

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

In Buckinghamshire we recognise that the impact on you and your child can be far reaching.

Therefore specialist workers and designated advisors are in place to handle allegations against staff and volunteers.

We are committed to providing fair treatment and to achieving just outcomes for all concerned.

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www.bucks-lscb.org.uk



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

A guide for parents or carers of a child or young person who has made an allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer working in the children's workforce

Introduction

Any allegation of abuse is likely to cause a great deal of anxiety and distress to all concerned - the child or young person making the disclosure, their parents, carers and family members (such as siblings), as well as the person against whom the allegation has being made

This guide is intended to guide you through the allegation investigation process and to let you know what will happen next.

In Buckinghamshire, Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) are in place to manage allegations against staff and volunteers. They are committed to providing fair treatment and to achieving just outcomes for all concerned.

Most organisations working with children identify a senior member of staff to take a lead on managing allegations. They are often referred to as a Designated Senior Manager (DSM)

What happens when an allegation is made?

If your child discloses an allegation of abuse to a staff member, the lead person or Designated Senior Manager (DSM) should be notified.

The DSM should immediately contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), if it is alleged that a member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children



Professionals should always take a disclosure from a child or young person seriously and not make assumptions about what is or is not true.

Any adult in the Children's Workforce who behaves in an inappropriate or abusive manner towards a child or young person should always be reported to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the numbers listed below:

Bridget Day
01296 382070

Yvette Morello
01296 387820

For additional information relating to the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board, please visit:

www.bucks-lscb.org.uk



Support for children, young people and their families

Support for Children & Young People

Way In (www.way-in.org.uk) counsellors offer confidential support and advice to Children & Young People in Bucks

Buckinghamshire Mind (www.bucksmind.org.uk) offers counselling services for young people aged between 4 - 18 who are dealing with emotional distress.

For online information on local youth information, advice, counselling and support services (such as Way In) you can visit: www.youthaccess.org.uk

If your child is feeling angry, and would like advice on how to manage their feelings, you can visit www.angriesout.com

www.thesite.org provides advice, information and support for young people on a wide range of issues.

Support for Parents and Carers

MOSAC (www.mosac.org.uk) is an organisation offering support and advice to non-abusing parents and carers of children / young people who have experienced sexual abuse.

If you would like to speak to someone in confidence, you can visit The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (www.bacp.co.uk) to find a qualified counsellor in your local area.



Books for parents of children who have experienced abuse can be found at <http://www.isurvive.org/resources/books-you-may-find-helpful/>

Your child and the member of staff or volunteer, should be supported from the outset.

If your child makes a disclosure directly to you, the LADO should still be notified (please see contact numbers)

What happens if further action is required?

If it is suspected that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer from, significant harm, or if a criminal offence may have been committed, a strategy discussion will be held.

This discussion will involve the LADO, a Police Officer, a Social Worker, the employer of the staff member or volunteer, plus other relevant agencies

The aim of the meeting is to share relevant information and to determine whether any other the following types of investigation are required:

- Enquires undertaken by Social Care, using Child Protection Procedures
- An investigation by the Police, to establish whether a criminal act has been committed
- Internal Disciplinary Investigation

In some cases, an allegation may come about due to naivety or poor practice on the part of the staff member. In situations such as this, it may be more appropriate for the allegation to be managed internally by their organisation, or for the member of staff or volunteer to undergo additional training.

In cases where an allegation appears to be unfounded, the LADO will consider

- A child's interpretation of events
- Whether there is something else going on for the child or young person which may have prompted a disclosure.

If appropriate, additional support will be offered to the child.

Notifications / Confidentiality

Confidentiality regarding both the child or young person, and the accused member of staff or volunteer, should be respected and people only told about the allegation on a 'need to know' basis.

Those informed of the allegation will include:

- The child or young person's parents / carers.
- The employer of the member of staff or volunteer.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Senior members of staff (where relevant)
- Manager of the placing agency (if appropriate)

There may be occasions when the police will need to decide the appropriate timing for individuals to be notified.

Where a matter becomes common knowledge or subject to speculation, it may also become necessary to issue a brief statement for the public.

It is strongly advised that families who are directly affected do not discuss the case widely, in order to help limit unnecessary gossip or speculation prior to a formal outcome.

Alleged Criminal Offence

If the police decide to investigate an alleged criminal offence, the member of staff or volunteer may be arrested, or invited to assist with the investigation.

Decisions about charging rest with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). If the offence is admitted by the accused, the CPS may advise a caution (a formal warning about the accused actions). If the CPS advises that the member of staff or volunteer is charged, they will either be released on bail (to appear on court at a later date) or kept in custody until the court hearing.

Parents will be kept informed about the progress of the case.

Internal Investigations

Following conclusion of police enquiries (or if the police are not involved), an employer may decide that further investigation is needed, to enable them to decide whether any further action is required within the place of work.

A child and their parents will be informed if the accused person will be returning to work after a period of suspension, and of other decisions that may have an impact on the child – but families are not entitled to know the details of any disciplinary sanctions applied to the accused adult.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

An employer has a duty to report a staff member or volunteer to the DBS if the staff member or volunteer has been dismissed from their post because

- They have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child or children
- They have satisfied the DBS "harm" test, or
- They have received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

The DBS will decide whether the staff member or volunteer should be barred from working with children in the future.

It is against the law for a barred person to work with children; it is also against the law for an employer to employ a staff member (or take on a volunteer) in a role working with children, if they know that they have been barred.

Child in Need (CIN) Assessment

When additional support is needed, Social Care can organise an assessment to identify services that can help. This is called a Child in Need Assessment (CIN for short).

This might be short term whilst the matter is being investigated, or longer term - going into the aftermath of incident.

You may also find the services detailed over the page of interest.