

LADO Fostering Concerns: Flow Chart

October 2022

Referral

Information received alleging a possible safeguarding concern about a Foster Carer. The referral to LADO should be made within 1 working day of information being received.



Discussion (usually within 1 working day)

This usually includes the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer), Fostering Team Manager & Child Care Social Workers. It is likely to be by telephone or email. **The aims are:**

- To establish if the matter meets the criteria for LADO involvement.
- To establish if the matter requires a child protection response which will proceed separately from the LADO process.
- To consider the immediate safety of children in the fostering household and decide if they can remain in placement.

Discussion concludes LADO involvement is not necessary

Fostering Manager determines the following:



No investigation needed:

Supervising Social Worker to discuss the referral with the Foster Carer to plan any appropriate action or learning, record the alleged concerns raised on Liquid Logic case notes for the carer and confirm that **No Further Action (NFA) in respect of the LADO** will be taken. **NB:** The matter will be included in the next fostering household annual review. There may be a recommendation to follow the practice concerns process.



Discussion concludes LADO involvement is necessary



Allegations Management Meeting:

Police are invited (where appropriate) alongside other relevant people. The subject of any LADO matter (whether a foster carer or member of staff) is not invited. **The aims are:**

- To discuss the matter raised and share knowledge regarding; the allegation; the child; the foster carer including their strengths and any previous concerns.
- To establish if criminal investigation is needed.
- To plan next steps by who and timeframes.
- To agree plans for informing the foster carer and agree what information can be shared with them at this stage.

Allegations Management Meeting (see previous page)

Allegation (timescale overseen by the LADO)

To include meetings/discussions with following: the child; the foster carer, members of the foster carer's family, other relevant people in the child's network; the person/people who made the referral; etc.

Allegation (Police involved)

If a potential crime has been committed this will be a joint investigation conducted by the Child's Social Worker and the Police.

Allegation (Police not involved)

If a serious concern has been raised but the police do not believe they could evidence that a crime has been committed this is likely to be a joint investigation conducted by the childcare team & fostering.

Outcome of LADO process:

Purpose: To agree the outcome of the investigation and confirm if it is: **Unfounded, Malicious, False, Unsubstantiated or Substantiated** and to make arrangements for informing the foster carer of this outcome. This will usually be in a joint meeting with the foster carer, the SSW, and their line manager.

Unfounded, Malicious:

Unfounded and Malicious Allegations are taken no further. Record the alleged concerns raised on Liquid Logic case notes for the carer and confirm that **No Further Action (NFA)** will be taken, apart from SSW support to be given to foster carer.

NB: The matter will be included in the next fostering household annual review. There may be a recommendation for a Practice Development Plan

The foster carers annual review will be brought forward and take place early following this outcome.

Substantiated and Unsubstantiated Allegations/Concerns

For all substantiated and unsubstantiated allegations, a post-allegation report will be completed by the Supervising Social Worker or other social worker/independent person in the fostering service which will make recommendations regarding the foster carers suitability to continue to be a foster carer. The post allegation report will be completed prior to the post allegation review.

There will be a post-allegation review undertaken by the FCRO which will be presented to fostering panel.

Outcome: Allegation is "Unsubstantiated" / Allegation is "Substantiated" (see next page)

Substantiated and Unsubstantiated Allegations/concerns (see previous page)

Outcome: Allegation is “unsubstantiated”

Fostering Panel date to be take place **within 3 months 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, for you and the service itself.

Outcome: Allegation is “substantiated”

Fostering Panel date to be booked **within 8 weeks of the matter concluding**.

Report submitted to Fostering Panel

Note: If a foster carer decides to resign or retire during the LADO process, the report is still presented to fostering panel. Final paperwork would be collated from the foster carer’s file held by Kirklees Council to inform any future reference should the former foster carer apply to foster elsewhere.

Outcome letter

Following the conclusion of the LADO process, and subsequent to the ratification of the panel’s decision by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) a reapproval letter or qualifying determination letter providing the reasons for deregistration from the ADM is sent to the foster carer. Please note this is not the same as the LADO outcome letter is for the employer and not the foster carer. It is the Fostering Team Managers responsibility to inform the Foster Carer of the outcome of the LADO process.

Independent Review Mechanism (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 Foster Carers Handbook for full details of this process.)

It is important to note that following a substantiated allegation the fostering service may advise DBS before panel, this should be discussed at the end of the LADO Process. The LADO outcome is shared with all parties involved in the investigation even if they were only involved initially, then ceased 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 application, 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.

