Bracknell Forest Council

Managing allegations against people who work with children in Bracknell Forest

Guidance for Managers

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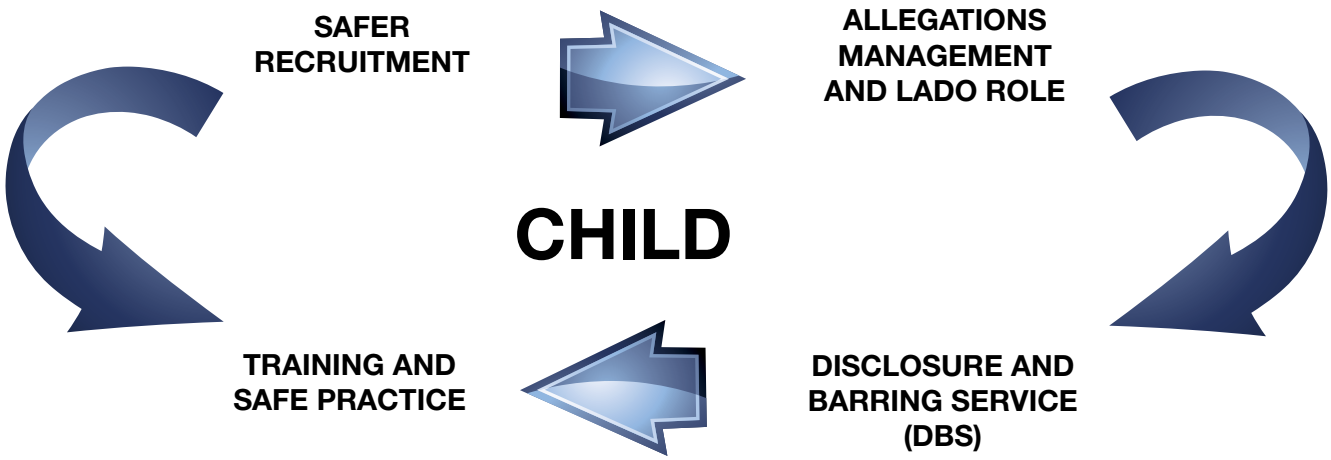

The process for managing allegations should be used in all cases when it is alleged that a member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved inappropriately towards a child, or behaved in other ways that suggests they may be unsuitable to work with children
- Or for education staff; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Reporting an allegation:

If you become aware of an allegation please inform a designated manager within your organisation or contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** or Children's Social Care Duty directly. The LADO should be informed of the allegation within **1 working day** of the incident taking place.

LADO role:

The LADO will provide advice and guidance to employers and will help establish what the 'next steps' should be in terms of investigating the matter further.

The LADO will monitor and maintain an overview of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistently and using a thorough and fair process.

In cases where the adult is unaware of the concern or allegation it may not be appropriate to tell them immediately and may prejudice a potential Police investigation. The LADO will provide advice.
The LADO will liaise with the police and other agencies, and arrange for an **Allegation Strategy Discussion** (also referred to in guidance as a Senior Strategy Meeting). This is a multi agency discussion to agree what action will be taken in relation to an allegation which meets the criteria above. If the case is complex there may be a series of meetings.

Your role:

The objectives of the allegations process are to identify the actions needed to ensure the safety of children and to decide whether actions are required against a member of staff or volunteer.
As a manager or employer you also have a duty of care to the staff member and you may have disciplinary matters to pursue. You should be mindful of the process being completed in a reasonable timescale and that adequate support is being provided for the member of staff/volunteer.

Arrangements for strategy discussions:

- Allegations strategy discussions can be held anywhere. In practice they are often held at the Council offices.
- The meeting will be chaired by a senior manager, an independent chair or the LADO.
- The chair will ensure that the information, decisions and actions are recorded.
- A hand written copy of the actions agreed will be given to you immediately after the meeting but you may also wish to take your own notes.

The meeting will focus on 3 aspects:

- Whether the allegation constitutes a criminal offence.
- Whether there are child protection concerns and agreeing which agencies will be involved in the investigation
- Whether there are disciplinary matters to pursue.

Strategy Review Meetings:

- Strategy Review Meetings may be held if necessary to track the progress of enquiries.
- A final discussion should be held to ensure any witness statements or other information from police or social care have been anonymised for third party detail and are available for use in any disciplinary hearing.
- On conclusion of the case the issue of the person's future suitability to work with children and whether the person should be barred from future work should be considered. The LADO will also assist the employer in decisions about a person's suitability to remain in the children's workforce, and whether a referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or the appropriate regulatory or professional body.
- The discussion should also identify any lessons learned or issues that need to be addressed in order to improve practice for the whole workforce; e.g. procedures and training.
- The meeting should agree how the allegation is recorded on the person's personnel file.

Outcomes:

The outcome of an allegation may be a finding that it is substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded, malicious or false.
If the allegation is unsubstantiated there may be recommendations about additional support or training for the staff member or volunteer. There may be cases where whole workforce/organisational development issues are identified.

If the allegation is substantiated the next step might be a police investigation, police prosecution, and internal investigation by the employer including consideration of disciplinary action.

How to contact the LADO

In Bracknell the LADO role is based within Children, Young People and Learning

Contact numbers:
LADO Tel 01344 351572 (Direct) 01344 351582
LADO email LADO@bracknell-forest.gcsx.gov.uk.
Children's Social Care Duty Tel 01344 351582

Guidance can be found at:
Berkshire Child Protection Procedures

http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/documents/Working TogetherFINAL.pdf

http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g0076914/dealing-with-allegations-of-abuse

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio tape or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format, please telephone 01344 352000.