

Allegations against staff within the children's workforce in Barnet

Information about reporting allegations and for those subject to allegations

All organisations providing services to children must ensure that those who work with or on behalf of children and young people are competent, confident and safe to do so. Likewise, anyone who comes into contact with children and young people in their work has a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. However, it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be misplaced or malicious. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned.

Equally, it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are adults who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children. It is therefore essential that a clear process exists for the investigation and resolution of allegations made for the benefit of all concerned.

Who is covered by the allegations against staff process?

This process covers all persons working within the children workforce in either a paid or unpaid capacity and includes volunteers and foster carers. This includes anyone working in a health, education, social care or voluntary sector service setting as well as any other service provided to children including contracted or commissioned services.

Who is responsible for the allegations against staff process in Barnet?

The process is managed by Barnet's LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). All local authorities must have a LADO who is responsible for -

- managing individual cases
- providing advice and guidance to employers
- liaising with police and other agencies
- monitoring progress of cases for timeliness, thoroughness and fairness.

The LADO does not do investigations.

The LADO can be contacted via Barnet's MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) for allegations against staff:

[Online form](#)

Telephone 0208 359 4066, Monday to Thursday, 9am - 5-15pm, Friday 9am - 5pm



When is it necessary to contact the LADO?

All allegations that meet the following criteria must be reported to the LADO.

Where it is alleged that someone has:

- 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/ren in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.

The LADO can also be contacted for advice regarding concerns or suspicions about behaviour towards children by staff within Barnet's children's workforce.

What happens when I contact the LADO?

Most referrers will be asked to complete a referral form and where necessary provide other supporting information. The LADO will then complete an initial evaluation and provide advice regarding the pathway to be followed to resolve the allegation.

What are the possible options for following up an allegation?

The LADO will decide whether the allegation made is a potential criminal offence in which case a referral will be made to the police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT). If the allegation indicates a child or children may be at risk of significant harm then a child protection investigation will be undertaken by children's social care. In these circumstances, an Allegation Against Staff & Volunteers Meeting (ASV) is likely to be convened to share information about the allegation, plan the investigation and any actions needed to protect the children and the person against whom the allegation has been made. This meeting is chaired by the LADO and will be

attended by the police, social workers and senior representatives from the organisation concerned including HR (human resources).

If the allegation does not indicate a potential criminal offence or child protection issue the matter may be passed back to the organisation managing the staff member/volunteer to resolve under their staffing (disciplinary or standards) process or as a complaint.

Who makes allegations against staff?

Allegations may be made by children, their parents, colleagues or others.

What information will parents be told?

Parents should be told at the earliest opportunity if their child has made an allegation or there is a concern that they may have been harmed by someone working with them. Parents should be kept informed during the investigation process and be told the outcome.

How will children be assisted during the process?

Children should be given the opportunity to share any concerns they have about their care and should be supported throughout the investigation process. They should also be told the outcome and provided with further support if required.

Can parents and children refer directly to the LADO?

Yes, parents or children can report their concerns directly to the LADO but it is advisable that issues should be first raised with a senior member of staff within the organisation (not the person who is the subject of the allegation).

What happens if I am subject to an allegation?

Your manager will contact the LADO for advice. This will include when it is appropriate to share details of the allegation with you and who will be investigating it. You should be offered information about support during the process, this may be via your union representative or a named individual within your workplace.



It is acknowledged that being subject to an allegation is a very stressful process.

Will I be suspended if I am subject to an allegation?

Decisions about suspension are made on a case by case basis and depends on the nature and seriousness of the allegation. Whilst the LADO can offer advice only, the employer makes the decision to suspend a staff member. Many people subject to allegations are not suspended although their working arrangements may be adjusted whilst the matter is followed up.

How long will an allegation take to investigate?

It is important that allegations are investigated as quickly as possible for all concerned. Initial evaluations by the LADO begin immediately and advice on the investigation is given within a few days. Investigations are usually concluded within a month. More complex investigations or those involving the police can take longer but the LADO is expected to monitor these for timeliness and assist in resolving delays where possible.

What happens at the end of the process?

Whichever process used to investigate the allegation (i.e. criminal, child protection or employer based) will be expected to decide on the outcome of the allegations/concerns raised based on the available evidence. Following most allegations staff return to the work place, and where this is decided, support should be offered to enable this to happen successfully. If it is concluded that someone working with children has harmed a child, or is unsuitable to work with children, it is possible they will be dismissed by their employer and in these cases a referral will be made to DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) to consider whether

this person should be barred from working with children.

Whatever the outcome the LADO will assist the organisation in which the allegation occurred regarding any lessons to be learnt and ways in which safer working arrangements can be improved.

What records will be kept regarding allegations?

It is a requirement that a summary of any allegations made and the outcome of any investigation is kept on the HR file of the person concerned, except for cases where the allegation was found to be malicious. In schools, this record should be kept for 10 years or until retirement whichever is the sooner. Records may also be held by agencies involved in investigating allegations and they should follow their records retention policy. The LADO records are kept in line with the council's data protection policy. More information can be seen on [council's privacy notice](#).

Guidance about what information should be disclosed in references can be obtained from the LADO.

What can I do to prevent allegations being made against me?

The government publication Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Who Work with Children and Young People in Education (2017), provides excellent advice about safeguarding children you are working with. The NSPCC provides guidance for Safeguarding children, young people and adults aged 0-25 in the voluntary and community sector. See the links below.

I am a manager of an organisation providing services to children – what are my responsibilities?

Member organisations of Barnet's Safeguarding Children Partnership should have a named senior officer who has responsibility for ensuring that procedures are in place for dealing with allegations against staff.



All organisations should have an identified senior manager to whom allegations or concerns can be reported. All staff or volunteers should be made aware of who this person is, who to contact in their absence, and of the procedures relating to allegations against staff which should include the LADO's details. Anyone working with children should be subject to the appropriate checks and be provided with clear expectations about what is expected from them in their contact with children. The safer working guidance detailed above is a useful framework to follow.

Where can I get further information?

Further information is available within the following documents:

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Working Together 2018](#)

[London Child Protection Procedures 2018](#)

Allegations against staff, carers and volunteers are dealt with in Chapter 7.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018](#)

Section 4 – Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers.

[NSPCC](#)

Safeguarding standards and guidance.

[Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Further information is also available on the Website

<https://thebarnetscp.org.uk/>

