, the professional will consult with their line manager and the Channel Chair before initiating an alert.

The Manager of the appropriate service has the responsibility for responding to the alert in writing, in five working days of receipt of the alert to the Channel Chair who will discuss this with the professional raising the concern.

In the event that no response is received within this timeframe or the Channel Chair considers the response to be unsatisfactory they may proceed to the stages below:

Stage 2: Service Director or equivalent

The Service Director has lead responsibility for responding to the alert in writing within five working days of receipt of the alert.

Stage 3: Corporate Director or equivalent

The Corporate Director has lead responsibility for responding to the alert in writing within five working days of receipt of the alert.

If the Channel Chair and professional raising the management alert considers the response to be unsatisfactory then a Dispute Resolution Meeting should be convened within five working days, chaired by the Channel Chair.

The Channel Chair should also at this stage consider informing and consulting with the Director of Adults Health and Care of Hampshire County Council (or their nominated individual) as the responsible body for the Hampshire Channel Programme and the Office for Homeland Security, if appropriate.

5.3 The Formal Escalation of Concern process should have timescales in total of no more than 20 working days.

5.4 The Channel Chair and professional may bypass any stage and progress the concern to the level s/he considers most appropriate.

5.5 At times, obstacles to resolving the issue may rest outside or beyond the control of the Local Authority, for example in relation to staffing, interagency or resources issues. However, if these are impacting on the ability of Channel to meet the needs of a child or adult the Channel Chair should continue to escalate the issue.

5.6 At each stage a record of the action taken, and the outcomes achieved, must be included in the case record by the Local Authority Channel Panel Facilitator. This will be reported quarterly to the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group as part of their governance of the Channel Panel process to provide assurance and highlight any risks. The report will also be shared with relevant managers to inform policy, practice and workforce development.