

A guide for parents or carers in relation to an allegation of abuse against an adult carer, member of staff, or volunteer working with children.

Introduction

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 are taken seriously.

What is a LADO and what do they do?

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for overseeing allegations about individuals who work with children. The work can be paid, unpaid or voluntary. A concern can be in relation to the person's behaviour at work, or outside of their workplace. Parents/carers can also seek support from their LADO about any privately registered nannies

The LADO in Brighton and Hove is a qualified social worker and will consider the following thresholds when an allegation is made:

- **Behaved in a way that has harmed, 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 would 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)**

What happens next?

The LADO will consider whether a discussion or meeting is held to decide if further action is required. If it is necessary to undertake an investigation, a decision will be made whether this will be undertaken by the police, children's social care, the employer or a combination of agencies. A police officer and/or social worker may wish to meet with your child to discuss the allegation.

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 social care may undertake an assessment if it is felt your child's needs are greater. This will involve your child being allocated a social worker to undertake the assessment and to identify if other support is required.

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, or share this on social media. This is to protect you and your child, it may also be a criminal offence to do so. The LADO will not be able share specific information regarding the alleged person involved with you, but will ensure that a nominated person in the agency undertaking the investigation will keep you informed throughout the process.

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 individual is guilty or innocent.

Unfounded: There is evidence that the allegation did not or could not have happened. The information may have been misinterpreted.

False: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

Malicious: There is evidence the allegation been deliberately invented to deceive or cause the adult harm.

Unfortunately, detailed information regarding the full extent of the investigation and actions taken in respect of the adult may not be able to be shared with you further, other than action has been taken and appropriate safeguarding measures have been implemented. This is due to confidential data protection requirements and is not about withholding this information from you.

Further Information?

For online information on safeguarding procedures, including those for the LADO, a LADO guide for a child or young person and other advice, counselling and support services you can visit Brighton and Hove's Safeguarding Children Partnership; www.BHSCP.org.uk