

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - One Minute Guide:

Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership

September 2020

What is it?

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be notified when it has been alleged that someone who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may harm a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child/children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children

The above criteria relates to the adult's behaviour in the **workplace**, the **community** and in their **home and social life**.

The LADO provides advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisation, liaises with police and other agencies and has oversight of all investigations to ensure a timely, thorough and fair process.

What happens once a notification is accepted?

Allegations meeting the above criteria should be referred to the LADO within one working day (WTSC, 2018) using a LADO referral form. LADO referral forms can be accessed via the Wakefield LSCP website:

<https://www.wakefieldscp.org.uk/professionals-and-practitioners/lado-local-authority-designated-officer/>

If there are concerns about someone working or volunteering with children, you can access advice and information by **emailing us via Lado.Referrals@wakefield.gov.uk to request a call back from the LADO.**

Completed LADO referral forms must be sent to the LADO inbox: **Lado.Referrals@wakefield.gov.uk**

The LADO will provide an initial response to the referrer within one working day advising the need for further action under the LADO procedures and where appropriate include involvement of other sectors including the police, social care, employers and regulatory bodies.

The initial evaluation will focus on the nature of the concern, safeguarding for the particular child and appropriate consideration for the practitioner concerned. Inter-agency Allegations Management Meetings are convened by the LADO to manage specific situations. If further action is necessary under LADO procedures, a LADO Allegations Management Meeting may be convened within 10 working days of this decision being made.

The LADO chairs the Allegations Management Meeting. The employer will always attend and other attendees may include Police, Social Care, HR and regulatory bodies i.e.. Ofsted. The adult who the allegation has been made about **does not** attend.

The following will be considered in the Allegations Management Meeting: the allegation details; employment details, children involved; immediate and wider safeguarding concerns and the need for:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- Children's social care enquiries and/or assessment about whether a child is in need of protection or services;
- Consideration by an employer of disciplinary action.

A follow up LADO Allegations Management review will consider the outcome of the investigation and determine whether the allegation is: substantiated; unsubstantiated, false, malicious or unfounded.

The LADO will retain a confidential record of the allegation and subsequent actions for future reference.

Each agency will use their own procedures to investigate an allegation. The LADO will offer guidance around any safeguarding concerns, for example an individual's contact with children while the allegations are being investigated.

What should practitioners do?

Anybody who has concerns about a practitioner working or volunteering with **children** should discuss their concerns with their manager and/or their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This should help clarify whether the criteria for a LADO referral has been met. If so, any practitioner can make a referral using the form available on the Wakefield LSCP website.

If it is still unclear whether the criteria has been met, practitioners can contact the **LADO via Lado.Referrals@wakefield.gov.uk to request a call back for advice.**

There is a separate process to follow if concerns relate to a practitioner who works or volunteers with vulnerable adults. Please contact Social Care Direct on 0345 8 503 503 or email via Social_Care_Direct@wakefield.gov.uk for more information about this.

If there are urgent child protection concerns, members of the public should contact Social Care Direct. If a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, call the police on **101 or 999**.

Key contacts and further information

The Local Authority Designated Officer in Wakefield can be contacted Monday to Friday on **01977 727032** or via lado.referrals@wakefield.gov.uk.

If you want to know more about the LADO role, or managing allegations against staff, you can consult the West Yorkshire Consortium Inter-Agency Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures at:

<https://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/> or the managing allegations page on the Wakefield LSCP website at <https://www.wakefieldscp.org.uk/professionals-and-practitioners/lado-local-authority-designated-officer/>