



EAST RIDING  
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

# Children and Young People's Support and Safeguarding Services

## You Can, I Can, We Can

### Managing Allegations Against Foster Carers Policy & Procedure



# Contents

1. Aim of this policy.....	1
2. Scope.....	1
3. The Difference Between an Allegation and a Concern.....	2
4. Our approach.....	3
5. Lead Local Authority.....	4
6. Key Practice Points.....	4
7. Key Definitions:.....	5
7.1. (LEVEL 1) - Standard of care concern.....	5
7.2. (LEVEL 2) - Concerns of a safeguarding nature that fall below the threshold for Section 47 child protection investigation.....	6
7.3. (LEVEL 3) - Allegation requiring investigation under Section 47 child protection procedures.....	6
7.4. Disagreement about the level of a concern/allegation.....	6
8. Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
9. Initial Response.....	8
9.1. Responding to Standard of Care Concerns (Level 1).....	9
9.2. Responding to Concerns of a Safeguarding Nature that fall below the Threshold for Section 47 Child Protection Investigation (Level 2).....	9
9.3. Responding to Allegations Requiring Investigation Under Section 47 Child Protection Procedures (Level 3).....	10
10. Key aspects of the Multi-Agency LADO Allegation Management Process.....	12
11. Support for Foster Carers.....	13
11.1. Financial support for foster / connected person (family and friends) carers during an investigation.....	15
12. Responsibilities of the fostering service and local authority social workers to children during an inter-agency investigation.....	16
13. Responsibilities to birth parents of Cared for children affected by an inter-agency investigation.....	17
14. Foster Carer Review (FCR).....	17
15. The Fostering Panel.....	18
16. Complaints.....	21
17. Referral to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and / or Notification to Ofsted.....	22
18. Additional Circumstances / considerations.....	22
19. Organised or complex abuse involving foster carers.....	23
20. Agencies providing support to foster carers.....	23
21. Acknowledgements.....	23

## 1. Aim of this policy

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All children should be protected from harm and abuse; therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that when allegations are made, there is a prompt and coordinated response to the concerns, ensuring that children are effectively safeguarded and that timely investigations can be undertaken. The welfare of the child is paramount, and this policy sets out how the local authority and our partners will coordinate responses to allegations, to ensure that children and young people are effectively safeguarded from harm.

This Policy and Procedure sets out our approach to managing and responding to allegations against foster carers. It outlines how services will work together to investigate and respond to concerns relating to the safety and protection of children and for the purpose of this policy, when incidents of alleged and/or substantiated allegations are made against foster carers.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with related [East Riding Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Procedure, and guidance](#) and East Riding Council, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Policy and Procedure – Allegations against persons who work with children.

The Policy is also informed by the [Fostering Services National Minimum Standards - standard 22, Handling Allegations and Suspicions of Harm](#).

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that any allegations that a foster carer for East Riding has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, may have harmed a child, may have committed an offence against a child, or may pose a risk of harm to children, is referred to the statutory agencies and fully investigated.

Our objective is to ensure that where such allegations are substantiated (or unsubstantiated but have ongoing concerns), appropriate action is taken to protect children from future harm from that person, and where the allegations are not substantiated, to enable the person to continue their work with children. During the investigation of an allegations, appropriate steps must be taken to protect children from the possible risk from that person.

## 2. Scope

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This procedure applies to those foster carers approved by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

It applies whether the allegation has arisen in relation to their work as a foster carer or in any other sphere of their lives (personal or professional life), that throws into question their suitability to work or volunteer with children. The allegation that they have harmed a child could refer to any child, not specifically a foster child in their care.

A clear distinction should be made between a concern about the quality of care or practice issue and a complaint.

This Policy aims to inform foster carers, children and families, practitioners and our partners what should happen when an allegation(s) is made or there are suspicions that a foster carer or anyone within the fostering household has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child: or
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children: or
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.



**NB:** If a child is living in an Early Permanence/ 'foster for adoption' arrangement then these procedures also apply, as the carers are identified as foster carers up until to the point at which the 'agency decision maker' confirms the panel matching recommendation.

**If the child(ren) is believed to be in immediate danger the Police should be notified straight away by calling 999.**

### 3. The Difference Between an Allegation and a Concern

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It might not be clear whether an incident constitutes an 'allegation'. It is important to remember that to be an allegation the alleged incident has to be sufficiently serious as to suggest that harm has or may have been caused to a child/ren or that the alleged behaviour indicates the individual may pose a risk of harm to children (or otherwise meet the criteria above).

Concerns that do not meet this threshold may constitute conduct or disciplinary issues and should be addressed using the appropriate organisational procedures.

Incidents which fall short of the threshold could include an accusation that is made second or third hand and the facts are not clear, or the individual alleged to have done this was not there at the time; or there is confusion about the account.

If it is difficult to determine the level of risk associated with an incident the following should be considered:

- Was the incident a disproportionate or inappropriate response in the context of a challenging situation?
- Where the incident involved an inappropriate response to challenging behaviour, had the carer had training in managing this?
- Does the carer understand that their behaviour was inappropriate and express a wish to behave differently in the future? For example, are they willing to undergo training?
- Does the child or family want to report the incident to the police, or would they prefer the matter to be dealt with by the employer?
- Have similar allegations previously been made against the individual – is there a pattern developing?

Whether an incident constitutes an allegation and hence needs to be dealt with through these procedures, may need to be discussed with the LADO. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Part 4, Section 2 [Part 4, Section 2](#) provides guidance for schools and colleges, which may be of wider interest when considering low-level concerns. Legal advice should be sought as necessary.

KCSIE provides that if there is any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a foster carer as a low-level concern in fact meets the harm threshold and thus should be treated as an allegation, the LADO should be consulted.



If it falls short of this threshold there may still be a role for the LADO to provide advice and support. Such a consultation process may allow for concerns to be evaluated objectively and to ascertain whether or not similar concerns may have been raised previously but not met the threshold for investigation. Whilst the LADO will only record the details of those allegations which appear to meet the threshold for consideration set out above, a record should be kept of any low-level concern that arise in respect of a foster carer.

KCSIE provides that records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, inappropriate, or problematic behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, a course of action should be decided upon, either through disciplinary procedures or where a pattern of behaviour moves from a low-level concern to meeting the harm threshold, it should be referred to the LADO. Records must be held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR). It is recommended that records are retained at least until the individual leaves their employment.

