

Investigation (timescale monitored by LADO)

An investigation is likely to include meetings or discussions with: the child, the foster carer, other relevant people in the child's network, the person/people who made the referral etc

Allegation: If a potential crime has been committed, this will be a joint investigation conducted by Social care and the Police

Allegation: if a serious concern has been raised but the Police do not believe they could evidence that a crime has been committed, the LADO will review the planning and timescale for the final Multi-Agency LADO Meeting (MALM). The social worker must interview the foster carers about all allegations and concerns. Best practice is that these interviews are undertaken by a senior Social Worker from the child's team and from the fostering service. An interview record must be produced and shared with the foster carers before attending the final MALM.



Conclusion of investigation:

A final Multi-Agency LADO meeting or discussion will be held to agree outcome of the investigation and confirm it is: Unfounded, False, Malicious, Unsubstantiated or Substantiated and to make arrangements for informing the foster carers of the outcome. This will usually be a joint meeting with the foster carer, the SSW and their line manager.

An outcome letter will be sent to the foster carers by recorded delivery.



Presentation to fostering panel

If the outcome of the allegation is '**unfounded**' details of the unfounded allegation will be noted at the foster carers' next scheduled annual review.

If the outcome of the allegation is '**unsubstantiated**' a household review needs to be presented to the fostering panel within **8 weeks** of the matter concluding.

If the outcome of the allegation is '**substantiated**' a household review needs to be presented to the panel within **28 working days** of the matter concluding. The Panel will review your registration and ensure that any support and learning needs have been considered appropriately by the service. If the allegation is serious and substantiated it could result in the panel recommending deregistration.



Independent reviewing mechanisms (IRM) and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

If the ADM agrees a panel decision to de register a fostering household, the carers have the right to appeal the decision through the IRM (see Handbook for full details of this process)

It is important to note that following a substantiated allegation, the fostering service may advise DBS. The LADO outcome will be shared with all parties involved in the investigation even if they were only involved initially, then cease to be part of the process: e.g. Police. The DBS have access to police records showing any involvement they may have had in an allegation process. However, when considering a DBS, they will use their discretion as to whether it is relevant to that check or not; for example, depending on what role the subject has applied for.