

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

What is the LADO

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children. This involves working with police, children's social care, employers and other involved professionals. The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but oversees and directs them to ensure thoroughness, timeliness, and fairness.

Ordinarily, to ensure impartiality, the LADO will not have direct contact with the adult against who the allegation has been made, or the family of the child/children involved but will, as part of their role ensure that these people have information regarding outcomes.

How to contact the LADO

The responsible officer should complete the [LADO Referral / Consultation Form](#) and email it to ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk

For urgent LADO matters outside of office hours, at weekends and on public holidays contact 01273 335905.

The [Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures](#) include important guidance about steps to consider before a notification to the LADO is made.

What to expect

The LADO function is undertaken by designated staff on a rota basis Monday-Friday, 9.30 – 4.00 pm however the LADO may be busy on other calls or meetings. We aim to triage notifications to determine level and timescale for a response within 24 hours (working day).

When to contact the LADO

Anybody who has concerns about a practitioner working or volunteering with children should discuss their concerns with their manager, HR provider and / or their organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead. This discussion should help to clarify whether the criteria for making a [LADO notification](#) has been met.

The LADO should be notified when it has been alleged that a professional or volunteer who works 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 she or he may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children, for example behaviour in their private life that raises concerns (a transferrable risk).

Each agency will use their own procedures to investigate an allegation. The LADO will offer guidance around any safeguarding concerns.

For help in deciding whether an incident may meet the harm threshold and referral to the LADO agencies can refer to the Threshold Guidance contained in [Table 1: Threshold Guidance](#), which is intended to support professional judgement.

See hyperlinks below to guide level of response as contained in Table 1 : Threshold Guidance

- **Level 1:** LADO Threshold Not Met – Notify LADO 'For Info Only'
- **Level 2:** LADO Threshold Not Met – Notify LADO & include staff member / volunteer details 'For Consultation'
- **Level 3:** LADO Threshold Met – 'LADO Referral' & include staff member / volunteer details
- **Level 4:** LADO Threshold Met – 'LADO Urgent Referral' & include staff member / volunteer details
- **Level 5:** LADO Threshold Met – 'LADO Urgent Response Required' & include staff member / volunteer details

LADO Threshold Guidance

The procedures for dealing with allegations need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Many situations may well either not meet the criteria set or may do so without warranting consideration of either a police investigation or enquiries by local authority children's social care services. In these situations, local arrangements should be followed to resolve the situation without delay.

Some rare allegations will be so serious they require immediate intervention by children's social care services and/or police. The LADO should be notified of all allegations that may meet the LADO Threshold criteria.

There are two aspects to consider when an allegation is made:

- Looking after the welfare of the child - the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) is responsible for ensuring that the child is not at risk and referring cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care as described in Part one of this guidance.
- Investigating and supporting the person subject to the allegation - the case manager should discuss with the LADO, the nature, content, and context of the allegation, and agree a course of action.

When dealing with allegations, the designated safeguarding lead should:

- apply common sense and judgement
- deal with allegations quickly, fairly, and consistently, and
- provide effective protection for the child and support the person subject to the allegation.

See hyperlinks below to guide level of response as contained in Table 1 : Threshold Guidance

- **Level 1:** LADO Threshold Not Met – Notify LADO 'For Info Only'
- **Level 2:** LADO Threshold Not Met – Notify LADO & include staff member / volunteer details 'For Consultation'
- **Level 3:** LADO Threshold Met – 'LADO Referral' & include staff member / volunteer details
- **Level 4:** LADO Threshold Met – 'LADO Urgent Referral' & include staff member / volunteer details
- **Level 5:** LADO Threshold Met – 'LADO Urgent Response Required' & include staff member / volunteer details

Additional information and resources to support you

This [NSPCC page](#) contains links to resources and best practice for managing allegations or concerns about abuse by someone who works or volunteers with children including how to respond to low-level concerns about adults working in education.

Table 1 : Threshold Guidance

Adapted from *'Keeping children safe in education'* (2022, pages 86 – 99)

Threshold Guidance

Level 1: LADO Threshold Not Met – Notify LADO ‘For Info Only’

Nature of the concern or incident	Examples	Recommended Action to be taken by the Designated Agency Lead (DAL):
<p>1. Complaint made by parent or carer, or comment made by child that does not seem to have any corroborating evidence (for example there is no injury seen, or witness accounts do not corroborate the allegation).</p> <p>2. The manager does not consider that the matter meets the threshold for a referral to LADO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Child objecting to a sanction imposed in school, describing an event to parent who then complains about how their child has been treated; but does not have all the information. · Young person in children’s home involved in a confrontation alleges harm by staff member. The allegation is not corroborated by credible witness accounts. 	<p>Designated Agency Lead (DAL) manages the situation internally (for example in accordance with local complaints process).</p> <p>DAL notes incident and outcome of action taken on a LADO Referral / Consultation Form and emails to ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk marked ‘Level 1: For Info Only’.</p> <p>No names will be used as this does not meet the threshold for a record about a named person to be kept.</p>

but is intending to investigate further.

