

Achieving for Children

Quick guide to making a local authority designated officer (LADO) referral

An allegation or concern is raised about an adult working or volunteering with children, and is brought to the attention of the organisation's designated manager for allegations. The concerns indicate the adult 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
- behaved in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more of their protected characteristics

The designated manager for allegations can immediately submit a [LADO referral form](#), or call the LADO service on 07774 332675 for a consultation before submitting a referral form.

The LADO will respond within 24 hours to advise whether or not the concern meets the threshold for LADO oversight. All LADO advice is confirmed in writing to the designated manager for their records.

If the allegation or concern does not meet the threshold for LADO involvement and oversight, the LADO will confirm in writing there is to be no further LADO action.

If the allegation or concern does meet the threshold for LADO involvement and oversight, the LADO will advise next steps which may include:

- employer referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or Single Point of Access (SPA) where children may have suffered or are at risk of suffering harm
- LADO referral to police if a crime may have been committed
- employer to undertake a risk assessment to identify risk to children, and other risks
- employer to take action to safeguard children and protect the adult from further allegation
- the need for a LADO 'allegation against staff and volunteers' ASV meeting
- employer to undertake management investigation

If there is to be no investigation by the police or children's social care, the LADO will refer the concerns back to the employer for internal management investigation.

If there is an investigation by children's social care or the police, these agencies will inform the LADO of the outcome. The LADO will advise the employer that they can begin their management investigation, which will take into consideration the outcome of the earlier investigation.

The employer will be asked to share the investigation report with the LADO, who will need to be satisfied the investigation has been thorough in exploring the safeguarding concerns, there is a clear outcome and any sanctions that have been applied are proportionate.

The LADO will provide a LADO outcome based on the information in the investigation report before closing the case.

Possible outcomes

On conclusion of the investigation, outcomes will be recorded as:

- **substantiated:** sufficient evidence exists to support the allegation
- **unsubstantiated:** evidence is insufficient to prove or disprove
- **unfounded:** evidence shows the allegation is false
- **malicious:** the allegation was deliberately invented or exaggerated
- **false:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation