

**The Local Authority  
Designated Officer  
(LADO)  
LADO Practice Guidance  
(Handbook)  
2026**

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## FORWARD

It is my privilege, as Chair of the National LADO Network, to introduce this first official National LADO Network Practice Guide and Handbook.

This handbook represents a significant milestone for the LADO profession. It has been developed to support Local Authority Designated Officers across England in the delivery of their vital safeguarding responsibilities and to promote greater consistency, confidence, and professionalism in practice. It reflects the collective experience, expertise, and commitment of colleagues working tirelessly to safeguard children and young people.

The development of this handbook has been made possible through the invaluable support of the Department for Education (DfE). On behalf of the National LADO Network, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Department for its commitment, guidance, and collaborative approach throughout the development process. Their input, challenge, and support have been instrumental in helping to create a resource that recognises both the complexity and importance of the LADO role.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Local Authority Designated Officers across the country who contributed their knowledge, insights, and experience to the development of this document. The engagement, dedication and scrutiny shown by colleagues throughout this process has ensured that this handbook is grounded in practice, reflects the realities of the role, and supports the needs of practitioners. Thank you also for your patience and perseverance as we worked collectively to bring this important piece of work to fruition.

As the first official handbook produced by the National LADO Network, this document should be viewed as a living resource. Safeguarding practice continues to evolve, and so too must the guidance and support available to practitioners. We recognise that there will be opportunities to strengthen and refine this handbook over time, and it will therefore be subject to regular review and update to ensure it remains relevant, effective, and fit for purpose.

It is our aspiration that this handbook will provide a valuable source of guidance, support consistency of practice, and promote excellence across the profession. Most

importantly, we hope it contributes to our shared commitment to safeguarding children and ensuring that allegations and concerns about those who work or volunteer with children are managed fairly, effectively, and with the child's welfare at the centre of all decision-making.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this achievement. I look forward to continuing our collective journey of learning, development, and improvement as we strengthen practice together.

Mrs Rita Dada (JP)

Chair, National LADO Network (NLN)



## **Section A: Context & Introduction to the Guidance**

### **Introduction to this Practice Guidance Document**

1. The Local Authority Designated Officer role (covered in depth in section 2 of this guidance) was introduced within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance in 2006<sup>1</sup> following a range of public enquiries and reports.<sup>2</sup>
2. For the purposes of this practice guidance, any person exercising the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer whether an individual or part of a team will be referred to as the LADO.
3. This practice guidance document has been drafted following a series of calls for the provision of a clear, **concise handbook for the role of the LADO**.  
Specifically for a handbook that emphasises the need to focus on the culture of practice and how LADOs: challenge bias; recognise the impact of discrimination; understand the lived experience of children, young people and their families; and gain a sound awareness of the processes attached to this significant role in safeguarding children.
4. There is no exact legal definition of people who work with children for the purposes of managing allegation procedures, but managing allegation procedures apply to any adult working, training or volunteering in roles that involve responsibility for children, including the individuals and roles within the organisations and agencies covered by section 11(1) of the Children Act 2004<sup>3</sup> and Chapter Four of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)<sup>1</sup>.  
Managing allegation procedures can apply to 16 or 17-year-olds and apprentices in trusted roles such as youth leaders or sports coaches if they have authority over other children<sup>4</sup>. Managing allegations procedures also apply to all

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<sup>1</sup> [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\): a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children](#)

<sup>2</sup> Warner Report (Choosing with Care) (1992); the Utting Report (People Like Us) (1997); the Waterhouse Report (Lost in Care) (2000); and the Bichard Report (2004)

<sup>3</sup> The Children Act 2004, Section 11 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/section/11>

<sup>4</sup> This includes more roles and professions than that which are described in section 21 of the Sexual Offences Act, 2003 "Positions of Trust."

roles covered within regulated activity relating to children, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006<sup>5</sup>.

5. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities of LADOs and how these should be actioned consistently by local authorities.

