



## **Quality Assurance & Safeguarding Service**

### **LADO Expectations & Standards**

**Consistent with The Local Authority LADO (LADO) Handbook for Practice 2023, Minimum standards for the Management of Allegations against Adults who work with children and The Home Office Information Sharing Guidance 2018**

The key principles underpinning the allegations management process are:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Adults about whom there are concerns should be treated fairly and honestly and should be provided with support
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. (Local Authority LADO (LADO) Handbook for Practice 2023)

All contact should come through the LADO Service via email to [Sandwell\\_Lado@sandwellchildrenstrust.org](mailto:Sandwell_Lado@sandwellchildrenstrust.org).

The LADO will contact the person by telephone within one working day (national standard) and same working day (internal standard) wherever possible. When the LADO is unavailable due to annual leave, training or other commitments there will be a consistent LADO cover. In the event the LADO cover is unavailable a Principal IRO will cover.

Accessing the LADO Service directly via email alongside our simplified process will enable a telephone discussion between the LADO and person making contact to be held quickly and conclude with Advice and Guidance wherever possible. These are contacts that do not meet the LADO threshold criteria.

In circumstances where the LADO determines the threshold criteria is met, the concerns may be progressed to a POT Meeting. A POT Meeting should be held within 5 working days. We will record delay reasons where the time-scale for a POT Meeting is not met to make improvements moving forward.

All allegations are concluded wherever possible within 12 weeks of the initial contact. Where this is not possible due to ongoing investigation / enquiry by another agency, referrals will be held in a separate pathway to be monitored at a minimum of once every four weeks and the reasons for delay recorded.

We recognise when allegations are made it is distressing to the person of concern, we will respond fairly and sensitively treating all concerned with respect. It is the employer's responsibility to inform the alleged person of concern that information has

been shared with the LADO Service and to keep them updated throughout. There will be a discussion at the initial point of contact with the LADO Service about what, how and when information should be shared in such cases where there is a risk to the child's safety, risk to the alleged person of concern or any other person and / or where there is a potential or ongoing police investigation.

The LADO service will actively promote hearing children and their experiences, their views are essential. We will aim to understand the child's lived experience, the potential impact and future risks of harm to other children. We will encourage and support all other users of our service to do the same.

The LADO will ensure that children and families are apprised of progress in investigations through the most appropriate person.

All information will be recorded consistent with the Home Office Information Sharing Guidance 2018 which was updated following the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act (2018).

GDPR, the Data Protection Act (2018) and human rights legislation should not act as a barrier to information sharing. Information sharing has been identified as a factor in many Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) and can be the difference between life and death of a child. A child's welfare and safety shall be paramount throughout all LADO decisions and she will use her professional judgement to determine what why and how information should be shared and recorded.

All outcomes will be clearly recorded and include risk analysis and time-scales. Minutes of POT Meetings will be distributed electronically through secure email within 10 working days. Records will be retained consistent with Sandwell Childrens Trust Policy.

A standard letter will be sent to the employee at the end of the LADO process in all cases advising of the outcome and providing the link to Sandwell Children's Trust privacy statement, guidance around retention of records and subject access requests.

### **Guidance in respect of preparation for the Meeting:**

The purpose of the POT meeting is, considering the current allegation or concerns, to decide whether there is reason to suspect that the individual/s has/have:

- 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.
- Behaved towards a child or children 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 (transferable risk)

(Ref: Working Together 2018, update December 2020)

**Children's Services:**

- Assessment Update
- Chronology / timeline
- Child Protection Conference and Plan update - progress on the case.
- Contact Issues
- Risk analysis
- Transferrable risk to the work place – analysis
- What has the person of concern told you about their occupation.

**Police:**

- PNC Check – is the person known to the police and if so, in what capacity?
- Crime Number
- Name of the Officer in Charge of case
- Actions taken – who has been seen and when
- Any bail conditions
- Interviews – including dates
- Witnesses
- Risk analysis
- Outcomes

**Employers and HR:**

- Conduct and capability of employee/volunteer
- Training portfolio re: safeguarding/restraint/de-escalation/safer worker practices/safeguarding/etc
- History of employee, including start dates.
- Other places of work.
- CCTV evidence
- What actions have been taken.
- DBS Information, including number, type and date.
- Do not ask children or employee/agency staff to make a statement
- Is the employee/volunteer a member of a regulatory body?
- Are you aware if the volunteer/employee works in another other capacity with children?

Anything else that adds value to the POT discussions and helps with the risk analysis.

These lists are not exhaustive. If you are still not sure, then please contact the LADO service.

**Criteria for finalising a POT process****Burden of proof required:**

It is important that all agencies understand that action to protect children or disciplinary proceedings is not dependent upon a successful police prosecution (which is deemed beyond reasonable doubt). The LADO process will consider all information available on 'the balance of probability' (based on the

presenting information the meeting is satisfied that the event more likely than not occurred)

### **Allegations Outcome**

#### **1. Substantiated**

There is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation.

#### **2. False**

There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

#### **3. Malicious**

There is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false.

#### **4. Unfounded**

There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.

#### **5. Unsubstantiated**

This is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence

### **Quality Assurance**

The Principal IRO responsible for the LADO Service will complete regular audit activity at least four times per year. This will include application of thresholds, contact outcomes, case recording and time-scales. Performance management reports will also be available. This will provide opportunities for reflective discussion and service improvement moving forward.

An annual report will be completed which will identify trends within the authority as well as lessons learnt. This will be shared across the partnership through various forums including the SCSP learning and development events. The above will contribute towards a safer organisational culture and continuous improvement.

The LADO or Principal IRO will be responsible for responding to any complaints received, identifying and sharing lessons learned.

The LADO will continue to facilitate learning and development events and opportunities through Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership (SCSP). This will also provide the opportunity to ensure lessons from allegations are shared and learned.

The LADO will continue to attend the regional LADO meetings, relevant national events and SCSP events / meetings.

