**One Minute Guide to the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer**

**What is a LADO?**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is the person who should be notified when it has been alleged that someone who works or volunteers 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; or
* Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates she or he may pose a risk of harm to children.
* Inappropriate relationship between a professional and a child
* Behaviour in private life that is or could lead to a safeguarding concern.

The role involves having oversight of allegations about practitioners which meet the above criteria, ensuring that these allegations or concerns about adults working or volunteering with children are recorded appropriately, monitored and progressed in a timely and confidential way. It is also important to ensure that the voice of the child or young person is heard and taken into account at every stage.

The LADO sits within Children Services in the Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Service. The responsibilities of the local authority in relation to the LADO role are outlined in Working Together 2019 and chapter 7 of the London Child Protection Procedures 2020 which addresses the management of allegations against adults who work with children and young people.

**Why do we need to contact the LADO?**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2020 document states that: *"Any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within the organisation. The Designated Officer should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the Police".*

It is everyone’s responsibility to protect children and safeguard all in our care. Organisations must have a Safeguarding Policy and part of the policy must state about the procedure for managing an allegation.

Confidentiality and information must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to:

* Protect children
* Facilitate enquiries;
* Avoid victimisation;
* Safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected;
* Manage disciplinary/complaints aspects.

**What happens once a referral is accepted?**

A referral will be accepted by the LADO if it meets the criteria set out above. Please see the referral form on the Tower Hamlets website for more information about whether allegations meet the criteria.

Referrals will be subject to an initial evaluation and where appropriate involvement of other sectors 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 and appropriate consideration for the practitioner concerned. Allegations Against Staff and Volunteer (ASV) strategy meetings are also 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, for example an individual’s contact with children while the allegations are being investigated.

**What should professionals do?**

Anybody who has concerns about a person working or volunteering with children should discuss their concerns with their manager, and/ or their organisation’s Designated Safeguarding Lead. This discussion should help to clarify whether the criteria for making a LADO referral has been met. If it is agreed a referral is necessary, the referral form is on the Tower Hamlets website.

If it is still unclear whether the criteria has been met after this discussion, practitioners can contact the LADO on 0207 364 0677 for consultation and advice.

**Key contacts and further information**

IF a child is at immediate risk of harm contact the Police on 999. Otherwise, the Local Authority Designated Officer can be contacted Monday to Friday: 9-5pm on 07903 238827 or 0207 364 0677 or by email on LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk. There is an Out of Hours contact number for evenings and the weekend: 0207 364 5006 – choose Option 3.

Please do not hesitate to call to discuss any safeguarding concern that you may have relating to an allegation of professional abuse against children.