

## Managing Allegations Against Adults Who Work With Children and, Young People

### A guide for families

Any allegation of abuse is likely to cause a great deal of anxiety and upset to all concerned: the child or young person reporting the abuse, their parents, carers, and family members.

This leaflet is intended to guide you through the process and support you to understand the different ways in which an allegation may be dealt with.

### Introduction

Telling someone about any kind of abuse that you have suffered can be very scary, particularly if you have had to speak out against a member of staff, or someone in a position of trust. It is important to remember that you have done nothing wrong, and that what you have said will be taken seriously.

### What happens when you tell someone?

If you tell someone such as your teacher or youth worker, they should inform the correct professional in their organisation (e.g. Head Teacher, Nursery Manager).

There is a specialist worker called the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO for short) who will also be informed, if the professional believes the allegation suggests 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; or**
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would 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.**

### What will the LADO do?

The LADO's role is to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and offered support. The LADO will also keep a watch over how long investigations are taking and challenge any unnecessary delays.

It is very important that everyone directly involved is listened to and that all the evidence is considered carefully. In this way the LADO helps to ensure that the right outcome can be achieved.

The LADO will initially decide if the allegation(s) need to be investigated externally (by the police and/or children's services) or should be investigated by the internal procedures of the organisation the adult works for. This decision may be made in discussion with the Child Abuse Investigation Unit of the police.

### What happens if the police and/or Children's Services may need to investigate?

If there is reason to suspect your child may have suffered harm, or a criminal offence might have been committed, a meeting will be held, involving the Police, the LADO, the employer, and other agencies such as Health and Education as appropriate. You will not be asked to attend (neither will the accused adult) as this is a meeting where confidential information will be given about the accused person.

This meeting is held to consider all available information and whether the police and/or children's services should investigate further or if the allegation can be investigated by the organisation.

If the police decide to investigate an alleged criminal offence, the member of staff or volunteer may be arrested, or formally invited to assist with the investigation. The police may ask for permission for you or your child to be spoken to or interviewed in a child friendly manner by specially trained officers.

If the case does proceed to court the LADO and the other professionals involved will ensure you and your child are aware of support and advice available as this is likely to be a very difficult time.

When additional support is needed Children's Services can signpost you to local and national organisations. In some cases they may organise an assessment to identify services that can help. This is called a Child and Family Assessment. This might be short term while the matter is being investigated, or can be longer term

Parents or carers should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution,

### What happens if the police and/or Children's Services do not need to investigate?

It is then necessary to decide whether the person may have broken the rules laid down by their employer. These cases are investigated by the employer using their internal procedures and your child may have already been asked to write a short account of what happened to them and/or they will be interviewed as part of the process (with your permission).

Parents or carers should also be informed of the outcome of any disciplinary process. The deliberations of a disciplinary hearing, and the information taken into account in reaching a decision, cannot normally be disclosed, but the parents or carers of the child should be told the outcome in confidence.

It is important that all children feel their concerns have been taken seriously and their voice has been listened to and that they should feel they can raise such concerns about adults, should they need to in the future.

### How can I raise an allegation/concern about an adult working with children?

If you believe you have an allegation/concern that needs to be shared with the LADO we would advise you share this with the manager of the organisation that the adult works for.

If you are concerned that the allegation has not been referred to the LADO and you believe it should have, please contact Hertfordshire Police on 101 and/or Hertfordshire County Council (Children's Services) on 0300 123 4043. They will direct your concerns to the LADO, if appropriate.

Please note:

**An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer is different to a complaint, which might be made against the way a school or another organisation has dealt with something you were not happy about. Complaints are usually dealt with by the organisation and/or their regulatory body (e.g. OFSTED).**

## Possible Support

- If you would like to speak in confidence to someone about how you are feeling, you can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111 or visit: <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>
- The Hertfordshire Directory - Families First Portal is where you can find information about local support, you can visit: [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst)
- The Citizens' Advice gives you information on your rights, you can visit: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/)

**Section 5.1.5 “Managing Allegations Against t Adults WhoWork With Children and Young People” can be viewed at:**

<https://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com>

