

## Safeguarding Children: Dealing With Allegations Supporting Staff and Volunteers

### Good Practice in dealing with allegations

Being under investigation is always stressful, but agencies can help by:

- Minimising Delay
- Providing you with written information
- Being open and honest
- Ensuring access to independent support

If you are unhappy about the way you have been treated by your employer, you should refer to your Employer's Grievance Policy. If you are unhappy about the way the investigation was conducted, you should contact the Local Authority's Complaints Officer.

**Contact Details**  
**Complaints Officer**  
**01472 326427**

***Experience shows that children can be subjected to abuse by those who are supposed to be caring for them. It is essential that children do not feel inhibited from reporting abuse against them by staff or volunteers. Children have a right to be treated properly and any incident where a child or adult feels that a trusted adult has crossed the boundary of acceptable behaviour should be reported. All individuals who work with children must ensure that the environment they work or live in encourages children to make truthful reports of unacceptable behaviour.***

### Dealing With an Allegation

This leaflet aims to provide information to those working with children, about what happens if an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against them. It also provides information about other situations where there is a concern about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour with a child.

Becoming the subject of an allegation is always stressful for the individual concerned and for their family. The challenge for everyone concerned is to ensure that children are affectively safeguarded and that their welfare is promoted, whilst at the same time treating persons accused fairly and honestly.

### What Happens When an Allegation is Made?

When an allegation is made about a member of staff/volunteers, the individual is likely to feel stressed and may also feel aggrieved. Your employer will refer the matter to the Local Authority's Designated Officer whose role it is to offer advice in these circumstances. The Local Authority's Designated Officer will discuss the concerns with your employer and if the concerns are of a serious nature, they will make a referral to the Police and/or Children's Services, who will undertake further enquiries. North East Lincolnshire's Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) provides detailed guidance to all agencies about the procedures to be followed and you can access these via the [LSCB website](#).

### **What form does the enquiry take?**

There are 3 related, but separate sets of enquiries which need to take place. Each differs in terms of focus and can have different outcomes. The 3 types of enquiries are:

- Child Protection Enquiries – relating to the safety and welfare of any children who are or who may have been involved;
- A Police investigation into a possible offence;
- Disciplinary Procedures, where it appears that the allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct on the part of staff.

Your employer will aim to inform you about the existence of the allegation as soon as they receive it. However, they may not be able to do this until after they have consulted with other agencies. In most circumstances, you could expect to be informed of the substance of the allegation within 3 days of your employer receiving it.

### **What happens if everyone thinks the allegation is serious?**

Children's Services and the Police will hold a strategy meeting to agree what type of enquiries will need to take place and what is required to safeguard any children involved. It is unlikely that you will be part of the strategy meeting, although your employer will usually be involved.

### **How will I know what has been decided?**

Your employer will keep you informed of what type of enquiries will be carried out and the expected timescales. You can expect to be treated fairly, be informed verbally and in writing about the nature of the concerns and be informed of all decisions as soon as possible. It is usual practice for the professionals involved to review the progress of the investigation regularly.

### **Where can I get independent support from?**

Independent support can be a great help and benefit to you. You may be able to contact some of the following:

- Union or Professional Association
- Occupational Health or Employee Welfare Service
- General Practitioner

Please discuss opportunities for independent support with your employer

### **Will I be suspended from work while enquiries are ongoing?**

Employers must not suspend persons accused of an allegation automatically, or without careful thought. Your employer will need to consider if there is cause to suspect that a child is at risk of significant harm, or if the allegation warrants a Police investigation or if the concerns are so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. Your pay may be affected depending on your employer's policy.

### **Will details of the investigation be kept on my work records or shared with anyone else?**

It is important that employers keep a summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, any actions taken and decisions reached on a person's confidential personnel file. However, a copy of information which is kept on file about you will be available to you.

The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future requests for references and provide classification in cases where a future Criminal Record Check reveals information from Police that an allegation was made but did not result in a prosecution or conviction.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board will keep a record of all allegations against persons working with children for monitoring purposes. They will hold personal information, the nature of the allegation and the outcome. This information will be stored securely in line with the Data Protection Act requirements.