



Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Guide for VCSE and private sector who work with children

April 2021

Together for Families



What is a LADO?

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is a statutory role with a primary function to oversee any investigation where an allegation of abuse or harm has been made against a professional or volunteer who has contact with children as part of their work or activities.

The LADO Service sits within Together for Families in Cornwall Council.

The LADO role is contained in Chapter 2 Working Together 2018 under People in Positions of Trust. The process is set out in the South West Child Protection Procedures endorsed by Our Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP).

When do you contact the LADO?

The LADO should be contacted **within 1 working day of an incident arising and prior to any further investigation taking place** where it appears that an allegation or concerns about a person who works 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 in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

What will the LADO do with your referral?

You can speak to a member of the LADO Service for initial Advice and Guidance and to determine whether a formal referral is required.

All formal referrals are completed on a proforma available on Our Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://ciossafeguarding.org.uk/scp> which should be sent to the Multi-Agency Referral Unit multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

The LADO Service will oversee and co-ordinate any subsequent multi-agency investigation of an individual case and ensure that any immediate risk to children is addressed.

A LADO will chair the multi-agency Professional Allegations Oversight Meeting.

The LADO Service will monitor and ensure that a thorough and fair process is undertaken which may include:

- A criminal investigation
- A joint police and social care investigation
- An internal disciplinary investigation by the employer/fitness to practice/practice standards
- Liaise with Ofsted/other regulatory bodies

What will happen during the process?

The LADO Service will provide advice and guidance in respect of:

- How to liaise with and support the child involved and their family to ensure that the child's welfare remains paramount
- Confidentiality, General Data Protection Regulation and sharing information. All data will be kept confidential and secure
- How the allegation impacts on other children or responsibilities within the staff member or volunteer's home, work and community life
- Lessons learnt from the experience and how to create a safer organisation

What happens at the conclusion of the LADO process?

The LADO Service recommends, in conjunction with your views and those of Social Care and the Police, whether or not on the balance of probabilities the allegation is:

- Substantiated (supported by evidence or where on the balance of probability abuse or harm is confirmed)
- False (there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation)
- Unfounded (no evidence which supports the allegation being made, or there is evidence to prove that the allegation is untrue or was mistaken)
- Unsubstantiated (there is insufficient identifiable evidence to prove or disprove the allegation)
- Malicious (i.e deliberately invented)

A copy of the Professional Allegation Oversight Meeting notes will be distributed to relevant parties including the staff member/volunteer who has been affected by this allegation.

The LADO Service considers with the employer whether an onward referral is required to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the professional's regulatory body if the staff member is deemed to be a future risk to children.

What do I do now?

Ensure that you and your organisation are familiar with and understand the LADO process as part of your Safeguarding Policy.

Ensure that you have access to statutory guidance:

- Working Together 2018
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-keeping-children-safe-in-education-part-4-guidance>
- South West Child Protection Procedures
<https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/>
- Disclosure and Barring Service guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Need more help?

Please speak to your manager or identified lead safeguarding officer who will be your main contact point during this process.

This guide does not replace any specialist advice that you may require from a trade union or HR and legal adviser.

Other bitesize guides in this series

Guide for employees and volunteers who work with children

General guide for employers and voluntary agencies who work with children

What should I do if I have a concern about a child?

Contact the MARU: multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk or 0300 1231 116 or out of hours: 01208 251300 or Our Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://ciosafeguarding.org.uk/scp>

This Guide does not replace any specialist advice that you may require from your HR and Legal Advisor.

For more information and advice contact

Contact

LADO: LADO@cornwall.gov.uk or Tel: 01872 326536

If you would like this information in another format please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall
Treyew Road, Truro TR1 3AY

Telephone: 0300 1234 101

Email: equality@cornwall.gov.uk

www.cornwall.gov.uk/togetherforfamilies