



# Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Working Together 2015 (*updated in 2017*) is a statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It requires that each Local Authority has a designated officer or team of officers, to deal with allegations made against professionals who are a part of the children's workforce.

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused or could cause harm to children.

The LADO works within Rotherham Council's Children's Services and gives advice and guidance to employers, organisations and other individuals who have concerns about the behaviour of an adult who works with children and young people. Included in this group are volunteers, agency staff and foster carers as well as people who are in a position of authority and have regular contact with children, such as religious leaders, police, political figures or school governors.

LADO investigations and procedures would be invoked where there is an allegation that a person who is employed or volunteers with children has:

- 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 that they may pose a risk of harm to children

- Behaved in way outside of work or employment which may cause risk of harm or influence to those children with who they work or are in contact with
- Behaved in a way in his/her personal life which could put children at risk of harm
- Contravened or has continued to contravene any safe practice guidance given by his/her organisation or regulatory body
- Exploited or abused a position of power
- Failed to understand or recognise the need for clear personal and professional boundaries in his/her work
- Become the subject of criminal proceedings relating to a child or adult which may indicate risk to children, e.g. assault, domestic violence, sexual offences against adults
- Become subject to Section 47 Enquires under child protection procedures
- The individual subject to the allegation or concern occupies a "position of trust"

## What will the LADO do?

Following notification, and within one working day, the first step will be to offer an initial evaluation discussion of the concern. This will consist of advice and guidance regarding the most appropriate way of managing the allegation and whether the referral meets the criteria for LADO involvement.

If the referral meets the criteria for LADO involvement, the LADO will:

- Arrange a Managing Allegations strategy meeting if one is required, liaising with the police and other agencies as necessary. If the case is complex there may be a series of meetings.
- Ensure that child protection procedures are initiated where the child is considered to be at risk of significant harm.
- Provide advice about sharing information the individual against whom the allegation has been made, with children and their families and others.
- Consider alongside the employer whether the person should be suspended while investigations are undertaken.
- Ensure employers are aware of their duty to notify the appropriate regulatory bodies and/or to refer the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

## Roles and Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

Partner Agencies (including Police, Health, Education, Voluntary Agencies and Faith Groups) have a responsibility to:

- Make a LADO referral through MASH immediately and will be screened by MASH within 24 hours.
- Put in place and operate arrangements for handling allegations in accordance with these procedures.
- Identify a Senior Manager to whom allegations or concerns should be reported, and a deputy in his/her absence or if he/she is the subject of the allegation. This person will be the initial point of contact with the LADO;
- Take part in discussions and allegation meetings.
- Cooperate with further information gathering.

Where a child from Rotherham makes an allegation in a setting or placement which is outside the Rotherham Council jurisdiction, the lead responsibility for action lies with the local authority for the area where the alleged abuse occurred.

Where the referral relates to a child from another local authority temporarily placed in an establishment located within the Rotherham Council, the Local Authority Designated Officer should liaise with the child's home authority about the roles and responsibilities in carrying out this procedure.

The LADO is held where the alleged perpetrator is employed not where they reside.

LADO referrals should be made through Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who will agree the threshold is met and action them within 24 hours to the Safeguarding Unit for further consideration and scrutiny.

If the concerns relate to vulnerable adults then Single Point of Access should be contacted on 822330.

**Call the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) with any concerns on 01709 336080.**

The full guidance can be seen on Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures, 5.2 Allegations Against Staff, Carers and Volunteers.