## About this Guidance

6. The guidance:
  - i. aims to promote national consistency and strong cross-boundary collaboration between local authorities
  - ii. offers advice to help LADOs carry out their role effectively
  - iii. applies to all LADOs.
7. Furthermore, this guidance:
  - i. should be read by safeguarding partners and organisations responsible for protecting children and young people
  - ii. explains the role of the LADO, how agencies should work together when an allegation is made, and what outcomes may follow
  - iii. sets out what safeguarding partners can expect from a LADO during investigations and how responsibilities should be shared
  - iv. covers cases that do not meet the threshold for a Section 47 investigation under the Children Act 1989, or for referral to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
8. If there is disagreement about the correct procedure, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) should be consulted.
9. In some cases, it is possible that both LADO and Section 47 investigations may run at the same time if there are concerns about a child's welfare inside or outside of the home.
10. For allegations involving staff in education settings, the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and/or other relevant sector specific

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<sup>5</sup> Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Section 5 [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)

guidance, regulations and standards must also be followed as is necessary, dependent on the setting in which the allegation originates.

11. For the purposes of reflecting the diversity of settings covered by this guidance, there is a subsection within section C which covers 'managerless' settings. Furthermore, while the term 'employer' is used throughout, this guidance may also apply to persons in other roles which are sector specific – i.e. in children's residential homes, the voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector, out of school settings and faith-based settings such as "Madrassah's and or similar etc."

## **Section B: The Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer**

12. The LADO is employed by the local authority and in some cases trusts, and their core role contributes to keeping children and young people safe from harm at the hands of adults who may pose a risk/threat to their safety.
13. The LADO oversees the management of allegations against adults who work or volunteer with children regularly. Their role is to ensure that any concern meeting the harm, risk-of-harm, criminal or suitability thresholds is handled promptly, fairly, and is compliant with statutory guidance. The LADO's role is also to determine if the harm threshold is met once advice is sought from them. The LADO provides advice to the employer, regulatory or professional body, coordinates the safeguarding and investigative process with agencies such as police and regulatory bodies, conducts an initial evaluation of referrals, and may chair multi-agency allegation meetings. Crucially, the LADO does not investigate directly; instead, they monitor and guide employers and other agencies to ensure thoroughness, timeliness, and appropriate action. The LADO does not determine any disciplinary outcome of the allegations management process, and they do not have contact with the adult who is the subject of the allegation. Their remit is procedural oversight and advice giving.
14. The LADO, whether an individual or team of officers, should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to be able to fulfil this role effectively. Any new

appointments to the LADO role, other than current or former designated officers moving between local authorities, should be qualified social workers as per the updated requirements set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*.

15. The LADO is responsible for ensuring organisations understand their role in managing allegations and promoting safe working practices, including safer recruitment. This should be achieved through targeted awareness-raising activities such as training, workshops, and direct engagement with partners, tailored to local needs and emerging trends.
16. The LADO should work closely with the Local Safeguarding Partnership to establish and maintain strategic links with key agencies—such as Education, Health, Police, and all organisations working with children, whether paid or voluntary, including, but not limited to, charity, social enterprise (VCSE) settings, childcare settings and sports clubs—to embed allegations management into their ongoing agendas.
17. As stated, LADOs do not conduct investigations themselves. Instead, the primary responsibility for investigating disciplinary or practice-related concerns into allegations against adults who work with children is carried out by the most appropriate person within the agency, usually the employer, although this role may, in some cases, be enacted by other regulatory bodies or, in criminal offences, the police, and or Children Social Care where appropriate.
18. The role of the LADO includes:
  - a. Advising employers and organisations on whether concerns should be referred onwards, investigated, or recorded for information.
  - b. Receiving and managing referrals, guiding cases through to resolution and offering advice to ensure quality investigations.
  - c. Liaising with police and other agencies when a crime may have occurred and advising on making appropriate referrals.
  - d. Advising referrals to Children's Social Care if a child is harmed or at risk, making a direct referral whenever required.

- e. Chairing LADO meetings - Allegations Management Meetings (AMMs)/ Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers Meetings (ASVs) and ensuring the right agencies are involved.
  - f. Monitoring case progress to ensure fairness, timeliness, and proportionality which includes oversight of the managing allegation process.
  - g. Coordinating multi-agency decisions about the allegation and any ongoing risks.
  - h. Advising on referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and relevant regulators (e.g. Ofsted, TRA, GMC, FA).
  - i. Escalating concerns if an employer refuses to make a necessary referral, including making the referral directly if needed.
  - j. Engaging with regulators, offering advice, training, and raising awareness.
  - k. Understanding the diversity of a wide range of settings, including, but not limited to, schools, faith groups, youth organisations, foster carers, NHS, police, out-of-school settings, children's residential settings, and childcare providers.
  - l. Having strong knowledge of child protection law, risk assessment, and relevant criminal and employment law.
  - m. Supporting other agencies/regulatory bodies and providing relevant information and documents where required.
  - n. Ensuring the support / welfare needs of the person subject to an allegation is considered
  - o. The LADO role also includes data analysis and service development.
19. In relation to Foster Carers, the LADO responsible for an allegation is usually based on where the risk is and where the foster carer/kinship carer resides. Example: If a foster/kinship carer is resident in Area A but is providing fostering services on behalf of a local authority or an independent fostering agency in Area B, the LADO in Area A takes the lead.
20. If an adult works across multiple areas (e.g. a sports coach), the LADO in the area where the harm occurred and the risk lies leads the case and keeps other LADOs informed.

