



CHILDREN

Information for employees or volunteers referred to the Bristol LADO team

Most people working with children either in paid employment or as a volunteer will work professionally and safely, aiming to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. However we also know there are adults who deliberately seek out, create, or exploit opportunities to behave inappropriately with children and young people and to harm them.

It is never acceptable for an adult in a position of trust to harm a child and therefore allegations or concerns about behaviour are taken seriously. An allegation is simply that and no decision on validity has been reached at this point. If an allegation has been made or a concern raised about your behaviour in relation to children, further information is needed to understand what has happened. An allegation can apply to concerns relating to your workplace as well as outside of work. There may also be occasions where events in your personal life eg home, family life or leisure activities may be relevant to your work or voluntary role with children and young people and require investigation. These are known as suitability issues where there is a potential transferable risk to your professional role.

We understand this may be a difficult time for you and this leaflet aims to give you a little more information about the process of managing allegations.

It is important that all allegations of abuse of children and young people are treated seriously and in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the [South West Child Protection Procedures](#).

LADO Threshold (criteria for referral)

A referral must be made to the LADO if an adult who works or volunteers with children and young people (in regulated activity) under 18 has:

- 1) behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child;
- 2) possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- 3) behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or;
- 4) behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children.

Role of the LADO

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is a statutory role.

The LADO's primary function is to oversee and co-ordinate any investigation into an incident where an allegation of abuse or harm has been made against a professional or volunteer who has contact with children as part of their work or activities. The LADO does not investigate allegations. An investigation would be carried out by an employer in most cases. In some cases the police may undertake an investigation if a criminal offence has been committed.

The LADO is responsible for:

- 1) Providing advice, information and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations around safeguarding concerns and allegations;
- 2) Ensuring investigations are carried out in a fair, timely and transparent way;
- 3) Ensuring that the subject of an allegation is provided with independent support by their employer;
- 4) Ensuring the child's voice is heard and that they are safeguarded;
- 5) Chairing LADO Allegation Management meetings;
- 6) Monitoring the progress of cases to conclusion

The process of managing allegations

- 1) Allegation or safeguarding concern reported to LADO team
- 2) LADO team review information and determine whether LADO Threshold is met. If the Threshold is NOT met then this will be handed back to the employer to manage internally. The LADO team would have no further involvement if this is the case.
- 3) Where LADO Threshold is met, there are 2 potential outcomes from the allegation: criminal investigation, or Employment Safeguarding Investigation.
- 4) Discussion will take place between the LADO team and the employer around safeguards to be put in place around the employee's role, while any investigation is ongoing.
- 5) An Allegation Management Meeting may be convened by the LADO team to share information between the employer and other relevant agencies, put safeguards in place in relation to the role, and create a plan around next steps. The subject of an allegation will not be invited to this meeting but should be updated by the employer afterwards.
- 6) If a police investigation is underway, the LADO team will not direct the employer to undertake an Employment Safeguarding investigation until the police give agreement for this to happen. Some employers may commence a code of conduct investigation outside of the LADO process while the police continue to investigate.
- 7) Following an Employment Safeguarding Investigation, the LADO team will receive a copy of the investigation report and any disciplinary outcome which they will review. The employer's investigation report should conclude with at least one of the following outcomes:
 - **Substantiated:** Evidence was able to prove that the alleged incident or malpractice did happen.
 - **Unsubstantiated:** Evidence was unable to prove or disprove that the alleged incident or malpractice did or did not happen.
 - **Unfounded:** Evidence was available to prove that what was alleged did not happen or could not have happened or information has been misinterpreted.
 - **False:** There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
 - **Malicious:** A deliberate act to deceive. For an allegation to be classified as malicious, it will be necessary to have evidence which proves the intention to deceive.

Support

You should be:

- 1) Advised to contact your Union or professional association representative. ACAS can be useful resource if you are not a Union member.
- 2) Given a named contact for welfare support, who is independent of the investigation process
- 3) Offered staff support, counselling service and/or Occupational Health support if available.
- 4) Your employer (or the police where applicable) should keep you updated regarding the progress of any investigation. The LADO team are not able to provide updates.

Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership, (City Hall) Bristol City Council, PO Box 3399, Bristol BS1 9NE

<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/>

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