One Minute Guide

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 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

 No 25, January 2019

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**Role and Responsibilities of the LADO**

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf) states that nationally, all agencies and settings that provide services or staff working with children are required to have clear procedures for responding to allegations against staff, whether they are paid or voluntary. Within education services, additional guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education updated September 2018](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741314/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education__3_September_2018_14.09.18.pdf) outlines specific requirements considered when managing allegations against staff working in education settings.

Within this guidance, **the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** has the responsibility to oversee the allegation management process and to ensure it remains effective and transparent and meets the dual demands of both protecting children and also ensuring staff subject to allegations are treated fairly. The LADO provides consultation and advice to the process to ensure that the investigative response is consistent, reasonable and proportionate, and that action taken is recorded in line with statutory requirements.

This role is clearly set out in S.8.2 of the [Pan Sussex Children Safeguarding procedures](https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/): Allegations against People who Work with, Care for or Volunteer with Children. These procedures were last updated to reflect the changes introduced in Keeping Children Safe in Education that was previously updated in 2015.

These procedures are applied when an allegation or concern regarding a person working/volunteering with a child is reported and meets one of the following criteria (as defined in Working Together, 2018):

• 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children.

**What happens if there is an allegation or concern?**

If an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff, outside of his/her work with children, and this may present a risk to child(ren) for whom the member of staff is responsible, the general principles outlined in these procedures will still apply.

There may be up to three potential strands in the consideration of an allegation:

• A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;

• Enquiries and assessment by children’s social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services; and

• Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

When an allegation is made against a member of the children’s workforce, the needs of the child and other children with whom the professional comes into contact are considered paramount as advocated by the Children Act 1989. Employers however, also have duty of care towards their staff. These complex dynamics require a response to allegations which are careful and balanced to ensure risk and support are measured at both levels. Employers can often feel anxious during this time and are well aware of the dilemmas they face and the implications of getting it wrong.

The LADO supports this process through advice on thresholds at the stage of notification. The LADO:

- Mediates with colleagues in other agencies regarding proportionate response to investigations;

- Gives guidance on individual risk management including careful consideration of whether suspension (this being a neutral act) of the staff member might be necessary; and

- Provides support in the analysis of information and evidence gained as investigations progress, to ensure risks are responded to and appropriately concluded.

**Who should contact the LADO?**

Anybody who has concerns about professionals or volunteers working with children within the West Sussex boundary, should contact the LADO for advice and to consider whether a formal safeguarding allegation needs to be recorded, or whether this is recorded as a ‘safeguarding consultation’.

**Where is the LADO based?**

The LADO and Assistant LADO are now situated within MASH.

Officers can be contacted by telephone on **0330 222 3339** (calls are directed through MASH) or by email;

Lindsey.Tunbridge-Adams@westsussex.gov.uk – LADO

Claire.coles@westsussex.gov.uk – Assistant LADO

Urgent Child Protection concerns should be discussed directly with the MASH tel: **01403 229900** or, if outside office hours, the Emergency Duty Team tel: **0330 222 6664**