More detailed guidance and case studies on low-level concerns can be found in [Developing and Implementing a Low-level Concerns Policy \(Farrer & Co.\)](#).

Where the matter constitutes a conduct or performance issue, the Manager should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedures and let the LADO know of the outcome.

## 4. Our approach

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The East Riding of Yorkshire Council recognise that allegations of harm or abuse made against foster carers can have a traumatic impact on those affected. It is therefore important that foster carers feel fully informed of the process of managing allegations and are aware of what support they should expect and that they are able to access this during and after the course of an investigation.

To achieve this, it is essential that the following processes and considerations are applied:

- Any allegation of abuse will be dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child(ren) and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- The Fostering service/team should be informed and involved in all Section 47 children's social care Strategy Meetings and Multi-Agency LADO allegation management meeting, to provide information and consider the implications for past, current, and future care arrangements, and requirements of fostering panel procedures.
- An allegation may require consideration from inter-related perspectives: child protection, criminal investigation, Fostering Panel Procedure, ([see panel procedure](#)) and the complaints procedure, ([see Complaints Procedure](#)) and as such may require the involvement which includes but is not limited to; the local safeguarding social work team, the Children's Independent Safeguarding Reviewing Officer (CISRO), Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Police.
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council's 'stronger together' model of practice framework provides a set of values and activities which we hold central to all our work with children, their families, and carers. We are committed to keeping children and young people central to our practice and we aim to work collaboratively with children, families, and carers to promote positive outcomes for all. It is our values which inform this policy and contributes to our commitment to working in a



supportive and systemic way which values the views, wishes and feelings of all individuals including our valued foster carers.

## 5. Lead Local Authority

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In principle the Local Authority Designated Officer's (LADO's) manage allegations and concerns about adults working with children on the basis of where an individual works rather than where they live. As foster carers essentially live where they work, even though they may work for another local authority (LA) or Independent Fostering Agency (IFA), allegations about foster carers come under the jurisdiction of the LADO for the local authority in which they live. For example, if East Riding foster carers live in the Hull City Council area, then allegations or concerns about them come under the jurisdiction of the Hull City Council LADO. However, discussions may take place between the LADO for the local authority in which the foster carers live and the LADO for the local authority they foster for, to make the most effective arrangements for overseeing the investigation.

For Independent Foster Agency carers, the LADO managing the concern should be employed by the local authority where the foster carer(s) live, even though their host organisation may be based in another local authority, for example, if an East Riding based Independent Fostering Agency organisation has agency carers in North Yorkshire, then the North Yorkshire LADO will lead on the investigation.

Child protection matters should be investigated in line with local child protection procedures with appropriate communication between authorities, for example an East Riding "cared for" child residing in Lincolnshire who makes an allegation about their carer should have the concern managed by Lincolnshire local authority. The same applies for another local authority "cared for" child residing in the East Riding.

The application of these procedures should be in accordance with the aim, scope and principles as outlined above.

## 6. Key Practice Points

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- The welfare of the child remains of paramount importance throughout any enquiries, this includes their safety and care arrangement stability.
- Any concern about the quality of care in fostering households should be investigated in a thorough, fair, timely and consistent manner.
- All parties should be treated with dignity and respect.
- During their interview with the investigating social worker, the foster carer(s) should be given an opportunity to answer any concerns.
- It is often traumatic for foster carers to be involved in these processes. It is essential that they are advised how to access the support of an independent advice advocate and mediation service.
- Where a Multi-Agency LADO Allegation Meeting is instigated, the foster carers need to be kept informed, but the nature and detail of the information that can be shared with them at different points in the process must be agreed at the Multi-Agency LADO Allegation Meetings.



- The investigation should be proportionate to the seriousness of the concern, complaint, or allegation. The route of progression of investigation can be escalated or de-escalated as information, assessment, analysis, and conclusions allow.
- The outcome of the investigation should rely on analysis of the information provided. This may include historical information about the alleged person in question or child where this is relevant to the investigation.
- It is important to reach a conclusion on all concerns / allegations, including where there is a failure to cooperate or resignation of the carer/s.
- Record keeping should provide a clear, comprehensive, and accurate account of why decisions or judgements are reached and be recorded on the child's and carer's record within AzeusCare.
- Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality.

## 7. Key Definitions:

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Harm” is the “ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of the child” (Section 31, [Children Act 1989](#); Article 2, [Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#); Scottish Government, 2021).

- (LEVEL 1) - Standard of care concern.
- (LEVEL 2) - Concerns of a safeguarding nature that fall below the threshold for Section 47 child protection investigation.
- (LEVEL 3) - Allegation requiring investigation under Section 47 child protection procedures.

**The definitions outlined have corresponding ‘levels’ to aid communication and understanding between the involved workers.**

### 7.1. (LEVEL 1) - Standard of care concern.

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Issues related to day-to-day management, for example:

- Having a child's hair cut without discussion with parents where delegated authority has not been agreed for the foster carer;
- Quality or nature of diet, clothing or routine care and low-level discipline issues;
- An accumulation of extremely low-level issues that have not met the threshold for complaints and allegations.



## 7.2. (LEVEL 2) - Concerns of a safeguarding nature that fall below the threshold for Section 47 child protection investigation.

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Issues that may fall into this category are:

- Concerns that have been managed at Level 1 but have persisted, despite intervention and support from the Fostering Service;
- Allegations made by a child against the foster carer that do not meet the Section 47 threshold but, nonetheless, are deemed to need investigating further;
- Allegations or concerns that are deemed to require a joint response from the Fostering Service and the child's social work team.

Examples of a Level 2 concern may be:

- Foster carers parenting style and quality of care, for example, inappropriate discipline;
- Quality of working with other professionals, for example, failure to adhere to the child's care plan;
- Breach of confidentiality;
- Persistent concerns that a child is failing to flourish in a foster arrangement.

The boundary between the level of concerns may be blurred and change as the assessment is undertaken.

## 7.3. (LEVEL 3) - Allegation requiring investigation under Section 47 child protection procedures.

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Allegations relating to when a child may be suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm due to the action or inaction of the foster carer. They may have:

- 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 or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children, for example, viewed images of child abuse, consumed excessive alcohol whilst with a child, or engaged in domestic violence;
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

## 7.4. Disagreement about the level of a concern/allegation

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If the fostering team manager and child's social work team manager are unable to agree on the level of a concern/allegation, this should be escalated to the relevant service managers.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

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**The Registered Manager** for the Fostering Service, in East Riding is the Fostering Area Manager. They have responsibility for ensuring standards and management systems are in place, and adhered to, to protect each child from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and deprivation in its fostering households, as well as monitoring and promoting the quality of care available.





