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# **Local Authority Designated Officer**

**Southwest Regional  
LADO Group**

# **Managing Allegations**

**2025**



## People who work with children

‘Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. Everyone who comes into contact with Children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action’.

*Working together to safeguard children 2023*

# Local Authority Designated Officer

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## LADO

- Receive reports about allegations and to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases;
- Liaise with the police and other agencies;
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process
- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations

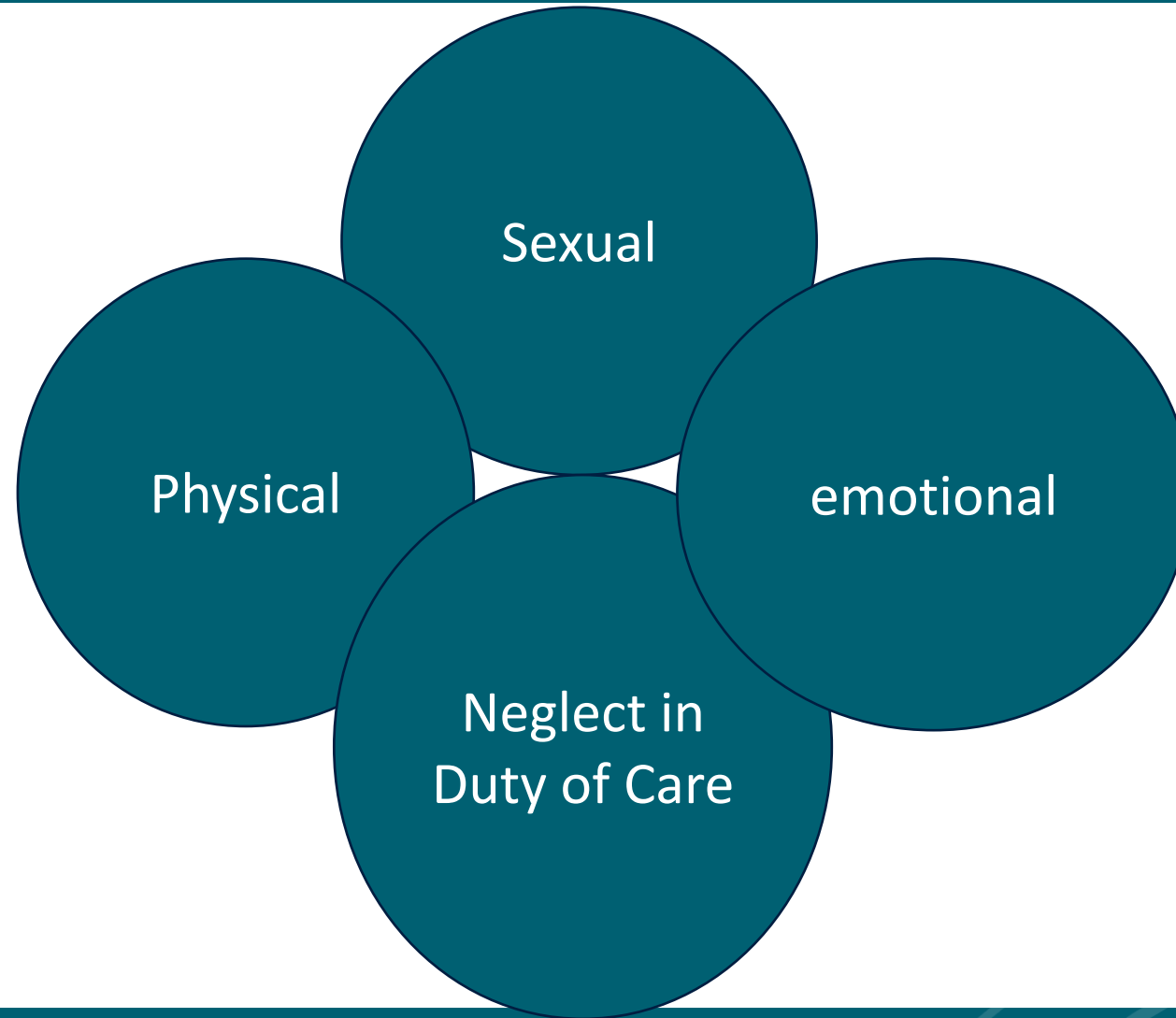
# So, what is an Allegation?

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# What is Harm?

