



What is a LADO?

Safeguarding Children in Brighton & Hove: *The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)*

The council has a statutory responsibility to have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with, cares for or volunteers with children, may have caused them or could cause them harm.

The LADO work is carried out by qualified social work managers within Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people. The LADO role sits within the Safeguarding and Reviewing Service; ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Children's Partnership ([Home - BHSCP](#)) Pan Sussex Procedures ([Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual](#)) provide the following additional guidance:

Allegations Management Procedures

The majority of people who work with children or young people act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for them. However, sometimes the behaviour of adults who work or volunteer with children and young people can result in allegations being made against them. It is never acceptable for an adult in a position of trust to harm a child or young person and therefore, allegations or concerns about behaviour raised regarding staff, workers, or volunteers in relation to children or young people should be taken seriously and reported to the LADO.

An allegation can arise in connection with an individual's private life. For example, in respect of their own children and family, in coming to the attention of other agencies such as Children's Social Care and/or the Police. It can relate to a current, or historical concern. The management of allegations exists both to protect children and those adults who work with them.

What is an Allegation?

There is a distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice of an adult, or a complaint, but all may raise concerns about harm towards a child. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

(Working Together 2018-updated 2020)

Harm is defined under the four categories of abuse; Physical, Sexual, Neglect and Emotional.

A complaint may relate to an adult's inappropriate use of language, breaching professional boundaries, such as discussing aspects of their personal lives. A concern could include breaches of safeguarding procedures and guidance including codes of conduct, and social media policy. It could include an adult's poor behaviour management or the maladministration of medicine. The later could cause more harm than an act of physical abuse.

What does the LADO do?

The LADO has overall responsibility for the management of allegations. The LADO:

- Provides advice and guidance to employers, or voluntary organisations, to enable them to safeguard children.
- Having received a referral, undertakes an Initial Evaluation to establish if the threshold of 'harm' or 'risk of harm' is met.

If it is the LADO:

- Co-ordinates the safeguarding and investigative process including liaising with police and other agencies.
- May chair a 'Strategy Meeting' to enable the sharing of information between agencies and professionals, plan any enquiries, set actions and agree timescales.
- Monitors the progress of investigations to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.
- Considers if the matter should be dealt with under disciplinary procedures as a matter of professional conduct. It is of note that the burden of proof in criminal cases is "beyond reasonable doubt" whereas the civil threshold of "the balance of probabilities" applies to other investigation or proceedings.

What is the outcome?

The outcome of an investigation into an allegation, or concern can be any of the following:

- **Substantiated:** The allegation supported by evidence of proof.
- **Unsubstantiated:** The allegation is neither proven nor disproven. This means it is not known if the individual is guilty or innocent.
- **Unfounded:** There is evidence that the allegation did not or could not have happened in the way it has been witnessed, described and reported. The information may have been misinterpreted.
- **False:** There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- **Malicious:** There is evidence the allegation has been deliberately invented to deceive or cause the adult harm.

The LADO may then:

- Inform professional and regulatory bodies such as Ofsted, the Disclosure and Barring Service, the General Medical Council, the Teaching Regulation Agency, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Care Quality Commission, or the Charity Commission.
- Identify any repeat patterns of behaviour and ensure that measures are in place to prevent further harm or abuse.
- Ensure accurate information is used in response to any future concern or allegation, in order to prevent unnecessary re-investigation.
- Disseminate any learning and to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the organisation's procedures or practice.

<https://www.bhscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2022/04/LADO-Referral-Consultation-Form.docx>