

In partnership with



The role of the LADO

(Local Authority Designated Officer)

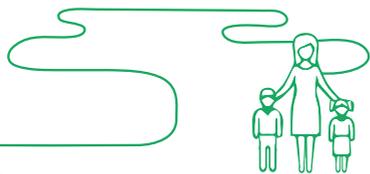
In Managing allegations against staff and volunteers working with children – a guide for parents and carers



A Guide for Parents and Carers



Most people who work with children act professionally. They provide safety for the children they are working with, either on a paid or voluntary basis. However, sometimes the behaviour of adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity can result in allegations of harm being made against them. It is never acceptable for an adult in a position of trust to



harm a child and concerns about the behaviour of staff or a volunteer are always taken very seriously. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is the person who receives information when there is concern that a child may have been harmed by a member of staff or a volunteer working with them.

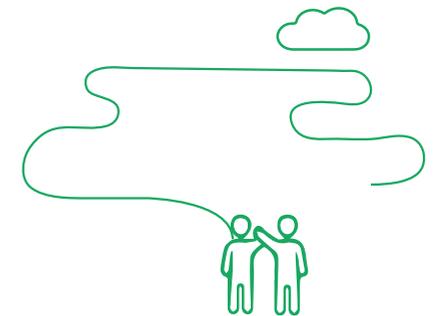
You are receiving this leaflet as information has been received by the LADO which alleges that a child you care for may have been harmed by an adult working with them. We understand that this can be a very difficult time for you and your family. This leaflet aims to explain the process of managing allegations and what happens when the LADO is involved.

What is the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)?

The LADO is a statutory post based within Children's Social Care and the role is fulfilled by an experienced qualified social worker. The Local Authority Designated Officer does not complete investigations but coordinates the people who will lead an investigation, offers advice and consultation and is involved in the management and planning of actions that will be undertaken to inform understanding of whether harm has been suffered by your child. The LADO will consider whether allegations can be substantiated, remain unsubstantiated or are unproven/unfounded and these are called findings. Depending on the nature of

the allegations and to safely manage the most serious allegations, the LADO may arrange for the allegations to be referred to the Metropolitan Police and may ask a social worker to make contact with you and ask your consent to support the LADO investigation. This can involve asking for your consent to meet with your child and speak with them about the allegations.

The LADO also provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations about concerns they may have about the



conduct of an individual and works to ensure that investigations are completed as quickly as possible and in a fair and balanced way for all who are affected by the allegation made.

The LADO will be unable to share specific information regarding the alleged person involved but will ensure that a named person in the organisation undertaking the investigation keeps you informed throughout the process. You may not have direct contact with the LADO.

What happens?

The usual process followed by referrers and the LADO is:

The person raising the allegation/sharing the disclosure should keep a written record, signed

and dated. They should immediately speak with a named person for managing allegations in their work or volunteer setting.

- The named person must then contact the LADO to discuss the information and refer to the LADO within one working day if the threshold is crossed for a referral. The LADO will consult and offer guidance. Immediate actions may include a basic level of fact checking to help determine threshold but would not include detailed interview of your child. Consent is not required to consult and/or refer to the LADO.
- In any event, next steps should be agreed between the LADO and the named person for managing allegations in the setting. This can include a range

of outcomes, such as the setting leading its own internal investigation with suitable LADO and Human Resources advice to no further action.

- The parents/carers of the child or young person should be informed as soon as possible following the allegation or disclosure. The LADO can provide advice on how this may best be managed.
- Where necessary, the LADO will refer to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) should the threshold appear



to be crossed for a referral to Children's Social Care.

- The LADO will also contact the Police where the allegation may constitute a criminal offence.

Investigation Outcomes

At the end of an investigation an outcome is required. The outcome of any investigation can be:

Substantiated

The allegation is supported by evidence or proof. Employers are legally obliged to conclude the investigation, even if the staff member resigns, is dismissed from their post or voluntary role or their contract is not renewed. The employer must consult the LADO to discuss whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and/or to a

professional or regulatory body. The DBS is the agency that decides whether an individual should be barred, or have conditions imposed regarding working with children and young people aged under 18 in the future.

Unsubstantiated

There is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. An unsubstantiated finding does not imply guilt or innocence.

Malicious

For an investigation to have this finding, there must be clear evidence to prove the intent to cause harm to the person against whom the allegation or disclosure was made.

Unfounded

There is no evidence or proper basis which

supports the allegation that has been made. There is evidence that supports or proves that the allegation is untrue or was misinterpreted.

False

There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation, however there is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive.

The outcome of any investigation is final and there is not recourse to an appeals process.

Detailed information regarding the full extent of the investigation may not be able to be shared with



you. This is to protect the confidentiality of the person against whom an allegation or disclosure has been made in line with data protection requirements. It may be that you can only be informed that actions have been taken and appropriate safety measures have been put in place.

Further Information

Further information is available on the website of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership at www.bromleysafeguarding.org

This website includes tips for parents for questions to ask providers of out of school activities, such as sports clubs or community groups. These can help parents reach informed

decisions about the safety of groups they may be considering supporting their children to join or take part in.

You can also find the protocol for managing allegations against adults on this website.

The protocol implements the statutory guidance of Working Together to Safeguard Children, which was most recently updated in 2018.

The Bromley LADO is Gemma Taylor. She can be contacted on **020 8461 7775** or by email on **LADO@bromley.gov.uk**