**The Fostering Team Manager (FTM)** and their fostering social workers have a key role in ensuring issues against carers are fully investigated. They should provide support to facilitate and develop the fostering role to protect both carers and children by sound practices. The fostering team manager is responsible for communicating with the foster carers at key points for example, following the multi-agency LADO allegation management meetings. The fostering team manager is responsible for ensuring identified work with the carers has been completed.

**The Fostering Social Worker (FSW)** has a key role in supporting the investigation as directed by the fostering team manager and the chair of the Strategy Meetings. Usually this will involve providing information about the foster carers, including a chronology for the initial Strategy Meeting, or Initial multi-agency LADO allegation meeting and any review allegation meetings.

The fostering social worker also has an on-going role to provide supervision to the foster carer during the investigation process. Regular contact should be maintained. The fostering social worker should have clear guidance from the multi-agency LADO allegation management meetings about what can be shared with the foster carers. Fostering social workers must ensure that foster carers have information about how to access support from the Fostering Network. (See chapter 9, Support for Foster Carers).

**Investigating Social Worker** has the role of investigating the allegations made against the foster carer(s). It should be clear from the initial multi-agency LADO allegation management meeting, who has the role of investigating social worker. This worker should not be the allocated social worker for the child or the foster carer. The investigating social worker will gather all relevant information. In agreement with the police, when involved, this role should include contact with the child and foster carer(s) who are the subject of the allegation(s). The investigating social worker will be responsible for presenting information collated and provide an analysis to the multi-agency LADO allegation management meeting. The investigating social worker will be identified from the Local Authority where the foster carers live.

**Child's Social Work Team Manager.** There will be the child social worker's team manager and the investigating social worker's team manager. It will be the investigating social worker's manager who has the management responsibility for the investigation.

**Child's Social Worker** will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are made to ensure the safety of the child, and support arrangements are in place. There may be a role for this worker in facilitating communication with the child.

**The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** has a key role in managing allegations about foster carers. They are involved in the co-ordination and oversight of individual cases, providing advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations. They liaise with the police and agencies and monitor the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with in a thorough, timely and fair manner.

**Fostering Independent Reviewing Officers (FIRO)**, (currently undertaken by a Children's Independent Safeguarding Reviewing Officer (CISRO)), review the status and suitability of foster carers annually, taking into account information from a variety of sources for example the child; carers; child's social worker and fostering social worker. A fostering independent reviewing officer will hold a review if there are concerns relating to the carer's suitability to foster.

**Fostering Panel members** have a responsibility to review the approval of any foster carers and their suitability to continue fostering following any complaint or allegation if the case is brought to panel. The panel advisor will provide professional support and guidance to the panel on the process as required.



## 9. Initial Response

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When the fostering team or the child's social work team receive any information of concern, this should be shared at the earliest opportunity with social workers and team managers across the relevant fostering and child social work teams. This information must also be shared with the LADO within 24 hours of its receipt.

The child's social work team manager and the fostering team manager should discuss and agree the nature and level of the concern or allegation, and whether or not safeguarding procedures or any protective action is required. This will include whether to refer to the LADO, whether they will manage the allegation as a standard of care concern or whether the information provided does not require any further action. This discussion and decision should be recorded on AzeusCare, and an alert sent to both the child's social work service manager and the fostering service manager.

If the fostering team manager and the respective team manager agree that threshold has been met. The child's social worker will complete the strategy discussion and send it to the identified team manager. If there are health and the police already involved, they will be identified in this document – The relevant children's social work team manager will then complete the strategy discussion.

When the team manager (can be either fostering team manager or child's social work team manager holds the initial discussion with the LADO (within 24 hours of the allegation), reference should be made as to how the situation may or may not meet the criteria as in Section 3.3, Allegation requiring investigation under Section 47 child protection procedures (Level 3).

During the discussion the following information should be available:

- Information about the legal status of the child, the responsible Local Authority for the child, length of time in the care arrangement, contact details for key people;
- Information about other children in the care arrangement, including carers own children;
- Details of the allegation or complaint;
- Any actions already taken;
- Whether the carers are aware of the allegation;
- Discussion about all the needs of the children in the foster home;
- Information about the carers' record in fostering and if now suspended, the circumstances;
- The views of the foster carer if known;
- The views of the fostering social worker, child's social worker and anyone relevant;
- For Level 2 concerns the LADO will advise whether a multi-agency LADO allegation management meeting is required. Level 3 concerns will automatically progress to a Children's Social Care Strategy Meeting. The LADO will be invited to attend the children's social care strategy.

The fostering team manager will inform the fostering service area manager of any serious allegations or complaints without delay. The fostering service manager will need to consider whether or not an Ofsted notification is required.

The registered manager (RM) will decide if the foster carer should be on hold from taking further children into their care while a police investigation, enquiry by children's social care, or any potential review of their approval to foster is taking place. This may be further discussed at the strategy meeting. Where allegations require investigation under Section 47 child protection procedures, no further children will enter the care of the foster carer until the matter is resolved.

If the decision is made to put a foster carer on hold from taking further children into their care a retainer fee may be payable.



Depending on the nature of the concern/allegation the fostering service manager, fostering team manager and the child's social work team manager will need to consider the safety and best interests of the child/ren in the care arrangement. Where a decision is made to move or not move the child/ren to an alternative provision, the rationale for this decision, including an assessment of the risk should be clearly evidenced on AzeusCare. Current care arrangements may remain if discussed and agreed with the foster service manager, the fostering team manager, and the area manager for the child's social work team.

Resignations will not preclude the investigation being concluded.

## 9.1. Responding to Standard of Care Concerns (Level 1)

If the issue about day-to-day care is still at the lower end of the spectrum, then, by agreement with their respective team managers, the child's social worker and/or the fostering social worker should, as soon as possible, make a joint visit, to the foster carer to discuss the concern.

The fostering team manager will decide whether or not the matter can be concluded (usually in consultation with the child's social work team manager) and recorded as a team manager decision on AzeusCare (both adult and child record). The outcome can be reviewed at the next routine Foster Carer Review (FCR), or a decision made that one will be held sooner. Any actions or training identified through any of these processes should be followed up by the fostering social worker and clarified in supervision by the fostering team manager.

