

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet summarises how we deal with allegations against people who work with children and young people in Somerset.

This procedure commences when someone who works with your child – either in a paid or voluntary capacity, has behaved inappropriately **and** one or more of the following is considered to have occurred:

- The individual has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed your child, **or**
- They have possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to your child, **or**
- They have behaved towards your child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- *Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children (ONLY for schools)*
NB This is referred to as the 'criteria'

STEP ONE - INITIAL ACTION

If you have not already been made aware, the organisation responsible for the service your child is receiving, should inform you that an incident has occurred.

This organisation e.g. school, will also contact the local authority to inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Every local authority has a LADO. The person in this role is responsible for advising the organisation on how to deal with the adult who has acted inappropriately when one or more of the criteria are met.

The fact that you have been provided with this leaflet indicates that the responsible organisation initially considers that one or more of the criteria are met - see 'Introduction'.

The LADO may consult with the following agencies if deemed necessary:

- Children's Social Care (CSC) – to identify any welfare issues and support for the family.
- Police – to consider if a crime has been committed.

STEP TWO - ASSESSMENT OF THE CONCERN

The organisation will inform the LADO by completing an Allegations Reporting Form (ARF).

The LADO will assess the information within the form and contact the organisation to agree if the criteria are met.

If the criteria are considered **NOT** to be met this does not mean that the matter is concluded. Your concerns will still be considered seriously but may be dealt with through other internal processes e.g. complaints procedure.

If agreed that the criteria are met, then the remainder of this leaflet will provide an overview of the possible processes that are followed.

STEP THREE - TYPES OF INVESTIGATION

Depending on the nature of the concerns, one or more of the following processes may take place:

- Inquiries and assessment by CSC about any of the children involved to determine the need to protect or provide services.
- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence.

- An internal investigation by the organisation.

Timescales will vary according to the type of investigation and agency / organisation involved. The LADO will ensure that any investigations undertaken are monitored and any delays addressed.

STEP FOUR - COMMUNICATION

The relevant agencies e.g. police, will keep you informed and updated if involved.

The organisation (who the person of concern works for) is responsible for keeping you informed about the progress of any internal investigation it undertakes. This will include the outcome of any disciplinary process, but not the information used in a disciplinary hearing (should it progress to this).

Key points

- The organisation should notify and take advice from the LADO if any of the criteria are met.
- If the criteria are not met, your concerns should still be treated seriously by the responsible organisation and dealt with through other means.
- If any of the criteria are met, one or more of the processes to investigate the matter will be followed.
- You should be informed of any relevant developments by the responsible agencies – if involved, and informed of the outcome by the organisation.

For more detailed information please visit the following links (or ask the organisation for a copy of its procedure):

Where the organisation is a **school**:

Keeping Children Safe in Education (part 4)
www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

For **all other organisations**:

South West Child Protection Procedures
www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/somerset/p_alleg_against_staff.html



USEFUL CONTACTS

Initial concerns can be directed to the relevant organisation, and agencies that may be involved:

Police

Non-emergency 101

Children's Social Care

0300 123 2224
(choose option 1)

If the police and children's social care are not involved, and the organisation is dealing with the matter, you may wish to contact the relevant national body.

Where the organisation is a school:

Ofsted

www.gov.uk/government/organisation/ofsted
0300 123 4666

Independent School's Inspectorate (ISI)

www.isi.net
0207 6000 100



Information for Parents and Carers on the Managing Allegations Procedure (for Somerset)

Version 1, October 2020