



**Managing concerns about adults who work or volunteer with children and young people**

# **Information for parents and carers**

Any allegation of abuse is likely to cause a great deal of anxiety and upset to all concerned: the child or young person reporting the abuse, their parents, carers, or family members, as well as the person against whom the allegation is made.

This leaflet is intended to guide you through the process of an investigation against a member of staff or volunteer.

An allegation against a member of staff or volunteer is different to a complaint, which might be made against the way a school or another organisation had dealt with something you were not happy about.

Complaints are usually dealt with by the school or organisation.

The majority of people who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment for them. However, sometimes the behaviour of adults who work or volunteer with children and young people can result in allegations being made against them.

It is never acceptable for an adult in a position of trust to harm a child.

## **Who is the Local Authority Designated Officer?**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (often referred to as the LADO) is responsible for overseeing all safeguarding allegations about adults who work with children. The work can be paid, unpaid or voluntary.

A concern can be in about the person’s behaviour at work or in their personal life.

The LADO will not be able share specific information regarding the alleged person involved with you but will ensure that a nominated person in the agency undertaking the investigation will keep you informed throughout the process.

The LADO will ensure that the employer’s investigation is well supported and carried out thoroughly in a transparent and fair way, and that investigations are concluded in a timely manner, when possible.

## **Contacting the LADO**

In Bristol our Local Authority Designated Officer is Nicola Laird.

You can contact Nicola using one of the following:

Telephone: 0117 90 37795

Email: [LADO@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@bristol.gov.uk)

Online: <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/>

**What happens now?**

1) Allegation reported to the LADO

2) The LADO will consider whether a discussion or meeting should be held to decide if further action is needed

3) If it is necessary to investigate further, a decision will be made whether this will be undertaken by the police, or the professional’s employer.

4) They may wish to meet with your child to discuss the allegation. This will be agreed with you beforehand.

5) Following the investigation, a decision will be made to conclude the outcome as: substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded, malicious, or false.

## **Outcomes**

Every investigation must be concluded using one of the following outcomes:

**Substantiated:** Evidence was able to prove that the alleged incident or malpractice did happen.

**Unsubstantiated:** Evidence was unable to prove or disprove that the alleged incident or malpractice did or did not happen.

**Unfounded:** Evidence was available to prove that what was alleged did not happen or could not have happened or information has been misinterpreted.

**False:** There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation.

**Malicious:** A deliberate act to deceive. For an allegation to be classified as malicious, it will be necessary to have evidence which proves the intention to deceive.

## **Further Information**

The outcome of any investigation is final.

Detailed information cannot be shared with you but you should be assured that action has been taken and appropriate safeguarding measures implemented. This is due to data protection requirements and is not about withholding information from you.

You can be assured that Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership provide independent scrutiny to all investigations to ensure they are clear and fair, considering all safeguarding issues to reach a conclusion and that appropriate action is implemented without delay.

**In order to help limit unnecessary gossip or speculation it is strongly advised that families, and those directly affected, do not discuss the case outside of their immediate family prior to the formal conclusion.**

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<https://bristolsafeguarding.org/>

Last updated October 2022