If the social workers and the team manager(s) are not satisfied with the outcome of their visit, a recommendation can be made to raise the matter to a concern of a safeguarding nature which falls below the threshold for Section 47 child protection investigation (level 2). If there are a number or pattern of concerns, consideration should be given to the level of response. Persistent or repeated low-level concerns about day-to-day care may constitute a real issue with regard to the quality of care, suitability or professionalism shown by the carer.

It may be felt that it is appropriate to hold a Foster Carer Review to consider the concerns in the context of the foster carer's overall competence. If a Foster Carer Review is required, it should be held as soon as possible in consultation with the fostering team manager and chaired by a fostering independent reviewing officer (CISRO). The child's social worker will submit a written report. The purpose of the review is to consider whether the foster carer continues to meet the [National Minimum Standards](#).

The fostering team manager should write to the carer detailing the outcome of the concern, if this has been held, within 10 working days. Complaint's guidance should also be included. A copy of the letter should be uploaded to the carers' file on AzeusCare, and the child's social worker and team manager alerted.

The concern should be recorded on the form 'Foster Carer Record of Concerns or Allegations' on the carer's file in AzeusCare.

## 9.2. Responding to Concerns of a Safeguarding Nature that fall below the Threshold for Section 47 Child Protection Investigation (Level 2)

Level 2 concerns - consideration should be made as to whether a Strategy Meeting is required. If a Strategy Meeting is required, see chapter 8.3 for further information.



When it is agreed that a Strategy Meeting is not required, but LADO indicates that a Multi-Agency LADO Allegation Management meeting is required:

- The plan of action should be discussed and agreed with the LADO. This should include agreement on who will be undertaking any further investigation. This may be a joint investigation between the police, Fostering Service, and the child's social work team, or it may be agreed that one service leads on this. Alternatively, depending on the seriousness of the concern or the cumulative nature of any lower-level concerns, social workers independent of the child or the foster carer may be required to undertake the investigation and provide some independence;
- A multi-agency LADO allegation management meeting should be arranged to share information and to discuss the outcome of the investigation. This meeting should agree any actions arising from the concern. There should be clear minutes which should be saved to the foster carer's records on AzeusCare. Minutes should not be saved on the child's record. Depending on the significance of the concerns, the professionals at the meeting may decide to arrange a further professionals meeting to review progress;
- Whilst being rigorous, the process of this investigation needs to be proportionate to the circumstances of the concern/allegation, as concerns will vary in terms of seriousness and their impact on any child concerned. There is a balance required in terms of safeguarding children, being fair to carers and their families, as well as looking at the impact on the arrangement stability;
- Following a Level 2 concern a Foster Care Review is required. This should be held as soon as possible in consultation with the fostering team manager and Children's Independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO) manager and will be chaired by the fostering independent reviewing officer, (CISRO). The child's social worker will submit a written report. The purpose of the review is to consider whether the foster carer meets the [National Minimum Standards](#) and to make recommendations. All reviews following Level 2 concerns should be referred to the Fostering Panel for consideration and recommendation on continued approval, which will then be submitted to the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) for a decision on their continued approval.
- Any concern or allegation should be recorded on the 'Foster Carer's Record of Concerns or Allegations'.

### 9.3. Responding to Allegations Requiring Investigation Under Section 47 Child Protection Procedures (Level 3)

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When it has been agreed by the social work team manager, fostering team manager, police, and other relevant agencies to pursue enquiries under Section 47, a Strategy Meeting will be held and chaired by the relevant children's social care team manager. A Strategy Meeting will always be held in the event of a Level 3 allegation, and in some circumstances for a concern of a safeguarding nature that falls below the threshold for Section 47 child protection investigation (Level 2).

The Strategy Meeting should be held at the earliest opportunity, (within 5 working days). However, strategy meetings are convened within 24 hours, where immediate safeguarding concerns are identified to agree a plan to investigate the matter. If immediate safeguarding action is required a strategy discussion will take place with relevant agencies possibly prior to a Strategy Meeting. Delay in holding Strategy Meetings is at the discretion of children's social work team manager, in consultation with the LADO and police, the reason for this delay must be recorded in the child's record within AzeusCare.

Actions and decisions from the initial discussion should be recorded within 24 hours on AzeusCare for both the carer and the child by the responsible children's social work team / duty team.



Those with parental responsibility, unless there is a clear justification for not doing so, which should be recorded, should be informed about the concern, or allegation and the outcome. This is the responsibility of the child's social worker. Consideration should be given whether to inform those with parental responsibility of other children in the care arrangement.

The investigating social worker should not be the allocated social worker for the child or the foster carer. There may be circumstances where it would be appropriate to utilise a social worker known to the child or foster carer, but the rationale for this decision will be clearly recorded.

With due regard to any police advice, the foster carers should be informed of the substance of the concern/allegation as soon as possible. This is the role of the fostering team manager following agreement at the strategy meeting. The information provided should include:

- The substance of the concern/allegation;
- Who will be involved in the investigation;
- The process and timescales of the investigation;
- Who will be informed or interviewed;
- The right to independent support throughout and how this can be obtained;
- Any financial arrangements if the child has had to leave the home;
- Decisions and reasons regarding any child in the care arrangement;
- Contact details.

**Strategy Meeting:** The following people should be invited to the Strategy Meeting:

- Any nominated social worker to investigate the concern/allegation (consider independence), and team manager;
- The child's social worker and team manager;
- The fostering social worker and fostering team manager; (who will liaise as necessary with the fostering service manager);
- Police representative as appropriate;
- The Designated Officer in the local authority (LADO).
- Any practitioner with knowledge of the child such as:

Education;

Health;

Independent Reviewing Officer (CISRO);

Youth Services;

Guardian;

Consider inviting Legal;

- There should be minutes of the meeting taken by an administrative person.

The initial Strategy Meeting as well as any further meeting will need to consider whether any action is required with respect to:

- Child protection / social care involvement;
- Criminal investigation;
- Fostering procedures;
- Complaints procedures.

If further Strategy Meetings are required to progress the matter, the LADO should be informed. The status of each of these processes will need to be reviewed and continued or discontinued as information becomes available.

