



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Regarding Allegations against professionals and volunteers who work with children and young people

1. Background

This may be a difficult and worrying time for you as you may either wish to raise a concern or have been informed of an allegation against an adult working with children regarding a child you care for. It is never acceptable for an adult in a position of trust to harm a child or young person and therefore, allegations or concerns about behaviour raised about paid staff or volunteers in relation to children or young people are taken seriously. Any allegation must be raised with the organisation for whom the individual works. Any allegation reaching a nationally agreed Allegations Management criteria of harm, will be shared by the organisation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for independent oversight. Parents must share any allegations with the organisation and not directly with the LADO.

2. What is the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role?

The LADO is the Local Authority Designated Officer based within the Local Authority. The LADO is responsible for overseeing allegations about individuals who work with children and is independent of the organisation. The LADO is a professional facing role and as such does not communicate directly with parents. It is the responsibility of the organisation where the individual works to communicate with you. Although the LADO offers advice and guidance to the organisation decisions, such as to suspend, are the responsibility of the organisation and not the LADO.

3. What happens next?

Any Allegation reaching the criteria is reported to the LADO by the organisation Senior Safeguarding Manager. The LADO will confirm whether the allegation fits the criteria for an Allegations Management, and if so, whether a Professionals discussion or meeting should be held, to decide further action. If it is necessary to investigate further a decision will be made by Professionals whether this will be by the Police, Children's Social Care or the employer or a combination of agencies.

An appointed investigating officer may wish to meet with your child to discuss the allegation. This will usually be discussed with you beforehand.

4. Personal Support

A named person, not the LADO, will be identified to keep you informed throughout the process of any developments. You will be informed when the matter has been concluded. This named person could be the lead with the investigating agency, such as a social worker or police officer, or it could be a manager within the employing agency of the adult about whom concerns have been raised.

5. Outcomes

On completion of the investigation an Outcome is agreed by Professionals including the LADO. The outcome will be one of the following:

- Substantiated - There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- Unsubstantiated - There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.
- Unfounded - There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.
- False - There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.
- Malicious- There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation.

The outcome of any investigation is final. Detailed information regarding the full extent of the investigation will not be able to be shared with you by the organisation other than to inform action has been taken and appropriate safeguarding measures have been implemented. This is due to data protection requirements and is not about withholding information from you. You can be assured that the LADO under the South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership provides independent scrutiny of all investigations.

Any concerns regarding any investigation must be raised with the organisation undertaking it and if appropriate, via their Complaints procedure, and not with the LADO.