



Practice Guidance for the investigation and management of standards of care concerns and allegations against foster carers

This should be read in conjunction with the Tri.x procedure [Allegations against Foster Carers and Wigan Safeguarding Partnership Procedures](#) [Welcome to the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children...](#)

Allegations

When information is shared that a child may be at risk of significant harm, there should be a strategy meeting held the same day or within 24 hours following Greater Manchester Safeguarding Procedures and the Local Authority Designated Officer should be invited to this meeting. [Welcome to the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Children...](#)

If there is concern that a carer may have caused harm to a child there must be a consultation with the Local Authority Delegated Officer and the Service Lead for Fostering to decide if this should be dealt with as an allegation of harm or a Standards of Care concern.

Consultation with the LADO – this should be held if there is a concern that a carer 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 in a way that indicates they may 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.

Referrals for Independent Advocacy Support from Fostering Network.

Carers should be offered independent advocacy support and if this is requested referrals must be made on the same day as a decision is made to investigate as an allegation of harm. If carers decline the offer, this should be recorded on LCS. The process for making referrals is as follows:

Complete referral form and send to Fostering Network.



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The Team Manager will then be contacted to authorise cost of support.

Carers must be informed in writing

- that an allegation has been received
- that they are on hold for further placements
- of support in place for them during the investigation
- that they are encouraged to continue to access training during the period of the investigation
- that they should continue to adhere to their foster carer agreement.

The following letter should be used to inform carers of this.



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Consultation with the Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer (FIRO)

The FIRO should be informed of the allegation and the outcome of consultation with the LADO, including if this is standard of care or allegation of harm. The FIRO will agree a date for the allegations review, taking into consideration reports and enquiries that need to be made.

The FIRO and SSW should remain in regular contact during the investigation to share information.

Standards of Care or Allegation of Harm

It is important to distinguish between a Standards of Care concerns and allegations of harm. The decision must be made in consultation with the Service Lead following consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Standard of Care / Complaint / Allegation Report–

This is completed when it has been agreed with the relevant team manager and service lead that the threshold has been met for a Standards of Care / Allegations investigation.



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The report will specify whether the investigation is of a SOC concern or an allegation and will conclude with an outcome and a decision about whether to hold an early Carer Review.

The report will have oversight of the Team Manager and Service Lead to decide if an early review is needed. If an early review is not required, consideration should be given to relevant training, support and supervision.

Allegations must be investigated promptly and without unnecessary delay and must be planned in consultation with the LADO. Investigations can only conclude following a decision from police and must have oversight from the LADO in further meetings. FIRO review meeting and fostering panel dates should be identified at the start of the investigation to ensure there is a clear timeline for progression.

Carers will be on hold for further placements, until the conclusion of the investigation however children may remain with carers with a robust safety plan agreed by the Service Lead for the child and the Service Lead for fostering. If a child or children have been removed as a result of the allegation the carer will continue to receive the skills element of the allowance that was being paid for up to 12 weeks. This payment will end when the investigation is concluded. This can be extended at the discretion of the Service Lead.

The outcome of the investigation report will determine if this should be booked in for an early review. All investigation reports should be included with the next Carer Review. The usual Supervising Social Worker annual review report should be completed and should be submitted along with the investigation report. These reports must be shared with the foster carers at least 10 working days prior to the FIRO meeting.

Supervisory and unannounced visits

These must continue throughout the investigation. Supervisory visit should be at least 4 weekly to ensure they carers have appropriate support and training.

Informing carers of the outcome

The SSW and their manager should visit the carers within 2 working days of the investigation report being finalised, to inform them of the outcome, share a copy of the report and ensure they have the right support in place.

A letter must be sent to carers within 5 working days of the finalisation of the report to confirm the outcome.



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legation%20Outcome

Recording

Interventions, case supervisions and case discussions should be recorded on LCS as usual.

In addition, the relevant Allegations and Complaints tab should be used to record allegations and complaints.

Investigation reports to be uploaded onto the carer's LCS file in Documents.