

Quick Guide to the LADO

Allegations Management – the Local Authority Designated Officer

Version 1.0

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Issued by: Nicola Robertson
ROLE: Service Manager QAAS



What is the LADO?

The LADO works within West Berkshire Council and is there to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary agencies when it has been alleged that a professional or volunteer who works with children in West Berkshire 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicated they may not be suitable to work with children.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

The LADO should always be notified when one or more of the criteria above has been met. The LADO doesn't investigate allegations, but gives advice and guidance to employers and voluntary agencies about how to manage allegations. The LADO also has oversight of allegations which meet the above criteria, ensuring that allegations or concerns about adults working or volunteering with children are investigated appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely fashion, consistent with a fair and thorough process. The LADO will also ensure that the voice of the child or young person is heard and considered at every stage.

The responsibilities of the local authority in relation to the LADO role are outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education. The Berkshire West Children's Safeguarding Partnership (in West Berkshire) website has detailed procedures for organisations to follow when an allegation is made:

<https://berks-westberks.trixonline.co.uk/chapter/allegations-against-staff-or-volunteers>

What happens once a notification is accepted?

A notification will be accepted by the LADO if it meets the criteria set out above. The contact form can be accessed by contacting the LADO service at:

LADO.LADO@westberks.gov.uk or by calling 01635 503153.

Notifications will be subject to an initial evaluation and where appropriate the LADO will consult with other agencies 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 or children and consideration for the employee/volunteer concerned. A multi-agency Allegations against Staff/Volunteers (ASV) meetings could also be convened by the LADO to manage specific situations.

Each agency will use their own procedures to investigate an allegation. The LADO will offer guidance around any safeguarding concerns.

What should practitioners do?

Anybody who has concerns about an adult who works or volunteering with children should discuss their concerns with their manager, HR provider and/ or their organisation's Designated Safeguarding Lead. This discussion should help to clarify whether the criteria for notifying the LADO have been met.

If it is still unclear whether the criteria have been met after this discussion, practitioners can contact the LADO for further advice.

Urgent child safeguarding concerns should be discussed directly

Usual safeguarding procedures apply if it is suspected that any of the criteria for a LADO notification have been met. If anyone suspects that a child is either experiencing or is at risk of harm:

- Members of the public should contact the West Berkshire Contact, Advice & Assessment Service on 01635 503090
- Practitioners involved with the child or family should contact West Berkshire Contact, Advice & Assessment Service on 01635 503190 or Child@westberks.gov.uk
- Outside of these office hours, practitioners should contact the Berkshire Emergency Duty Service on 01635 351999.

Key contacts and further information

The LADO in West Berkshire can be contacted Monday to Friday by emailing LADO.LADO@westberks.gov.uk or calling 01635 503153.

If you want to know more about the LADO role, or managing allegations against staff, you can consult the managing allegations pages on the BWSCP website.