



CHILDREN

Information for parents and carers when a child makes an allegation against someone who works or volunteers with them

Why are you receiving this leaflet?

You are receiving this leaflet because information has been received which alleges your child, or a child you care for, may have been harmed by an adult working in a position of trust.

Any allegation of harm is likely to cause a great deal of anxiety and upset to all concerned: the child or young person reporting the allegation, their parents, carers, or family members, as well as the person against whom the allegation is made.

This leaflet is intended to guide you through the process of an investigation against a member of staff or volunteer.

An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer is different to a complaint, which might be made against the way a school or another organisation had dealt with something you were not happy about. Complaints are usually dealt with by the school or organisation.

The majority of people who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for them. However, sometimes the behaviour of adults who work or volunteer with children and young people can result in allegations being made against them.

It is never acceptable for an adult in a position of trust to harm a child.

Who is the Local Authority Designated Officer?

The Local Authority Designated Officer (often referred to as the LADO) is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding allegations about adults who work with children. The work can be paid, unpaid or voluntary.

A safeguarding allegation can be about the person's behaviour at work or in their personal life.

The LADO will not be able share specific information regarding the alleged person involved with you but will ensure that a nominated person in the agency undertaking the investigation will keep you informed throughout the process.

The LADO does not investigate safeguarding allegations, but helps professionals to agree who will, and will ensure that any investigation is thorough, fair and concluded in a timely manner, wherever possible.

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.

What happens now?

- 1) Allegation reported to the LADO by employer, relevant agency, children's social care, or police.
- 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) If it is necessary to investigate further, a decision will be made whether this will be undertaken by the police, or the employer. The LADO team will also provide advice to the employer around safeguards in respect of the staff member and their role. The employer may decide to supervise or suspend the staff member while an investigation is ongoing.
- 4) If a police investigation is underway, the LADO team will not direct the employer to undertake their own investigation until the police give agreement for this to happen.
- 5) During the employer's investigation, the subject of the allegation will be spoken to by the investigator, any witnesses (children and adults) will be spoken to, and any available CCTV viewed. This is to help the investigator to understand what has happened.
- 6) It is very important that the voice of the child who has been affected by the allegation is heard as part of the investigation process. The investigating officer may wish to meet with your child to discuss the allegation. This will be agreed with you beforehand.
- 7) The LADO team will be notified of the outcome of the investigation, however parents/carers will not be notified of the outcome as this is confidential to the staff member under investigation. If the investigation has found the person has behaved unprofessionally, they may be given more training and support to help them develop their skills in their role. However if there is evidence that the person has behaved in a way which has caused harm and may cause harm again in the future they could be removed from their role.

Confidentiality

Detailed information about the investigation process cannot be shared with you but you should be assured that action has been taken and appropriate safeguarding measures implemented. This is due to data protection requirements and is not about withholding information from you.

You and your child will be asked not to talk to anyone else about the allegation because this may affect how well it can be investigated and may affect the outcome.

Contact Details

The LADO team are not able to provide you with any updates in relation to an ongoing investigation. You will need to obtain this from the nominated person from the agency investigating (e.g. head teacher, manager, police officer leading investigation).

Email – LADO@bristol.gov.uk