

### **What is a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)?**

They are the Designated Officer in the local authority who is involved in the management and oversight of allegations made about members of staff or volunteers who work with children. This is a role set out in the statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#).

### **What is an allegation?**

There are four criteria for what constitutes an allegation that should be referred to the LADO. These may relate to a person who works with children who has:

1. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
2. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
3. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children; or
4. Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

### **Who is this relevant to?**

- Employees and volunteers who work with children on a paid or unpaid basis.
- Anyone in regulated activity with children, who requires an Enhanced DBS to carry out their role.
- Those in a 'position of trust', such as police officers, foster carers, doctors, nurses etc.
- Cleaners, security guards, lunch time supervisors etc. working in regulated settings, e.g. an allegation made against a cleaner in a supermarket would not be relevant, but if they worked in a school it would, as this falls within regulated activity.

### **What should you do?**

Anybody who has concerns about a person working or volunteering with children should follow their organisation's allegations process.

You should discuss the concerns with your manager, safeguarding lead and/or HR provider to consider whether the criteria for making a LADO notification has been met. If it is unclear whether the criteria have been met after then a notification should be made to the LADO.

All allegations or concerns about people working with children should be reported to LADO within 24 hours of the incident taking place or the concern being shared.

### **What does the LADO do?**

The four criteria relate to a person's behaviour in the workplace, the community and in their home and social life.

If one or more of these criteria are met, then the LADO will provide advice and guidance to the employer or organisation to ensure their investigations are full, timely and fair.

The LADO will also liaise with the police and children's social care where necessary and refer on to regulatory bodies as needed. It is not the role of the LADO to investigate.



## **What if the staff member or volunteer is from an organisation outside of Portsmouth?**

If a child from the Portsmouth area makes an allegation against a staff member or volunteer from an organisation that operates outside of Portsmouth, then the responsibility for the management and oversight of this lies with the LADO in the local authority where that individual works.

## **What happens when a notification is accepted?**

A notification will be accepted by the LADO if it meets the criteria set out above. The LADO will advise on what action should be taken by the employer and whether the matter should be referred to children's social care and/or police.

The LADO may convene an allegation meeting to coordinate and evaluate the risks to children and oversee that appropriate actions are taken, to protect children and young people but also to ensure support for the individual themselves. The LADO may attend a strategy meeting held under Section 47.

The LADO does not typically have direct contact with the person of concern the person making the allegation, and they do not investigate, they provide advice.

## **What happens when the criteria is not met?**

Organisations should have policies and processes to deal with any concerns or allegations where the threshold is not met for LADO involvement, sometimes referred to as 'low-level' concerns.

If there is any doubt as to whether the information which has been shared about a member of staff or volunteer in fact meets the harm threshold, then you complete a LADO notification form and submit to the LADO inbox.

Be mindful that multiple (thus cumulative) low-level concerns may meet LADO threshold at a later stage. Factors to bear in mind are whether the worker has reflected and responded to the constructive feedback provided to them or whether they continue to behave in a manner that may suggest they are unsuitable to work with children.

## **How to contact the Portsmouth LADO:**

If it is regarding a new matter, a [LADO notification form](#) needs to be completed and sent through to the [LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

The LADO will review this and make contact within 24 working hours.

If you need to discuss an open case with the LADO, they can be contacted on 023 9288 2500 or email [LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

**If you are concerned that a child or young person has suffered harm, neglect or abuse, please contact Portsmouth Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

**If a child is at immediate risk of harm, call the Police on 999**