21. For historic allegations, LADOs should agree who leads. Usually, it is the LADO in the area where the adult currently works, especially if there is an ongoing risk.
22. In complex cases, for example, where allegations cross multiple local authorities, LADOs should agree early on who will manage the case. The lead LADO must keep other involved LADOs updated.
23. LADOs should work proactively across boundaries, sharing information and coordinating with placing authorities and Children's Social Care.

## **Section C: Handling & Management of Allegations**

### **Defining and Managing Allegations**

24. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026<sup>6</sup> states that an allegation may relate to a person who works with children who, in their capacity of working or volunteering with children, or in their private life, has:
  - a. Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child.
  - b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
  - c. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates a potential risk of harm.
  - d. Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.
25. This is referred to as 'criteria' and shall be used throughout this handbook.
26. Each local authority should have a clear, accessible and consistent referral pathway for raising allegations with the LADO. It should be clear that the LADO may also be contacted for advice and guidance. The contact details for the LADO should be up-to-date and held by both the employing local authority and the LADO Network.
27. The LADO service is a professional-facing service and will only deal directly with professionals. It is important to note that the statutory and local guidance make clear that the employer or organisational safeguarding lead is the person who

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<sup>6</sup> [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2026\): a guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children](#) paragraph 260

formally submits the LADO referral — however, in some cases, parents, members of the public, professionals, or the police may all raise the initial concern. Once the concern is raised, subsequent contact and communication by the LADO will only be with the agency whose responsibility is to update other involved parties such as the parents, victims and/or subjects. LADOs have no direct contact with parents and do not deal with parental complaints. These are dealt with via the responsible agency's internal complaints procedure and any identified safeguarding allegation can then be referred to the LADO directly by the agency.

28. In all cases, the LADO should be contacted within one working day of a concern being raised. Organisations should expect acknowledgement of the referral within one day.
29. If there are concerns that an adult's behaviour outside their role may indicate unsuitability to work with children, the LADO should advise the employer or agency on the process of conducting a risk assessment. This should evaluate potential transferable risks and the impact on their safeguarding responsibilities. The employer retains responsibility for the assessment, but the LADO will oversee in cases where there is LADO involvement and confirm its outcome.
30. In addition, LADOs should be alert to signs of organised or widespread abuse and/or the involvement of other perpetrators or institutions. They should consider whether the matter should be dealt with in accordance with the local authority's complex abuse procedures.
31. The LADO ensures the case is routed correctly, coordinated properly, and managed safely and as such, is responsible for sharing referral information with the relevant and appropriate bodies.
32. Appendix A provides a diagrammatical process pathway for the management of allegations as described in this section, including initial considerations. Appendix B provides a 'Managing Allegations LADO Checklist'.

## **Employers' Immediate Risk Assessment**

33. The LADO can advise on potential next steps and risk assessments, but decisions about suspension or changes to working arrangements rest with the employer.
34. The power to suspend lies with the employer and should not be automatic. The decision to suspend must be based on:
- a. The nature of the allegation
  - b. Potential for criminal investigation
  - c. Risk of compromising the investigation
  - d. Risk to the adult involved
  - e. Availability of alternative duties.
35. Suspension is only appropriate where there is:
- a. A significant risk to children
  - b. A risk to the adult
  - c. A risk of investigation being compromised.
36. Be aware that regulators may apply different thresholds than employers and can act swiftly to protect children.

