

A Guide to Managing Allegations Against Adults Working / Volunteering with Children and Young People

This leaflet is a brief guide about the Local Authority Designated Officer role, commonly referred to as LADO. It contains information about how the allegations of abuse made against individuals who work with children and young people in any setting is managed.

Norfolk's Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) takes allegations of harm and abuse against children and young people seriously.

When an allegation is made

Any adult working or volunteering with children and young people, at some point, may be the subject of an allegation that they have harmed a child. This is a difficult position for all.

Every Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to have a LADO who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them harm.

The criteria for making a referral to LADO are that an individual:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- A child is anyone under 18 years old.

PROCESS

Stage 1

Persons who have become aware of an allegation against a person working or providing services for children and young people should in the first instance discuss this with their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for allegations in their organisation. The designated person then notifies the LADO within 24 hours via the LADO referral form (on the NSCP website). The LADO will then respond within 24 hours. The referrer must make a referral to Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) where the alleged harm to a child is significant at the same time as the referral is made to LADO as per S.47 procedures.

Stage 2

In all cases, the LADO and Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider:

- Whether or not the threshold is met.
- Whether a referral to the police or social care team is appropriate.
- Whether a Multi-Agency LADO Meeting needs to be convened.
- Whether Human Resources needs to be involved.
- Whether any immediate action needs taking place to make a child or young person safe within the organisation.
- Where a child makes a clear allegation and/or has an injury, the referrer/employer should inform Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) immediately to initiate S.47 procedures.

Stage 3

The LADO will consult with the police, social care and the person's line manager/employer if that person is different from the person who referred the allegation. Please note: the LADO is not the investigator and all investigations are done by either the police and/or the employer.

Stage 4

The LADO will convene a Multi-Agency LADO Meeting (MALM) within 5 to 7 working days of the referral where required. The LADO will offer advice and guidance if the allegation does not meet the criteria detailed in 'When an allegation is made' section of this leaflet.

Stage 5

The Initial Multi-Agency LADO Meeting (MALM) will bring together information within a Multi-Agency setting to plan the investigation. There are several strands to be considered as a result of an allegation:

- Police investigation of a possible criminal offence.
- Internal investigation by the employer/agency in respect of the allegation, if no criminal investigation.
- Enquiries and assessment by children's social care regarding whether a child is in need of services.
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action.
- Consideration by an employer around the suitability of the employee to continue to work with children.

The LADO is responsible for monitoring progress of referrals to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible and are consistent with a thorough and fair process.

A final/outcome MALM will be arranged to agree the adjudication (via actual or virtual meeting).

The LADO will record information and outcomes of the stages and ensure, where necessary, individuals are referred to DBS and/ any other relevant regulatory body by the employer.

Key Information

All allegations should be reported to the LADO. This must include situations where the worker has resigned. **'Compromise agreements' are not acceptable and may put others at risk in the future.**

Even when an alleged victim does not wish to make a complaint, this does not mean that the allegation should not be referred to LADO and investigated by the relevant agency.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as current concerns.

The term 'employer' means the organisation that has / had a working relationship with the person against whom the allegations has been made and includes voluntary organisations etc.

CONTACTS

THE LADO TEAM

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Telephone: 01603 223473

Email: LADO@norfolk.gov.uk

Managed within the Independent Statutory Services of Norfolk Children's Services

All referrals to be sent to:

Email: LADO@norfolk.gov.uk

Address: LADO Service, Children's Services, 1 Norwich Business Park, Whiting Road, Norwich, NR4 6DJ

The LADO referral form can be found on the Norfolk Safeguarding Children' Partnerships Website –How to raise a concern. See link below:

<https://www.norfolkscb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/LADO-Referral-Form-agency-2019.doc>

The procedures: Allegations against persons who work/ volunteer with children can be obtained from the NSCP website. See link: <https://www.norfolkscb.org/about/policies-procedures/8-3-allegations-against-persons-who-work-with-children/>