

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Briefing Paper August 2011



About this Briefing

- To discuss the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer
- To make organisations aware of when they need to contact the LADO
- To give details of the LADO for Manchester

1.1 What is a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)?

The role of the LADO is set out in the HM Government guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) (2010).

LADOs are involved in the management and oversight of individual cases where it is alleged that a person working with children has:

- 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 or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

The LADO role applies to paid workers, unpaid workers, volunteers, foster carers, casual workers, agency or anyone self employed.

The procedures for managing allegations includes concerns, allegations or offences that may arise in someone's personal life as well as at work, an example of this may be

- downloading of child pornography on home computer
- allegations of domestic violence

1.2 How is the LADO involved?

The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. These officers provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, in addition to liaising with the police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

They will provide advice and guidance and help determine that the allegation sits within the scope of the safeguarding procedures. Within the role the LADO helps co-ordinate information sharing with the right people. They will also monitor and track any investigation with the expectation that it is resolved as quickly as possible.

1.3 What should you have in place in your organisation?

Your safeguarding policy and procedures should identify a senior manager / lead for safeguarding within the organisation to which allegations or concerns should be reported. All staff and volunteers in your organisation should know who this lead is.

Your procedures should also identify an alternative person to whom reports should be made in the absence of the named senior manager or in cases where that person is the subject of the allegation or concern.

Your procedures should also include contact details for the Local authority designated officer.

1.4 What do you need to do if an allegation has been reported to you?

The allegation should be reported to the senior manager identified in the employer's procedure immediately unless that person is the subject of the allegation in which case it should be reported to the designated alternative.

If the allegation meets any of the criteria set out in section 1.1 the senior manager will consider the information, see if it meets the threshold and if required take the necessary steps in contacting the LADO. **This should be done within one working day.**

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation or possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services: and
- consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed, in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations, and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. **In some cases that will require the employer to consider suspending the person.** Suspension should be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. People must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. Employers must consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children until the allegation is resolved.

Neither the local authority, the police, nor children's social care can require an employer to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer. The power to suspend is vested in the employer alone.

However, where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation discussion concludes that there should be enquiries by children's social care and/or an investigation by the police, the LADO should also canvass police/children's social care views about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children, to inform the employer's consideration of suspension.

1.5 Action following initial consideration

Where the initial evaluation decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be dealt with by the employer. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be instituted within three working days.

If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action the employer should discuss who will undertake that with the local authority designated officer. There are three possible actions following consideration:

- If it doesn't meet the threshold for further investigation then the employer will use their internal procedures to manage risk
- If it does meet the threshold then this will activate the procedure for managing allegations and a strategy meeting will be called for all partners involved including police and social care
- If it is believed that a crime has been committed then the police may be contacted

The local authority designated officer should continue to liaise with the employer to monitor progress of the case and provide advice/support when required/requested.

The local authority designated officer for Manchester is:

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