



## **Allegations against staff and the Local Authority Designated Officer: a guide for children's services in Camden**

### **Introduction**

As part of their duty to safeguard children, organisations need to ensure that only adults who are suitable to work with children are employed. This is done through safe recruitment practices and by having robust procedures to deal with any allegations that a staff member or volunteer has harmed a child.

Organisations must have a system in place for responding to allegations or concerns relating to staff and volunteers, including a delegated manager responsible for dealing with incidents and reporting allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

This leaflet explains the role of the LADO and describes what organisations need to do in response to allegations or concerns involving staff and volunteers. More details can be found in the CSCP guidance on managing allegations against staff and volunteers. [Introduction \(cscp.org.uk\)](https://www.cscp.org.uk)

### **Role of the LADO**

Every local authority must have a designated officer (LADO) whose role is to support the children's workforce by:

- co-ordinating borough-wide responses to allegations
- providing advice and guidance to organisations where allegations have been made
- liaising with the police and other agencies
- contributing to decision-making on cases
- monitoring the progress of cases.

In Camden, the LADO is Jacqueline Fearon.

## When to refer

- The organisation's responsible officer should refer any incidents or allegations to the LADO where a member of staff 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;
  - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
  - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (a transferrable risk).
- This includes allegations or incidents or concerns arising out of the work-place in their private life that may suggest they are unsuitable to work with children such as inappropriate relationships with young people or viewing child pornography.
- Incidents and concerns should be reported to the Camden LADO if the incident happened in Camden regardless of where the child lives.
- Historical claims about a member of staff still working at the organisation should also be referred as these must be investigated.
- Referrals should be made for all staff and volunteers, paid or unpaid.

Camden uses the National LADO Network thresholds when deciding on interventions and agencies can refer to these for guidance on whether to refer cases to the LADO.

[LADO Threshold Document – national-lado-network.co.uk](https://www.national-lado-network.co.uk)

## How to refer

The responsible officer should complete the *LADO Agency reporting form* and email this to the LADO mailbox [LADO@camden.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@camden.gov.uk). The referral form is available at: <https://cscsp.org.uk/professionals/managing-allegations-against-staff-and-volunteers-lado/>

The mailbox is regularly checked by the LADO and who will contact the referrer as soon as possible to discuss the case and decide what action to take. Agencies will be expected to provide as much information as possible from the outset, including any witness statements or CCTV footage, to support any investigation.

In urgent cases where it is necessary to speak directly to the LADO, responsible officers can call **020 7974 4556** and ask to speak to the LADO. Referrers may reach a voicemail message and be asked to leave a message but this will be returned as soon as possible.

***It is strongly recommended that a referral is sent to the LADO mailbox in the first instance.***

### **Consultation and advice**

Sometimes agencies may have concerns but are not clear if they meet the threshold for referral. The LADO can offer informal advice by telephone to establish whether thresholds for a referral have been met. Although the outcome of the consultation will be recorded and shared with agencies, it will not be formally recorded on CSSW case records unless a formal referral is made.