## **Allegation Management Meetings**

37. The LADO decides if a LADO Meeting is needed based on the nature and complexity of the referral. If a meeting is not required, the LADO will hold allegations management discussions (which can be via phone calls or emails) to share information and agree actions. A LADO Meeting can be convened at any stage if deemed necessary. All referrals, even those below the threshold, should be recorded by the LADO.
38. The LADO meeting is organised and chaired by the LADO, with relevant agencies invited. The subject of the allegation does not attend.
39. The core meeting objectives should amount to a holistic assessment of risk which considers the wider context of the child and their history. This should include the following as a minimum:
- a. Share information about the person and the allegation

- b. Protect affected children and consider emergency measures
  - c. Review of previous concerns or referrals
  - d. Identify support for children, staff, and others affected
  - e. Conduct risk assessments to inform safeguarding
  - f. Assign lead contacts per agency
  - g. Agree actions, responsibilities, and timescales
  - h. Set review protocols and monitor progress
  - i. Address senior-level issues (e.g. media, resources)
  - j. Agree outcome
  - k. The employer (or agency) is responsible for feeding back the outcome to the person who is the subject of the allegation
  - l. Schedule follow-up meetings.
40. Minutes must be recorded, securely stored, and shared only with the agreement of the LADO (as Chair). The LADO monitors progress against agreed timelines, escalating delays as needed. Additional LADO meetings, including Outcome Meetings, may be convened where required. The LADO ensures the subject is kept informed via police/employer. Stakeholders should be advised early that complex cases may take longer, with reasons for delays documented.

### **Voice of the Child in the LADO Process**

41. The child or young person's voice must be central to the process and never assumed or overlooked. The LADO should ensure the child is spoken to by the most appropriate independent professional.
42. It is critical that the most appropriately skilled practitioners are utilised in seeking and responding to the voices of children and young people. Evidence in serious case reviews and thematic reviews by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel cases have emphasised the importance of ensuring that every possible voice is heard, no matter the individual circumstances – e.g. even where children are non-verbal. In such cases, the LADO should assure themselves that the practitioner seeking the 'voice' of the child has the necessary skills, expertise,

and knowledge of the child's communication approach to be able to do so effectively.

43. Children may not always feel ready or know how to express what has happened. Their views must be actively sought and not inferred. The child should be given the opportunity to share what has happened, express how they feel, and say how they would like the allegation to be handled, with the understanding that their preferred approach may not always be possible. If the child does not wish to speak or is unable to do so, this should be clearly recorded. In such cases, the views of parents or carers should be sought and shared with the LADO, in line with standard practice. Where a child is non-verbal, or where parents or carers may not have knowledge of the alleged abuse (for example, where it may have occurred in a residential or medical setting), an appropriately skilled practitioner should be engaged to ensure the child's voice is heard.
44. Where a criminal investigation proceeds without the child's assistance, the LADO should liaise with the agency leading the investigation (police) to seek assurance that the child is informed. This should apply regardless of whether the child consented to the investigation.
45. The LADO should identify who will provide feedback to the child and family, ensuring clear communication and transparency throughout.

## **Confidentiality**

46. Allegations against adults engaged in working with children and young people can have significant ramifications for the reputation, employment, progression, and financial remuneration of individuals. As a result, and in line with section 141F of the Education Act 2002, there are reporting restrictions which make it an offence for any person to publish any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher (in relation to any criminal and or safeguarding offence) in a school and that every effort must be made to maintain confidentiality.
47. Information should be restricted to updating the child, parent/s and person of concern and those who have a 'need to know' to conduct the case. It is the responsibility of the LADO to determine what information is shared and with

whom, and to ensure that records held and retained are done so securely, with access appropriately restricted. (Further guidance on information sharing can be found at paragraph 77-83).

## Outcomes

48. The LADO must ensure that every allegation is investigated or acted upon, with a clear and recorded outcome in each case. Once investigations are complete, the LADO provides a quality assurance role—reviewing the process to confirm it was fair, proportionate, and thorough—and works with relevant agencies to agree on an appropriate safeguarding outcome. (Please note that the LADO may seek to view/review a full investigation report for quality assurance with the aim of strengthening LADO oversight and advice).
49. Throughout the process, the LADO supports the employer in making informed decisions about how and when to communicate the start, progress, and outcome of their investigation, ensuring the welfare of the person subject to the allegation is considered.
50. The employer or agency responsible for the child (not the LADO) should keep families or carers informed about the progress of the case as it relates to their child. It is for the employer or agency responsible for the child to determine what information can and should be shared with families or carers.
51. The following outcome categories reflect established safeguarding practice and are commonly used in LADO processes. Terminology should be applied carefully, particularly where it relates to a child's account.