The Strategy Meeting will need to consider the following information:



- Details of the allegation;
- Whether or not there is a social care - child in need or child protection assessment / investigation;
- Whether or not there is a police investigation;
- The views of the child if known in relation to the allegation or the care arrangement;
- Whether or not the child's parents or those with parental responsibility are aware of the situation, and their views and how this should be facilitated with consideration to the investigation and the rights of both the carers and the family;
- Significant information about the child(ren) including legal status, individual needs, and length of time in the care arrangement where relevant;
- Information and views from the child's social worker, the fostering social worker and their managers;
- Information and views from professionals involved, for example, school, health, Independent Reviewing Officer (CISRO), child's guardian etc;
- The significance of any other previous concerns, complaints or allegations made against the carers or their family / members of the household. Any other relevant information about the adult / carers. A Chronology should be available, provided by the fostering social worker;
- Other children living in the care arrangement and any information and actions in relation to them;
- Any information relating to any other children the carer may have contact with, in any other role/employment;
- Whether or not the carers are aware of the situation and if not, how this should be managed, and within the timescale set at the Strategy Meeting;
- Information and views from the carers, when known, about the complaint / allegation;
- Consider where the carers will get support from and if they have been encouraged to seek support;
- How and when to respond to the complainant and who should undertake this;
- Whether or not there are any further safeguarding measures that need to be put in place.
- Allocation of tasks and timescales;
- Does this matter continue to meet the threshold for consideration by a Strategy Meeting? If so, set further strategy date (preferably within 28 days but this may be longer for example if bail conditions are set but there may be other tasks which need a more imminent review);

## 10. Key aspects of the Multi-Agency LADO Allegation Management Process

Allegations which meet threshold for LADO are managed in line with the Managing Allegations against persons who work with children policy and procedure.

In all cases once an investigation and assessment has been completed and the information gathered, the investigating social worker will provide a report to share with LADO to conclude the investigation. As far as possible the same individuals should attend all Multi agency LADO allegation management meetings, to ensure that all information has been shared and that there is a consistent approach.

The point at which the foster carers are interviewed by social workers will be dependent on any joint / police investigation. It may need to wait until the police make a decision in relation to the investigation, or if there is a criminal prosecution this may not be possible until the matter is concluded. The multi-agency LADO allegation management meeting should be clear about this issue, and all minutes must reflect the position.

Where foster carers have refused to cooperate, have withdrawn from the process or tendered their resignation, it is important that this process is completed, and conclusions reached on the information available. Resignations will not prevent an allegation from being followed up and concluded.



All cases will need to reach a clear outcome and judgement, about whether or not the matter is:

- Substantiated - there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;
- False - there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- Malicious - there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- Unfounded - there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances;
- Unsubstantiated - this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation; the term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

Once there is sufficient information, the Chair should consider all the potential outcomes and provide a clear rationale for their decision, this should be recorded clearly in the minutes.

Where a concern is substantiated, the Chair should clearly note which of the criteria set out above is met and why, this should be recorded clearly in the minutes.

The LADO will seek to gain consensus from the attendees regarding their analyses of the concerns in relation to the threshold criteria, and their view of the outcome. The final outcome of the meeting will be decided by all professionals within the LADO process, objections should be recorded in the minutes.

At the conclusion of the investigation the fostering team manager should write to the carers, within two weeks, outlining the judgement and any actions reached with the complaint's guidance included. A copy should be placed on the child's and carer's record.

It should be clear on the foster carer's record if they were:

- Convicted of any offence;
- De-registered as a foster carer;
- Referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

At a suitable point in the process consider whether or not a notification to Ofsted or Disclosure and Barring Service referral is appropriate. A recommendation in respect of this should be made and presented to the fostering service manager, who will assess and act upon the recommendation.

The LADO should be kept informed on the conclusion of the foster carer review process and any subsequent referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## 11. Support for Foster Carers

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The Fostering Network provides a variety of support to foster carers including an informative website and a national helpline, ([The Fostering Network helplines](#)). Carers also have access to the services of an independent advice and mediation worker through the Fostering Network when enquiries/investigations are ongoing relating to concerns, complaints, or allegations.

The fostering social worker will continue to provide supervision and support to foster carers throughout this process and will keep foster carers as informed as they are able to in line with guidance from the fostering team manager and the chair of the Strategy Meetings.



This process can be distressing for carers, and staff should ensure that they are sensitive and supportive, whilst maintaining professional boundaries.

Fostering agency / Council responsibilities to foster carers / approved connected person (family and friends) carers during an inter-agency child protection investigation.

The relationship between fostering services and foster carers should be fair and honest. The carer, because strong feelings of fear, anger and guilt can be triggered in both carers and staff.

It is the responsibility of fostering services to ensure that staff continue to treat carers fairly and honestly in these difficult situations. Once the foster/connected person (family and friends) carers have been informed that a concern has been raised about the wellbeing of a child in their care the fostering service should ensure that foster carers/approved connected person (family and friends) carers:

- Are given a copy of the local authority's Child Protection procedure;
- Have access to legal advice and representation;
- Understand the process of the investigation and why it is taking place;
- As far as possible, know when, where and by whom interviews will be conducted;
- Are informed about any independent support that will be provided;
- Are informed about the financial arrangements the fostering service or local authority will make in relation to allowances/fees if Cared For children are re-settled or the carer is temporarily suspended from taking further care arrangements.

Agencies will also ensure that foster/connected person (family and friends) carers:

- know the reasons for the re-settlement of children, if applicable;
- know what contact, if any, each member of the foster/connected person (family and friends) care family is permitted to have with each child affected by the concern/allegation;
- Understand the current status of their approval as foster carer or approved connected person (family and friends) carer;
- Are assisted in communicating with investigating agencies;
- Are informed on a regular basis of the progress of the investigation, both verbally and in writing;
- understand that if they resign while the investigation is underway, this will not affect the progress or outcome of the investigation.

If this information has not been fully shared when the carers are first informed about the concern, any remaining information should be provided as quickly as possible and preferably within three working days of the relevant decisions having been made.

While an allegation/concern is being investigated, the fostering social worker should normally have continued responsibility for communications between the fostering service and the foster carer. However, if the foster carer requests that another member of the fostering service's staff should fulfil this role, the foster carer's views should be taken into account. The contact with the fostering social worker should continue, even when independent support is also provided.

Where the concern relates to a Cared For child residing with an approved connected person (family and friends) carers, support should be provided by a connected person (family and friends) care support team member who is well known to the connected person (family and friends) carer. In some situations, there may be only one worker supporting the carer and working with the child and social work managers need to consider if that one worker can fulfil a supportive role to both the child and the connected person (family and friends) carers. Subsequently, additional workers from a fostering team could be asked to provide specific support to the connected person (family and friends) carer during an investigation.





