



Allegations or concerns about people working or volunteering in a position of trust with children: Information for all agencies



LADO/TC
10/03/21

When to make a referral

Contact Walsall's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one day where it becomes clear that a person in a position of trust with children (anyone under the age of 18 years) has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates may not be suitable to work with children

If there are concerns of significant harm contact MASH/Police in the first instance. If there are concerns but it is not clear that any of the above are met, the LADO is still available for **advice and guidance** - the concern does not need to be of 'significant harm'.

Someone working in a position of trust with children includes:

- Staff and volunteers who work with children or make decisions about children
- Those who acquire trust even if they have no specific role with children (e.g. Faith Leaders)
- Students studying for professions that work with children (e.g. Social Work, Early Years)
- Young people who hold a position of trust (e.g. Trainee/Assistant Scout Leaders)
- Some workers may report that they only work with adults but if that includes 16-18 year olds, a referral to LADO is still appropriate (e.g. College Tutors).
- Make a referral when allegations are made of non-recent abuse committed by someone in a position of trust.

However, it does not include:

- Those who work solely with adults, it is the information holder's responsibility to encourage the adult of concern to contact their employer or for the information holder to do so. The Adult Safeguarding Team can be contacted for **advice and guidance** on **0300 555 2922**.
- When the position of trust held is not in Walsall, make a referral to the LADO in the area where the position of trust is held. Cases such as Walsall LA foster carers who live outside Walsall; make a referral to the Walsall LADO who will liaise with the LADO in the area the foster carers live.
- Professional failings or poor practice not related to child/ren safety and welfare – other employer processes are usually more appropriate.

No employer/Learnings:

- People who may try to get into the children's workforce (e.g. they have applied for or previously held such roles) and there are serious concerns.
- Those who hold a relevant professional qualification and/or are regulated professionals but are not currently in employment or working with children (e.g. Health Roles, Social Work) but there are serious concerns that need to be shared.

Contacting the LADO

- You can discuss concerns with the LADO to decide the best way forward without making a 'referral'; contact can be made by telephone or email.
- Where you have identified that you need to speak to the LADO you should usually advise the individual of concern you will be doing this, as it is helpful to gather their views on this, however, unless by doing so places a child at risk or it will compromise any investigation.
- Information required includes where the individual of concern works/volunteers and details about their role.

- Confirmation if they or you have spoken to their employer about the concern, again only if it is safe to do so and will not put child/ren at risk or jeopardise an investigation.
- A discussion with the LADO, however, does not mean that contact with their employer is necessary.

Position of Trust (POT) Meetings

- A POT meeting chaired by the LADO will take place for more serious concerns.
- The individual about whom there are concerns are not invited to this meeting.
- The POT meeting does not replace a strategy discussion, which should have taken place as appropriate.
- It is important that the views of the child who made the allegation/raised the concern or children, whose views may be important, are clear. You may be the best person to provide this information.
- The LADO can advise on what information you may need to present at a POT meeting.

Record Keeping

- The LADO keeps a record of all contacts on Mosaic; these are subject to strict access limitations.
- Information about how the allegation is managed should be recorded on the child's file and include information relevant specifically for the child.
- Information about the process followed in respect of the adult's position of trust should not be on the child's file.
- You should record any actions or recommendations that relate to the child and signpost that full minutes are available from the LADO.
- If you are the Supervising Social Worker for a foster carer about whom there are concerns, information about the process should be stored on the carer's file in the restricted or confidential section.
- Other agencies/employers minutes should be kept in the restricted or confidential section of the adult's file.

Remember, it could be you

Anyone working or volunteering with children can be subject to an allegation or a concern.

Tips to remember:

- Speak to your manager about any concerns outside of work that might raise a concern around your safety or suitability to work with children, even if you hope it is going to be resolved quickly.
- Report to your manager any concerns raised to you about your practice even if you think it was resolved or retracted.
- Keep recordings up to date with sufficient detail about anything that might have exposed you to greater risk or where there was an incident (e.g. if you were alone with a child/young person who became distressed or angry).
- Be careful on social media and keep privacy settings tight, think about what can be seen on other people's social media about you, which may not be private.
- Be open and transparent in your practice, a restorative approach promotes relationships which minimise the risk of allegations.

Your role with colleagues

Remember your colleagues, internal and external, might present a risk. Report any concerns that you have or are raised to you. Those we trust (and like) can still harm children, you may not believe your colleague(s) present a risk but you must report and let someone else make that decision, even if you do not think the concern is founded

Contact Details: Belinda Crowshaw LADO, Telephone 01922 652322 mobile: 07707151435
Email: lado@walsall.gov.uk