Allegation outcomes are defined as follows:

- a. **Substantiated:** Sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.
- b. **Malicious or false:** Sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the allegation is untrue and was made with a clear and evidenced intention to mislead or cause harm. This category should be used with caution, particularly where the allegation has been made by a child.
- c. **Unsubstantiated:** Insufficient evidence to prove or disprove; does not imply guilt or innocence.

- d. **Unfounded:** No evidence or basis for the allegation. It might indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.
  - e. **False:** sufficient evidence to disprove allegation, and no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive.
52. The disciplinary outcome is determined by the employer, considering any evidence gathered during the investigation and any concerns regarding suitability to work with children. The LADO will then review and ratify the safeguarding outcome. Once agreed, the most appropriate agency will be identified to inform the individual of the outcome. This is most likely to be, but is not exclusively, the employer.
53. Beyond determining the outcome, the employer should assess whether the adult poses an ongoing risk to children. If so, they should ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures and disciplinary actions/decisions are undertaken.
54. Following an investigation outcome, the LADO may recommend training, increased oversight, or referral to professional or regulatory bodies, including the Disclosure and Barring Service and any relevant regulatory bodies.

### **Allegation Management in the Case of Managerless Individuals**

55. The LADO's role is to provide oversight and coordination of the allegation management process. This does not extend to leading or carrying out investigations, including in cases involving individuals without a clear employer; instead, the LADO should ensure that an appropriate body or independent person is identified to undertake this work.
56. The LADO may receive allegations involving adults who work independently with children, such as private tutors, where no employer or overseeing body exists. The absence of an employer does not alter the LADO's role. If there is no police-led criminal investigation, the LADO should consult with relevant agencies and regulatory bodies to determine the most appropriate course of action.

57. In very exceptional cases where no other appropriate body is available to act, the LADO may need to contact the individual as part of coordinating the allegation management process. This must be handled with care to maintain impartiality, and the method of communication - written, phone, or in person, and should consider the individual's welfare. Where the case does not meet police or social care thresholds, and no regulator exists, where possible, the LADO will try to explore appropriate arrangements to manage the allegation. Particular care should be taken in such cases to avoid any perception that the LADO is undertaking an investigative role.
58. In these circumstances an independent or external investigator should be identified to ensure separation from the LADO's oversight role and maintain independence. The LADO's role is to facilitate and oversee these arrangements, not to undertake the investigation.
59. Throughout, the LADO should consider the Salmon Principles<sup>7</sup>, ensuring, through their oversight role, that the external investigator's process applies the principles of natural justice (in the same way it would for overseeing an employer's investigation) and to ensure all actions are proportionate, transparent, and in the best interests of children.

### **If the LADO Disagrees with the Outcome Reached**

60. Regardless of whether the allegations management process has been led by an employer or a regulatory or professional body, if the LADO believes the wrong outcome has been reached and/or that the outcome/decision made is unsafe, they can challenge and escalate where required. It is important to note that the LADO can challenge the outcome and decision making at any point in the process. The LADO can refer to the regulatory body and/or appropriate body.
61. The LADOs will also ensure that both outcomes are recorded with a clear rationale as to why the outcome is not agreed. Instead, if they believe the wrong conclusion has been reached, their influence lies in professional oversight and escalation. They can raise and resolve inter-agency concerns where decisions

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<sup>7</sup> [House of Commons - Public Administration - First Report](#) Salmon Principles Annex 3

or processes appear unsafe or inconsistent with statutory guidance. This includes challenging agencies that have failed to share relevant safeguarding information. The LADO may also escalate issues to the Local Safeguarding Partnership to address gaps in practice or unsafe decision-making. They can reconvene multi-agency meetings to review information, challenge decisions, and ensure the case meets safeguarding thresholds and procedural standards.

### **People in Position of Trust (PiPoT)**

62. Where an allegation or safeguarding concern relates to an individual who works or volunteers with both children and adults, consideration should be given to both the LADO allegations management procedures and the relevant local Safeguarding Adults Board/PiPoT arrangements.
63. Referral or consideration under one framework should not preclude consideration under the other. Information arising from conduct involving an adult may be relevant to assessing transferable risk or suitability to work with children, and concerns arising within the children's safeguarding framework may similarly be relevant to the individual's suitability to work with adults.
64. Where both frameworks are engaged, the LADO and the relevant Adult Safeguarding/PiPoT lead should seek to share relevant information, risk management and agency involvement, while maintaining the distinct statutory roles and decision-making requirements of each safeguarding framework.