3. The employer may be concerned regarding the employee's behaviour or responses to a situation which raises concerns regarding suitability.

- An allegation is made second or third hand. Facts are unclear, there are inconsistencies or confusion in the account or there is evidence that disproves or contradicts the account (e.g staff member was not present at the location).
- A school child tells a friend, who tells the teacher, that another teacher 'makes them feel funny when they look at them'. No other concerns or complaints expressed. No history of similar concerns in respect of the teacher.
- A staff member or volunteer with no history of concerns about their conduct or capability makes an inappropriate remark that appears naive rather than potentially grooming or acts in a way that could be deemed unprofessional.
- A child with a history of challenging behaviour, alleging

Notification to the LADO 'Level 1: For Info Only' provides audit trail.

LADO stores the information securely in restricted area of Eclipse (electronic recording system) under organisation/employer for audit and performance data.

they feel bullied by a well-respected member of staff.

Level 2: LADO Threshold Not Met – Notify LADO & include staff member / volunteer details ‘For Consultation’

Nature of the concern or incident	Examples	Recommended Action to be taken by the Designated Agency Lead (DAL):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff member has allegedly behaved inappropriately but without causing harm. Complaint made by eg parent or child to external agency eg. Ofsted. 2. Social Care have opened a child protection (Section 47) enquiry or decided to hold an initial child protection conference on a staff member or volunteer’s own children, or their child has entered the care system due to problems at home. 3. Suspicion or allegation of domestic abuse, stalking, coercion, and control of others by staff member or volunteer. 4. Arrest or prosecution for a criminal offence outside of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Child accuses teacher of pushing them when they were being guided away from a situation. Situation covered by ‘<u>Use of Reasonable Force</u>’ DfE 2013. · Nursery worker seen by parent to pull a child away from a situation. Described as rough handling. Staff member says child had to be moved from a confrontation to avoid harm to them/ another child. · Staff member or volunteer accused of domestic violence assault on own children. No history of complaints or concerns about capability or standards at work. 	<p>When the DAL is informed of a safeguarding concern in a staff member or volunteer’s private life, there should be a consultation with the LADO to consider what the transferrable risks may be and potential notification to the relevant regulatory body. Employees are also expected to inform their employer/regulatory body in the first instance.</p> <p>DAL notes the staff member or volunteers details, the incident, relevant history and outcome of action taken on a <u>LADO Referral / Consultation Form</u> and emails to ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk marked ‘Level 2: For Consultation’.</p> <p>Notification to the LADO ‘For Consultation’ provides audit trail of consultation and advice from the LADO and intelligence about the person.</p> <p>LADO stores the information securely in restricted area of Eclipse (electronic recording system) under staff member name.</p>

including sexual offences in relation to children or adults, violence, drugs, drink driving etc.

- Staff member suspected to have made racist or prejudiced remarks to a child or young person.
- A staff member or volunteer makes an inappropriate remark that appears naive rather than potentially grooming or acts in a way that could be deemed unprofessional. There is a history of similar concerns.
- Concern that family members of a professional or volunteer may be involved in criminal activity.
- Teacher under stress who is heard to shout inappropriately at the children one day towards the end of term.
- Childminder witnessed to ignore children crying and speak rudely to them, but further context not known.

Employer informs the staff member or volunteer that the outcome will be recorded on the LADO record.

Level 3: LADO Threshold Met – ‘LADO Referral’ & include staff member / volunteer details

Nature of the concern or incident	Examples	Recommended Action to be taken by the Designated Agency Lead (DAL):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standards of care issues, where the concerns are considered serious and warrant investigation by the employer, with oversight and the support of the LADO. 2. Contact with children and young people through social media and private email accounts or providing rewards and incentives which are not sanctioned within a code of conduct and could single out children or young people from other peers. (sexual grooming) 3. Bullying, threats and intimidation and comments of a personal, derogatory or racially abusive nature (emotional harm). 4. Physical contact or inappropriate restraint, pushing or shoving without injury which 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A complaint that a foster carer provides significantly poor care or there are numerous concerns regarding that care which lead to concerns regarding the appropriateness of the care arrangement. · Where a member of staff repeatedly treats a child in their care in a negative manner by making derogatory comments · Suspected of making racist or derogatory remarks to a child or young person. · Early recourse to the use of restraint, where judgement might indicate alternative methods of diffusing a situation · Failing to meet expectations of levels of care consistently 	<p>DAL notes the staff member or volunteers details, the incident, relevant history and outcome of action taken on a <u>LADO Referral / Consultation Form</u> and emails to ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk marked ‘Level 3: LADO Referral’.</p> <p>Referral to the LADO will result in consultation and advice from the LADO.</p> <p>LADO stores the information securely in restricted area of Eclipse (electronic recording system) under staff member name.</p> <p>This affords the employer with the support of external scrutiny to demonstrate transparency and provides the employee with the protection afforded by the LADO.</p> <p>Employer informs the staff member or volunteer that the outcome will be recorded on the LADO record.</p>

