**Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Brief Guide**

The threshold for raising concerns with LADO is if a professional 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 towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, or;

 Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Referrals can also involve aspects of a professionals personal life, such as;

• The person's behaviour with regard to his/her own children

• The behaviour in the private or community life of a partner, member of the family or other household member

• A person's behaviour in their personal life, which may impact upon the safety of children to whom they owe a duty of care.

The LADO should be informed of all allegations against adults working with children and will provide advice and guidance on the progress of cases to ensure they are resolved as quickly as possible. Information relating to allegations is collated and presented to Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) to inform training, research, safer recruitment and awareness raising.

The LADO role applies to the children's workforce (paid, self-employed and volunteers). The LADO is involved from the initial phase of the allegation through to the conclusion of the case. The LADO will provide advice and guidance and help determine that the allegation sits within the scope of the procedures. Within the role the LADO helps co-ordinate information sharing. The LADO will also monitor and track any investigation with the expectation that it is resolved as quickly as possible. The LADO does not investigate.

**Management of allegations focuses on three aspects:**

Safeguarding – LADO will oversee and ensure statutory agencies are appropriately safeguarding the alleged victim, children the alleged perpetrator works with, and children in the alleged perpetrators personal life.

Criminal investigation – the LADO will seek updates from the police where there is a criminal element to the allegation, and share information where necessary.

Employment – LADO will oversee employer investigations, and provide advice and guidance to employers of the alleged perpetrator to ensure safeguarding procedures are followed and the children within that establishment are appropriately safeguarded from any potential risk.

It is Children’s Social Care, the Police and the Employers responsibility to investigate and form a conclusion regarding the allegation. The LADO can chair allegations meeting to co-ordinate this response and ensure fair and just investigation and actions.

**The following definitions should be used when determining the outcome of allegation investigations:**

a. ***Substantiated:*** there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;

b. ***False:*** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;

c. ***Malicious:***there is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false;

d. ***Unfounded:***there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively they may not have been aware of all the circumstances;

e. ***Unsubstantiated:*** this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.