

RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OR CONCERN

An allegation against a person working with children can be made by people in a range of different circumstances. Some allegations are made by children; some allegations are made by colleagues or other professionals; others are made by parents or member of the community. Everyone who receives information about an allegation should take it seriously and keep an open mind as to whether it might be true.

The majority of allegations against professionals or volunteers relate to their behaviours towards a child or children in the workplace. However, a sizeable minority of concerns reported to the LADO relate to the professional's or volunteer's person life or to their care of their own children. Finally, in some cases, there may have been an allegation of abuse against someone closely associated with a member of staff and there are concerns this may present a risk of harm to children for whom the member of staff is responsible.

In all cases, the general principles outlined in the Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Board procedures apply.

The person receiving the report

SHOULD

- Make sure children are safeguarded
- Write down what has been said and record the circumstances in which the allegation was made
- Report the matter to the lead person in agency or organisation

SHOULD NOT

- Ask leading questions if seeking clarification
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Promise confidentiality but assurance should be given that the information will only be shared on a 'need to know' basis

The lead person for safeguarding

SHOULD

- Confirm children are safeguarded
- Obtain the written account which has been prepared by the person to whom the allegation has been made
- Record details of potential witnesses
- Record the details of any discussions and the rationale for any decisions that have been made about the child/member of staff
- Refer to the LADO within one working day of the allegation being made
- Consider what and how the key information will be shared with parents/carers

SHOULD NOT

- Investigate the allegation
- Interview the subject
- Interview potential witnesses

Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) Guidance Notes

The LADO and the lead person for safeguarding will:

- Confirm that the child/ren have been safeguarded
- Consider whether further information is needed
- Discuss details of the allegation taking into account thresholds for LADO involvement
- Determine whether there is sufficient evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is unfounded or false
- Determine whether multi-agency investigation of the allegation and/or risk of harm to a child is indicated
- Consider whether suspension of the individual is indicated, if the agency/organisation has not yet made this decision

Outcomes

There are three potential outcomes from the initial referral to the LADO, in terms of the investigation of allegations or concerns. These are:

1. The allegation is demonstrably false/unfounded, and no further action is required.
2. The matter can be dealt with by the individual's employer/managers; or;
3. A LADO Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) meeting needs to be arranged involving other relevant professionals (including the police if it appears that an offence has been committed)

Important notes

1. Subject to restrictions on the information that can be shared, the accused person's employer should, as soon as possible, inform the individual about the nature of the allegation, how enquiries will be conducted and the possible outcomes. The individual should be given a copy of the LADO leaflet 'When you the subject of an allegation'.
2. Where concerns have arisen due to events in the member of staff or volunteer's private life, the individual should be given a copy of the LADO guidance notes 'Where there are concerns about your personal life'.
3. All referrals made to the LADO are recorded on the local authority's electronic record. When the employer informs the subject that an allegation has been made, the subject must be made aware of this fact.