<p>breaches a code of conduct (physical)</p> <p>5. Medication errors, meal preparation-food allergies, and contextual safeguarding such as leaving a door unguarded leading a child to escape a setting, are breaches of safeguarding practice (neglect)</p> <p>6. If conduct concerns form part of a pattern, or there are other concerns about the individual concerned, consideration will need to be given to whether a referral to Children’s Social Care as well as the LADO is required.</p>	
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Level 4: LADO Threshold Met – ‘LADO Urgent Referral’ & include staff member / volunteer details

Nature of the concern or incident	Examples	Required Action to be taken by the Designated Agency Lead (DAL):
<p>Allegations that require an immediate referral to the LADO include:</p> <p>1. Physical abuse and restraint where injuries have been</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A credible disclosure by a child or young person that uses the word ‘hit’ or ‘hurt’; yet there is no injury seen and no 	<p>DAL notes the staff member or volunteers details, the incident, relevant history and outcome of action taken on a <u>LADO Referral / Consultation Form</u> and emails to ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk marked ‘Level 4: LADO Urgent Referral’.</p>

<p>caused to a child including scratches, cuts, bruises, red marks, swelling, bites and broken bones</p> <p>2. Disclosures of sexual abuse, including direct contact, historic incidents, links to exploitation, grooming and online abuse</p>	<p>corroborating evidence of child's account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Restraint that has caused an injury to the person being restrained. · An incident witnessed, where there is a physical exchange between staff and child or young person. It is unclear whether self-defence or retaliation was involved. The matter needs full investigation. · Making racist or derogatory remarks to a child or young person in the presence of witnesses. · A very young child still requiring personal care/ nappy changing, indicates that a nursery worker touched him/her in the genital area · A professional or volunteer has been sending inappropriate but not necessarily sexual, texts to young people he/she works with. 	<p>Referral to the LADO will result in consultation and advice from the LADO. In such circumstances the LADO may decide a strategy discussion with the police or employer is indicated to agree next actions including when and what to communicate with the staff member or volunteer.</p> <p>LADO stores the information securely in restricted area of Eclipse (electronic recording system) under staff member name.</p> <p>This affords the employer with the support of external scrutiny to demonstrate transparency and provides the employee with the protection afforded by the LADO.</p> <p>In consultation with the LADO, the employer informs the staff member or volunteer that the outcome will be recorded on the LADO record.</p>
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- A foster carer where there have been several complaints about poor practice and standards of care; children in their care who are not always clean or appropriately dressed or seen to be treated in a way that causes concern to observing professionals.

Level 5: LADO Threshold Met – ‘LADO Urgent Response Required’ & include staff member / volunteer details

Where the agency identifies a child has been harmed, that there may be an immediate risk of harm to a child or if the situation is an emergency, they should contact the Front Door for Families on 01273 290400 and as appropriate the police (immediately) as per the processes explained below.

Nature of the concern or incident	Examples	Required Action to be taken by the Designated Agency Lead (DAL):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allegation made with credible corroborating evidence, where a child has been injured or harmed. 2. Behaviour by the professional or volunteer which is deemed extremely concerning towards the children they are caring for and requires immediate suspension. 3. Allegation by a member of the professional/ volunteer’s family which is so serious it requires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Child has clearly been injured or could have been injured as a direct result of the actions of a professional or volunteer. · Incident within the professional/ volunteers home life that is of high risk and high level of concern. 	<p>The DAL telephones The Front Door for Families on 01273 290400 during working hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Thursday and 9.00am to 4.30pm on Fridays). Outside of working hours please contact the Emergency Duty Service on 01273 335 905 or 01273 335 906.</p> <p>Email confirmation of referral is sent to FrontDoorforFamilies@brighton-hove.gov.uk and copied to the LADO at ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk</p>

immediate consideration by employer.

- Professional or volunteer arranging to meet young person outside the work environment and asking them not to tell anyone; or making inappropriate contact through social media with sexual overtones.
- Making racist or derogatory remarks to a child or young person in the presence of witnesses.

[hove.gov.uk](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk) and marked 'Level 5: LADO Urgent Response Required'.

Social Care, Police & LADO may decide a strategy discussion with the police and employer is needed to agree next actions including when and what to communicate with the staff member or volunteer.

LADO stores the information securely in restricted area of Eclipse (electronic recording system) under staff member name. This affords the employer with the support of external scrutiny to demonstrate transparency and provides the employee with the protection afforded by the LADO.

In consultation with the LADO, the employer informs the staff member or volunteer that the outcome will be recorded on the LADO record.

Important Note: 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 however be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. Employers must consider carefully whether the circumstances of a situation 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.

