



A guide for a child or young person who has made an allegation of abuse against an adult carer, member of staff, or volunteer working with children.

If this is you, this is for you. We can help if:

- You are being mistreated or abused by someone and you're not sure what to do
- You think another child/young person is being mistreated or abused
- You need advice or need to talk to someone

## ***Introduction***

Being mistreated or abused is sometimes called **'Harm'** and is defined as **Sexual Abuse, Physical Abuse, Neglect** or **Emotional Abuse**.

Telling someone about any kind of abuse that you have suffered can be very scary, particularly if you have had to speak out against a member of staff, or someone in a position of trust. We recognise this can be distressing for you and your family. We are committed to providing fair treatment and to achieving justice for everyone concerned. It is important to remember that what you have said will be taken seriously.

## ***What happened when you told someone?***

If you told someone, such as your teacher or youth worker, they should inform other professionals who are trained to help (e.g. Social Worker, Police Officer). There is a specialist worker called the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO for short), who will also be informed.

## ***What is a LADO and what do they do?***

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) tries to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and offered support. They will speak with the organisations such as Police, Children's Services and the adult's employer. They keep a watch over any investigations, and ensures that everyone directly involved is listened to and their views heard. It is very important that all the evidence is considered carefully. In this way, the LADO helps to ensure that the right outcome can be achieved for the adult member of staff, their employer, for you and your family.

## ***Who can I talk to?***

While it may seem overwhelming, until the investigation is complete it is best that you and your family do not talk about the matter with other people, such as friends or other families. This is to protect you. However, it is natural that you may want to speak to someone about how you are feeling. You could speak to your parents or carers, or if you prefer, there are other people that will understand what you are going through. You could ask to speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead in your school or club.

## ***What is an enquiry?***

It's what we do when we need to make sure that children are okay and to find out what's going on.

## ***What will be the outcome?***

The outcome of an investigation into an allegation can be any of the following;

**Substantiated:** The allegation supported by evidence of proof. The adult's employer may offer further training, seek to dismiss them, and/or ref them to other organisations such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

**Unsubstantiated:** The allegation is neither proven nor disproven. This means it is not known if the adult member of staff is guilty or innocent.

**Unfounded:** There is evidence that the allegation was not true, but may have been misinterpreted by what was heard, seen, or happened.

**False and Malicious:** There is evidence the allegation is not true and the allegation may have been made up to cause the adult member of staff harm.

## ***What happens next?***

Sometimes you or your family may need additional help and organisations such as schools can provide additional support. This is usually called a Team Around the Family, but often referred to as a TAF. Children's Services may undertake an assessment if it is felt your needs are greater. This will involve being allocated a social worker to undertake the assessment and to see if other support is required.

## ***Additional support?***

If you would like to speak in confidence to someone about how you are feeling, you can contact ChildLine on 0800 11 11 (24 hour hotline) or visit: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

For online information on local youth information, advice, counselling and support services you can visit: [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)