



GUIDANCE FOR LADO REFERRALS

This guidance sets out the Sussex Police Professional Standards Department (PSD) procedure to be followed where an allegation of child abuse is made against Sussex Police employees namely Police Officers, Specials, Police Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, or where there are concerns about that individual's suitability to work with children that meets the criteria for a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

A referral to the LADO will be made following assessment of a public complaint and/or, misconduct case. Details for the referral will be made using the requisite form for each Local Authority; West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

The case will be allocated to an Investigating Officer (IO) and initial enquiries will be undertaken, to confirm the identity of the member of staff subject of the referral and any information readily available about the incident. If the referral has been received from the LADO, an updated referral form will be submitted to the LADO with any additional information.

LADO Initial Evaluation Meeting

In instances where it is considered that the threshold for a Safeguarding LADO process has been met, an Initial Evaluation Meeting (IEM) shall be convened.

On occasion the LADO may contact PSD and following discussion, decide that the threshold for a LADO process has not been met. The IO will then determine what further action is appropriate in the circumstances.

If the threshold has been met the LADO will invite all interested parties, including the appointed investigating officer to a meeting. Attendees will be dependent on the circumstances and nature of the allegations and the role of the member of staff.

The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that all necessary parties are aware of the details of the allegations or the concerns raised. It will be agreed who and how the concern, or allegation is investigated i.e. which agencies shall be responsible for finding out or collating information that will inform the final LADO safeguarding process decision.

During the meeting the police may be required to share personal information about the member of staff concerned to support the safeguarding assessment. The necessity for sharing information should be considered and whether this is required to safeguard a child or assess the potential risks posed to a child. If information is shared during the meeting a record should be made of what was shared and ensure this is reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

The gateway for sharing the information is *section 10 & 11 Children Act 2004 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*.

Following the meeting the LADO will circulate an action log to all parties, which will detail any investigative steps to be taken.

There will be occasions where it is determined that no further action is required at the conclusion of this meeting.

Investigation Process

An investigation will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the public complaint and/or misconduct guidance and regulations. If there is no public complaint or misconduct, proportionate enquiries will be undertaken in line with the actions detailed by the LADO.

As part of the investigation process the member of staff will be informed of the LADO referral. They will be given the opportunity to make representations to the LADO, as well as respond to any allegations as part of the public complaint/misconduct. Should they wish to they can email their views independently to the LADO, (email details below)

Appropriate welfare support will need to be provided to the member of staff, this will include referral to the member of staff's line management to manage. In addition, the appropriate staff association may be informed. Regular updates should be provided to the member of staff during the investigation process.

Once the investigation has concluded and if appropriate, signed off by the Appropriate Authority, a copy of the findings, subject to the harm test will be forwarded to the LADO. (Statutory agencies have a duty to share information in instances where they believe children may be at risk of harm. However, every effort is made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained, and information is restricted to those who have a need to know).

LADO Outcome Meeting

When the investigation process has concluded the LADO will convene an outcome meeting. All parties will be asked to attend. The IO will be asked to provide an overview of their

actions and the outcome of their enquiries. At a final LADO meeting/case discussion, those who have participated in the process will be required to express their professional view about the adjudication. Decision making is not the sole responsibility of the LADO.

There are five outcomes, the details of which are documented in the protocol. All parties must take part in the decision process and the threshold for a safeguarding decision is often made on balance of probabilities, where a lower burden of proof is acceptable, as appose to the criminal threshold of beyond all reason doubt. The decision will made on the facts presented during the process and would need to be proportionate and fair.

At the conclusion of the meeting the LADO will circulate the outcome decision. It is the responsibility of the IO to update the member of staff.

LADO Information Sharing

Following the LADO process, the member of staff can request to see the minutes of the LADO meetings that have taken place by contacting the relevant authority (Email details below)

Third party information (such as the personal details of the alleged victim, names of witnesses etc.) is removed and only information pertaining to the person of concern is provided. The local authority will retain a record of the allegation and any associated documents in archive.

Further information about the LADO can be found of their respective websites;

West Sussex LADO	Internet - click here	Email - LADO@westsussex.gov.uk
East Sussex LADO	Internet - click here	Email – lado@eastsussex.gov.uk
Brighton & Hove LADO	Internet - click here	Email - ladoenquiries@brighton-hove.gov.uk