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# The Harm Test

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## **What is the harm test?**

A person satisfies the harm test if they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm. It is something a person may do to cause harm or pose a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

	Accidental	Reckless	Deliberate
Physical	A member of staff collides with a young person when walking out from the living room, and the child alleges this was intentional.	Member of staff physically must restrain a child, however they use an unapproved physical hold. No harm was caused, but the child complained about being restrained.	Young person is physically and verbally abusive to a member of staff, the member of staff pins them to a wall and shouts in their face.
Sexual	Walking past a young person on the stairs, the member of staff brushes the Young Persons bottom with their hand.	Member of staff does not knock on the Young Persons door before entering and the Young Person is naked.	Member of staff arranges to meet the young person outside of working hours and contacts them on their personal number and asks the young person to send naked pictures of themselves.
Emotional	Member of staff refers to a young person with the incorrect pronouns	A black Young Person reports the registered manager is calling them a cheeky monkey and the young person feels this is racist.	Member of staff repeatedly shames a trans young person for the clothing they are wearing. Telling them “ you can't wear that” “you look like a poof” this is done in front of other young people and staff
Neglect (in duty of care)	Care home not fully staffed and an issue arises which means that a young person's medication is administered late.	Speeding when transporting a young person	Member of staff locks the young person in a room and refuses them any food in response to the child having been abusive.

# Preliminary Fact Finding

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- Establish the facts
- Quick and timely – to ensure a LADO referral is completed within 24 hours
- Detailed written account from person reporting the concern
- Do you have a full understanding of what happened
- Context of concern - where and when did it happen
- Are there any witnesses
- CCTV
- Speak with the Child or Young Persons Social worker
- Discuss with Senior Manager
- Do you have any previous concerns about the member of staff
- What is the Child or Young Persons view
- Has the young person told anyone else



# Preliminary Fact Finding

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- Were there any witnesses?
- Ask the witnesses what they saw?
- What is the Child or Young Person's history regarding making allegations?
- Ask the Child or Young person to demonstrate what happened
- TED- Tell - Explain -Describe
  - Tell me what happened?
  - Can you tell me where/when this happened?
  - who was involved?
  - Who was close by / saw what happened?

# Managing low level concerns

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- Farrer and Co; Developing a Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Record keeping is essential
- Record and evidence who you have discussed the concern/allegation with and joined up decision making (Social Worker/Manager/HR)
- Evidence decision making and rationale regarding how the concern has been dealt with and actions taken by your organisation

# Patterns of Low-Level Concerns

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- Create a chronology where there are number or pattern of concerns regarding a staff member
- Record on staff members file so this can be reviewed in supervision/performance reviews
- When a pattern of concerns is identified a formal course of action should be decided; either through disciplinary procedures or referral to the LADO

# Possible Options

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- LADO referral (clearly meets LADO threshold / harm test)
- Doubt-it may meet harm test - consult with LADO
- Low level concern (harm test not met)
- Behaviour is appropriate and consistent with code of conduct

**Familiarise yourself with the LADO service in the area where you work and the process you will need to follow.**

# Reporting Allegations

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Context

Demographics

LADO criteria

Notification to the  
LADO made within  
ONE working day

# Allegation Management

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- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- Children's social care enquiries and/or assessment about whether a child is in need of protection or services;
- Organisational investigation

**The LADO does not investigate allegations.**

# Communication

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- The LADO will identify an individual who is responsible for keeping the child, parents and the person who is being investigated updated.
- The employer is responsible for updating the LADO with any progress and new information if relevant.
- Children and Young People's views are important and should be considered throughout the Allegation Management process.

# Outcomes

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- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation;
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation;
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive;
- **Unsubstantiated:** this is not the same as a false allegation. It means that there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation; the term therefore does not imply guilt or innocence.
- **Unfounded:** The term 'unfounded' means that there is no evidence or proper basis that supports the allegation being made.





**Don't assume it can't happen in your organisation**



**Don't think "What if I'm wrong?" think "What if I'm right?"**



# What have we learnt

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- Dismissive
- Disbelief
- Children and Young people not being heard
- Professional curiosity/challenge
- Cumulative harm and risk

# Features of a safer culture

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- Open, no secrets
- Belief that 'it could happen here'
- Clear procedures for reporting concerns i.e. whistleblowing / confidential report policy.
- Support in raising concerns and commitment to take action
- Setting acceptable standards of behaviour
- Policies and procedures put into practice
- Induction and probationary periods
- Commitment to safeguarding and an ongoing culture of vigilance

# Involving the LADO service

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- Notification to the LADO SHOULD be made within ONE working day ('Working Together...' 2023)
- Report concerns to the Local Authority where the individual works if you feel the LADO criteria has been met
- If you are concerned about a member of staff and children are at risk of harm, do not wait to speak with a LADO before taking appropriate safeguarding actions.
- Familiarise yourself with how to make a notification to the LADO service in the area where you work

# Questions