Once foster carers/connected person (family and friends) carers have been informed that a concern has been raised, if appropriate, options for safeguarding children without moving them from the care arrangement should be explored with the carers. For example, it may be possible for certain member(s) of the foster or connected person (family and friends) care family to live elsewhere while matters are investigated. In such circumstances all possible assistance should be provided to enable this to happen. In other situations, a member of the wider family may be able to provide a safe place for the child.

Decisions about whether carers should have their approval to care temporarily suspended for any children while the concern is investigated will be made in accordance with fostering service and local authority procedures. These decisions will be taken by senior staff within the fostering service in consultation with senior child protection staff within the local authority in which the carers live. For connected person (family and friends) carers, decisions about them continuing to provide a home to the child should be taken by the senior worker for connected person (family and friends) carers and senior child protection manager. Discussion with the child's worker and/or lead professional will be critical to reach the best decision.

Foster/connected person (family and friends) carers and any member of the foster/connected person (family and friend) care family named in the concern should be informed personally and in writing when the child protection investigation has been concluded. Reasons for this decision and what further steps will follow should also be explained. It is suggested that this information should be conveyed within three working days of the relevant decision having been taken.

If applicable, the foster/connected person (family and friends) carers should also be informed in writing of the arrangements to continue payments and the provision of independent support. They should also be offered an opportunity to meet with the fostering manager / senior manager responsible for connected person (family and friends) care, in order to clarify the implications of these decisions for the foster/connected person (family and friends) carer family.

Foster carers about whom a concern has been raised should have access to information and advice from an independent source. This should include legal advice.

All East Riding foster carers are provided with membership of the Fostering Network which can provide access to independent legal advice and support as part of their membership package, ([The Fostering Network helplines](#)).

### 11.1. Financial support for foster / connected person (family and friends) carers during an investigation

East Riding of Yorkshire Council fully acknowledges the need to support foster carers during an investigation and that no assumptions are made about the outcome of any allegation made against foster carers where the foster children are removed from their care.

If an allegation is made against East Riding Local Authority approved foster carers, and the foster children are removed from their care and resettled elsewhere, this will not result in an immediate financial hardship for the foster carers.

Foster carers will continue to be paid the care arrangement fee and the fostering allowances for the fostered children who were residing in the home for the first 28 days after the children have been removed from their care.

For the next 28-day period the carers will be paid a sum equivalent to half the care arrangement fee and fostering allowance payments they would have received if the children had remained in their care.



If an outcome of the allegation is known before the 28 days, then payments may stop before this date.

Exceptions to receiving payments:

- Payments to respite carers for children on pre-arranged periods of respite care - these carers will be paid up to the end of the respite period that had been agreed;
- Supported lodgings carers – no further payments will be made after the young person has left;
- Further payments will not be made to foster carers who have already given notice on the care arrangement for the child/young person concerned, or where there was already a planned move for the child/young person to move within a month;
- The payments made will not include any additional payments that may have been made in relation to the children, for example, birthday or holiday allowances payments. This is because these additional payments are only agreed on the basis that the child is within the household.

When the care arrangement ends, the child's social worker will complete the Change of Circumstance form on AzeusCare to record the end of the care arrangement.

This will end the payments to the foster carer, and to arrange the continued payments due under this policy the fostering social worker will complete a payment request, giving details of payments to be made, and send to Business Support/Fostering Payments.

The Fostering Team Manager and Area Team Manager for Fostering and Adoption Services must be informed of any allegations against foster carers by the fostering social worker so this can be recorded.

The fostering social worker will also inform the Fostering Team Manager and Area Team Manager for Fostering and Adoption service when the foster carers' payments are due to be reduced to half the amount and will book a meeting in to discuss any on-going payments before the payments end. The fostering social worker should prepare to update on the progress of any investigation at this meeting.

## 12. Responsibilities of the fostering service and local authority social workers to children during an inter-agency investigation

Children and young people should be given as much information as possible about the processes that are being followed and the likely outcomes of different enquiries.

Children and young people should, as far as possible, be given an opportunity to express their views if moving care provisions is being considered. Their views should be taken into account, giving due consideration to the child or young person's age, maturity and understanding. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to offer children and young people the support of an independent advocate or children's rights worker to help them effectively present their views. This could be a worker from the Pathway Team, an Independent Reviewing Officer who knows the child, or a children's participation and rights worker. These views should be noted and recorded on the Child's Plan.

Where the child is Cared For and residing with approved connected person (family and friends) carers, consideration should be given to the suitability of any other members of the child's wider family to care for the child on a temporary basis. This would include relevant checks of their suitability for an emergency care arrangement.

Responsibility for discussing these matters with children will usually rest with the social worker for the child/ lead professional and/ or worker for the carers, but it may be helpful to involve someone whom the child knows well and whom the child trusts for example, the lead professional.



If it is decided that children are to be moved from a care arrangement because of a concern, the reasons for this should be explained carefully to the children, using appropriate methods for communicating with younger children or children with special educational needs.

Unless they are considered to be at immediate risk, children should be given time to say goodbye to the family of the carers and their friends in the local area. They should also be made aware of what opportunities there will be for maintaining contact with people who have been important to them. Unless there appears to be immediate risks to the child, no major changes, for example to schooling, should be made until the matter has been considered and decided at their next Child Looked After review.

Children will need support to adjust to any move and opportunities to talk about how this has affected them. They will also need to be kept up to date about the implications for their future care, especially if there is a possibility that they will return to the care of the foster carers. This would usually be the responsibility of the child's social worker and/ or lead professional.

Irrespective of whether the child raised the concern, children affected by any investigation into a concern should be informed of the outcome of an investigation and given an opportunity to express their views about how this has affected them.

### **13. Responsibilities to birth parents of Cared for children affected by an inter-agency investigation**

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At each stage of the decision-making process, consideration should be given to arrangements for informing birth parents that a concern has been raised about the carers looking after their child. In deciding what information and when it should be given to parents, social work staff shall take into account their statutory responsibility to involve parents in decisions which affect their children, alongside the child's wishes about what their parents should be told with full consideration given to the child's safety. The worker may also consult with the Local Authority legal advisor about how to proceed.

Care is also needed to ensure that parents who do not have parental responsibilities, are not inappropriately included in the full range of notifications.

