**LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICERS**

**(LADO)**

**SAFEGUARDING WITHIN THE CHILDRENS WORKFORCE**

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**MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Children and Young people can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any and every setting. If you have a concern about an adult who works with children and or holds a position of trust contact the County LADO service when it is reported that they may 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.**

**Or**

* **Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children? (includes transfer of risk, risk by association)**

(Harm Threshold)

This applies to situations when:

There are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a person who works with children in either a **paid or unpaid capacity** - as a permanent, temporary or agency staff member.

It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, **is or has been working with children**.

**Role of the LADO**

* To **provide advice and guidance** to employers and voluntary organisations around allegations and concerns.
* To exercise **professional judgement** in their decision making, having considered the following:

Any action or inaction that may have caused any form of damage, injury, pain, hurt, discomfort, loss of dignity or suffering to any child.

This may be of a **physical, sexual** or **psychological/emotional** nature or by **negligence** or other **non-physical acts** e.g. via social media.

* Ensures the **child’s voice and lived experience** has been heard and that measures are in place to prevent further harm or abuse.
* To monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible **consistent with a thorough and fair process.**
* To **coordinate all allegations and concerns** made against a person who works with children within Kent.

There may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation:

1. Criminal police investigation

2. CSWS assessment or enquiries

3. Internal investigation/disciplinary

**All allegations must be notified to the LADO within 24 hours**

**Definition of Potential Outcomes:**

**Substantiated**

There is sufficient identifiable evidence to **prove** the allegation. Employer to refer to DBS.

**False**

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

**Malicious**

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

**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.

**Unsubstantiated**

This is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is **insufficient evidence to prove or disprove** the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

**Key points to note**

You must not speak to the member of staff or take any action about the allegation until you have spoken with the LADO, as this could jeopardise any possible subsequent investigation.

Regardless of the nature of allegations and who receives the allegation, it must be reported to the County LADO Service. This must include situations where the worker resigns. There may be disciplinary issues to consider and possible referrals to professional organisations.

Complaints procedures are separate to the allegations process and just because someone does not wish to make a complaint, this does not mean the allegations should not be considered and investigated.

It is important that employers learn from each investigation to prevent similar situations in the future and the LADO may provide you with key lessons learnt.

**REFERRING TO THE COUNTY LADO SERVICE**

**Contact number: 03000 410 888**

**Email:** **kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk**

**Link to Referral form:**

[**https://www.kscb.org.uk/procedures/local-authority-designated-officer-lado**](https://www.kscb.org.uk/procedures/local-authority-designated-officer-lado)

Or access the form on KSCMP or KELSI

**PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HARM**

If a call is urgent i.e. **a child is in immediate danger and requires safeguarding** call  **03000 41 11 11 (Front Door) or 999**

Urgent child protection matters outside of office hours call:

**Out of Hours on: 03000 41 91 91**

The County LADO Service welcomes **feedback** to help improve. Please find the form at : <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/procedures/local-authority-designated-officer-lado/>