

## Guidance for managing abuse allegations affecting a multi-site organisation

This guidance should be used in the case of abuse allegations that stem from an organisation with multiple sites, and with a number of functions including residential children's homes, education settings, and alternative provision.

The following process should take place.

The Local Authority, **where the organisation's headquarters** is based, should call a wider strategy meeting to determine lead arrangements. This initial meeting should consider the severity, number, and frequency of incidents across the three localities. The spread of placements across the area should also be considered, to support recommendations on leadership and management of multi-site abuse allegations.

### Principal actions

- A request should be made for the details of all children from the establishment(s) and the details of the placing authority.
- A strategy meeting should be convened, and an invite made to all relevant Local Authorities.
- Invitations should be extended to the Team Manager/Social Worker for any local children placed in these establishments.
- Invitations should be made to wider safeguarding partners as appropriate, including the Police, LADO, and any other relevant safeguarding professionals from other relevant agencies.
- Information requests should be made of each Local Authority if they have had any concerns regarding the practice in these establishments and to provide the detail for this.
- Share any information that is held regarding the establishments, any concerns we may have had regarding practices and our responses to this.
- A full discussion should be co-ordinated to review the findings and agree the level of concern. The meeting should consider the response to the Ofsted request for information, and how the home Local Authority and other Local Authorities propose to address any concerns identified, (i.e. a visit to the establishment, support from LADO to review the findings and policies the establishment has in place, and identify any immediate additional measures that the Local Authorities insists the establishment confirms for the children they are responsible for-and as a whole).

- A course of action should be agreed with the Local Authority where the establishment (Children's Home or Education establishment) would be responsible for any s47 enquiry as the establishment is in that area, each Local Authority retains the decision making in terms of their response for children placed by the authority.
- The meeting will co-ordinate the actions both individually and collectively, agree timescales according to need and risk, and book in a review strategy meeting to ensure all actions have been completed.
- If police are progressing a criminal investigation, this would need to be discussed and that decision shared in this meeting, and consideration to this strategized in terms of any visits or conversations to and with staff within these establishments. It is important not to compromise any criminal investigation, therefore this requires co-ordinated decision making and response, hence the need for the wider strategy meeting.
- Responses to any media interest should to be considered in the meeting. (Usually in these situations, we would agree that police and Children's Services leads in this agree a joint statement.)
- Consideration should also need to be given regarding any internal communications that may be required to ensure staff are aware of potential media interest and agree communication to be sent out that informs staff of how to deal with any enquiries. This would also incorporate a discussion re any decision that a helpline should be set up, and agreement on how that would be managed – if it were felt necessary.
- If an out of area Local Authority take a decision/action following the strategy meeting, to undertake a visit/speak to their child/ren placed at the establishments, and through these discussions the child discloses abuse, at that point the Local Authority where the establishment is located would have the responsibility to undertake a strategy meeting individual to that child and if agreed, the s47 enquiry for that child. At the conclusion of the s47, full responsibility would revert to the Local Authority that has overall responsibility for the child.