Records of initial decision-making discussions and planning meetings should indicate what decisions were made in relation to informing birth parents, what information is to be shared, who is responsible for telling the parents and how, (for example, verbally or in writing). The child's social worker and/ or lead professional will usually carry out this task. Parents should also be informed when an investigation has concluded. In situations where a decision has been taken to delay or limit the information given to parents, reasons for this should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting where the decision is taken.

### **14. Foster Carer Review (FCR)**

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For Level 1 concerns a foster carer review is convened at the discretion of the fostering team manager and the children's independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO) manager.

For concerns / allegations at Level 2 or Level 3 the fostering social worker will ensure that a review of the foster carers, chaired by a children's independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO), is held as soon as possible in consultation with the fostering team manager and children's independent and safeguarding team manager (CISRO) manager following the outcome of the process.



The Foster Carer Review should review and confirm the status of the foster carers and make recommendations as to continued suitability to act as a foster carer.

A criminal prosecution should not necessarily delay this process; however, the police will need to be informed and agree to what information is shared. In all likelihood, there will be sufficient information and assessment for the foster carer reviews to make its recommendations.

The report to the foster carer review will address:

- The nature and outcome of the allegation or complaint;
- Whether or not a report has been forwarded to the crown prosecution service;
- What, if any concerns remain;
- The views and experience of the carer;
- A chronology;
- Views of the fostering social worker;
- Any implications for the safer caring agreement;
- Training issues;
- Any other information relevant to the carer or the child in the care arrangement.

The recommendations from the Foster Carer Review will be confirmed by the children's independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO) in writing to the carer along with a copy of the review report. The possible outcomes and recommendations are:

- Re-assessment of the carer in relation to the identified concerns;
- Immediate re-instatement of the carer if approval and use had been on hold;
- Reconsideration of the terms and range of approval (variation);
- Future identified training or development needs;
- The carer choosing to resign;
- The concerns are sufficiently serious to recommend termination of approval regardless of whether there is a criminal prosecution.

It is important to avoid delay in holding a review when there are concerns as to the continued suitability, as it further delays the Panel process, may cause further stress and anxiety to the carers, and have financial implications if retainer fees are payable.

If the carers resign and the review is booked before the 28-day notice period ends, the review shall still go ahead, whether the carers attend or not.

## 15. The Fostering Panel

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Following level 1 concerns it is at the discretion of the fostering team manager and children's independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO) manager if there is a review held, if following the review, the children's independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO) recommends referral to Foster Panel this is at the discretion of the fostering team manager.

Progression to Panel at Level 1 would depend on the seriousness and context of the concern or complaint and whether there is a pattern of concerns emerging with the foster carers.

Following a Level 2 or 3 concern/allegation and the subsequent foster carer review, foster carers must be reviewed and referred to the Fostering Panel.



Foster carers will be invited to panel. The fostering social worker and fostering team manager will attend the panel. It is good practice for the children's independent and safeguarding reviewing officer (CISRO) to attend, particularly if the recommendation is termination of approval.

Where carers have offered their resignation and this takes effect (this means that the notice period of 28 days is complete – and the carers are no longer carers) prior to a foster carer review, the foster carer review and Fostering Panel will still go ahead, and the case will be presented to panel. In the circumstances of a carer's resignation in the course of an investigation, the Foster Panel will be asked to note the resignation and to consider if they would have given serious consideration to recommending termination.

The carers will be invited to attend panel at which their case is considered, and asked to respond to the concerns, allegations, or complaints about their practice. Panel may also express a view as to whether the foster carers should be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service and Ofsted.

The panel's views and those of the service are then held on the carer's file and can be provided in references to other agencies if necessary. Based on this information, the Agency Decision Maker (Fostering), in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will decide whether to refer the former foster carer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for inclusion of the carer's name on the Children's Barred List. OFSTED should be informed of any decision to refer a carer for inclusion on the Children's Barred List.

Prior to reaching any conclusions the panel will consider the following:

- Report of the investigation by the Fostering Social Worker;
- Foster carer review report and recommendations;
- Views of the child's social worker;
- Chronology;
- Views of the child;
- Any written representations by the carers;
- Decisions from the multi-agency LADO allegations meetings;
- A copy of the concluding letter from the fostering team manager.

The panel should make recommendations in line with the requirements of the [Fostering Services Regulations 2011](#). The reasons for the recommendation will be made clear. The possible recommendations are:

- The carer(s) remains suitable to foster and the terms of the approval are confirmed (which may be changed);
- The carer is not regarded as suitable to continue fostering.

The panel adviser / administrator will, without delay, forward the minutes of the panel's recommendations to the agency decision maker, who, informed by the panel's conclusions, will determine, and progress it in accordance with the requirements of the [Fostering Services Regulations 2011](#), Regulation 27 (6) (7) (8). For example, 7 working days of receipt of the final set of panel minutes.

The carers will be informed of the Agency Decision Makers determination/ decision, by the fostering team manager, verbally within 2 working days of the decision and in writing within 5 working days of the date of decision.

If, after taking into account the recommendations of the panel, the agency decision maker is no longer satisfied that the foster carer or their household is suitable to continue (or their terms of approval are appropriate) as foster carers, written notice will be given to the carer that it is proposed to terminate or revise the terms of the approval. This is called a 'qualifying determination'.



This notice shall also include the right to challenge this decision, the carer may within 28 days of this notice, submit any representations about the case to the agency decision maker.

Apply (via the agency decision maker) to the Secretary of State for a review by an independent review panel of the determination.

The opportunity to appeal to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) via the Secretary of State does not apply in circumstances covered in Regulation 26(6). This is essentially where the foster carer or a member of their household over 18 years old has been convicted or cautioned of a specific offence (these offences are listed in Regulation 26 (5) and in Schedule 4 of the Fostering Regulations).

If the carers do not respond within 28 days, and make no representation or request for a review, the determination can be progressed to a decision (Regulation 27 (8)). This will then be confirmed in writing to the carer.

If any representations are received following the determination these will then be passed to the foster panel for consideration. (Regulation 27 (9)). Good practice would suggest that this would be a different panel to build in independence and further scrutiny.

The new panel should consider the representations made by the foster carer in conjunction with the minutes and documentation from the previous panel. The foster carer and participating parties would need to attend panel. The panel will make recommendations whether or not the foster carer remains suitable and the terms of that approval suitable.

These further recommendations will be passed to the agency decision maker who will make a further decision in line with the Fostering Services Regulations 2011 (Regulation 27 (9)).

If the carers request that the matter be heard by the independent review panel it must be facilitated via the panel advisor / agency decision maker. The information which the advisor/ lead for the independent review panel requires must be provided within 10 days. This information usually consists of the papers presented to panel but not the minutes of panel – as they will consider the case without the influence of the considerations and recommendations of the East Riding panel.

Once the independent review panel has heard the matter and made its recommendations the agency decision maker can proceed to make a decision based on both the original panel's recommendations and those of the independent review panel (Regulation 27 (10)).

The agency decision maker should send a copy of their notification to the foster carer and to the Secretary of State (Regulation 27 (12)).

The decision made by the agency decision maker following the subsequent panel or review panel is final.

Carers can use the complaints process to challenge the agency decision maker decision. This may be if:

- The carers assert that the process and procedure followed were flawed, for example, the investigative process, the household review process, or the panel process was not followed;
- There was significant inaccuracy in the information relied on to reach the panel recommendation by the agency decision.

The agency decision maker may review the decision in the light of any findings arising from the complaints process.



In circumstances where an East Riding foster carer's approval to foster is terminated but they reside in another local authority, or if a child from another local authority is residing with the carers, that local authority should be notified with the reasons as set out in the written notification to the foster carers.

## 16. Complaints

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### Fostering Service

Any concerns relating to the fostering services implementation of this procedure should be raised with the Fostering Service Area manager.

Any complaints in relation to the Fostering Service's implementation of this procedure should be raised in line with Children and Young People Support and Safeguarding Services complaints procedure.

In responding to complaints, the council will consider whether the complaint can be satisfactorily resolved through a team level solution or should be recorded as a stage 1 complaint.

If the person raising the complaint remains dissatisfied with their response at Stage 1, they can request to escalate the complaint to a Stage 2 complaint.

In the event that the complaint is not resolved / the person raising the complaint is unhappy with the Stage 2 response, they can escalate it to a Stage 3 complaint.

Following this process if the complainant remains unhappy, they can take their complaint to the Ombudsman. Further details about Children's Services, complaints can be found here; ([see Complaints Procedure](#))

### Local Authority Designated Officer

If after the conclusion of the investigation process, there exists substantial new / additional information that was not available at the final multi-agency LADO allegations meeting, the foster carer can write to the East Riding LADO Manager with this information. The East Riding LADO Manager will consider whether the information provided would have made a material difference to the outcome categorisation made at the final meeting and whether any further investigation is appropriate. The LADO manager will notify in writing to the reportee any determination made and/or action taken.

Any complaint about any action following on from any aspect of the investigation of an allegation taken by another organisation, should be directed to that relevant organisation, for example in the case of a police investigation or action, this should be to the police force undertaking the investigation, an employment/voluntary activity / regulatory body related investigation or action, this should be the organisation responsible. The East Riding LADO is not responsible for the conduct of an investigation, or decisions made by specific organisations in furtherance of that organisations legislative or procedural requirements.



## 17. Referral to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and / or Notification to Ofsted

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The fostering service has a statutory duty to refer any carer to the Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration of inclusion on a list of people about whom there is concern that they are unsuitable to work with children. This is on the basis that the foster carer may have had their approval terminated due to misconduct that has harmed a child, or put a child at risk of harm, or if they have resigned in circumstances that may have reached the same conclusion.

A referral to Disclosure and Barring Service should be considered at the culmination of the process, and when the outcome of the concerns /allegations have been substantiated or there are significant ongoing concerns. The Fostering Service will take the lead in making the referral to Disclosure and Barring Service.

Ofsted will also be notified of any serious incident, a child protection enquiry or significant event in line with the Fostering Regulations 2011 Schedule 7 Events & Notifications. The fostering team manager will complete a notification to Ofsted and send to the fostering service manager who will forward to the Service Director for Children and Young People, Support and Safeguarding Services and Ofsted.

## 18. Additional Circumstances / considerations

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### Historical information on current and former carers

Historical information relating to concerns, complaints or allegations against current and former carers should be responded to in the same way as contemporary information.

Standard of Care Concern (Level 1): If the information is of a minor nature and having consulted the chronology there is no suggestion of a pattern of concerns, this matter should be recorded on the former carers record as received but not investigated. Feedback to the referrer if it is the former Cared For child will be an important part of the process. A letter should be sent to the former carer if their address can be confirmed to say information had been received and kept on record and if any further information is required to contact the department.

Concern/Allegation (Level 2 or 3): The response should follow the allegation process in the same way as with a current matter. If there are any current safeguarding issues a Strategy Meeting should be held within the usual timescales, consistent with Child Protection Procedures.

If there is no social care current involvement with the former carers, in agreement with the police, the former carers should be contacted to explain a complaint has been received which needs to be addressed with them and seek their views on. If this is not possible then the information should be stored on the carers record with conclusions reached as far as is possible.

Feedback should be given to all referrers.





## 19. Organised or complex abuse involving foster carers

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If it becomes evident that there is an organised or complex abuse situation, then guidance should be sought from the LADO. LADO will then seek advice from senior management.

Even greater consideration needs to be given to planning and strategy, legal advice, and the use of independent and a dedicated team of staff. Notification will be required to the press office.

## 20. Agencies providing support to foster carers

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Agency	Contact details	Additional info
Fosterline	Tel: 0800 040 7675. E mail: <a href="mailto:fosterline@fostering.net">fosterline@fostering.net</a>	Open weekdays from 0 9am -5pm (8pm on Wednesdays) except Bank Holidays.
The Fostering Network:	Tel 0207419582 E mail: <a href="mailto:info@fostering.net">info@fostering.net</a> Legal Advice line: 01384 885734 (24-hour service)	All foster carers are automatically made members of the Fostering Network and can access these services free of charge.
Independent Fostering Support Worker:	Tel - 07736063843	
Independent Review Mechanism	Contact Manager, IRM, Unit 4, Pavilion Business Park, Royds Hall Road, Wortley, Leeds, LS12 6 AJ.  E mail <a href="mailto:irm@baaf.org.uk">irm@baaf.org.uk</a> Tel: 0845 450 395	

## 21. Acknowledgements

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The principal documents referred to in the production of the above procedures are listed below:

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)

Fostering Services: [National Minimum Standards](#) (2011)

[The Children Act 1989 Fostering Guidance and Regulations \(2011\) Volume 4:](#)

Allegations of Abuse made against adults who work or volunteer with Children: ERYC (2022)



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21.08.2023	2	Craig Blair	Guidance added in accordance with KCSIE