## **Section D: Additional Guidance & Onward Development**

### **Whistleblowing**

65. Organisations must have clear whistleblowing procedures for staff to report concerns about colleagues working with children. If a LADO receives a whistleblowing concern directly, they must assess whether it meets the LADO criteria for an allegation. If it does, the standard LADO guidance applies.
66. The LADO does not investigate organisational issues nor quality assure the handling of whistleblowing complaints, but should share relevant information with relevant professionals, in line with legislation and best practice.

### **Escalation Process**

67. Any concerns regarding the adequacy or appropriateness of responses to an allegation by an individual or organisation should be escalated by the LADO through their internal escalation procedure/Local Safeguarding Partnership's escalation process or referred to the appropriate regulatory body for consideration. Escalation should follow the Partnership's professional challenge and resolution protocol. Any significant issues with the escalation process, including lack of cooperation, delay, or failure to follow safeguarding procedures, should be clearly recorded and escalated through appropriate governance arrangements.

### **Learning Points from Allegations**

68. The LADO and employer should review each case to identify any improvements to organisational policies or practices that can be made. While the LADO focuses on allegations against individuals, cases may highlight broader issues such as, but not limited to, lone working, behaviour management, or training needs. These learning points should be recorded and shared with relevant regulatory bodies and, where appropriate, contribute to Local Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews.

69. If the LADO identifies recurring concerns within an organisation, these should be reported to the appropriate regulatory body. Where concerns indicate potential risks beyond a single organisation or local area, the LADO should ensure that relevant intelligence is shared with other local authorities and safeguarding partners, including through regional and national networks. Where the organisation operates across multiple areas, relevant commissioning or placing authorities should also be informed.
70. Patterns or trends identified through LADO activity within the local area should be shared with the Local Safeguarding Partners to support oversight, learning, and continuous improvement. This includes promoting safer recruitment practices across all children's services.

## Recording

71. Each local authority should have a clear policy for recording and retaining concerns referred to the LADO. This should include cases that meet the LADO threshold/criteria for allegations, as well as all consultations and contacts about behaviour or concerns that do not meet the threshold. A proportionate record is expected in all cases, including where matters are resolved at the point of consultation, to support oversight, identification of patterns, and safeguarding decision-making. Where individual details are recorded, the employer should inform the adult that the LADO was consulted.
72. Records should be clear, sufficiently detailed, and include an appropriate level of risk analysis at each stage. All meetings and discussions should be documented and shared promptly with participants. Information should be stored securely and handled in line with data protection legislation.
- Allegation records should be retained in accordance with the local authority's data retention policy.

## Information Sharing

73. Effective information sharing is essential for safeguarding children and assessing risks posed by adults working with them. Organisations often hold

different pieces of information that, when combined, enable a full understanding of concerns and appropriate planning.

74. LADOs must be familiar with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*<sup>8</sup>, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and the guidance document *Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners*<sup>9</sup>, which outline legal frameworks for sharing information. To ensure investigations are fair and proportionate, employers should provide the LADO with access to relevant information and documentation where this is necessary and proportionate to support safeguarding decisions.
75. Due to the sensitivity of allegations, information shared with the LADO or in meetings should be handled confidentially. It may be shared more widely where necessary, proportionate, and timely to protect children, support safeguarding decisions, or meet legal or regulatory requirements.
76. Adults subject to allegations must be informed of the concerns, following a risk assessment to ensure children are not placed at further risk. However, they are not routinely entitled to detailed records of multi-agency discussions. All LADO records and meeting notes should be stored securely and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
77. If meeting notes are used for DBS or regulatory referrals, or in response to a Subject Access Request, they should be redacted to exclude third-party information. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR permit information sharing for safeguarding purposes. Concerns about data protection must not obstruct efforts to protect children.
78. Each request for information sharing should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, ensuring it is necessary, proportionate, timely, and in line with local authority protocols and safeguarding partnership agreements. Care must be taken not to compromise other agencies' investigations.
79. Where appropriate, information should be shared with relevant professionals and other agencies if there is a risk that the person could pose a danger to

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<sup>8</sup> [Working together to safeguard children 2026: statutory guidance](#) Page 17-22 – Information Sharing

<sup>9</sup> [DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

children in another job, setting, or role. If the person resigns or leaves during the investigation, the process should continue. A decision should be made by the employer, based on the information available as to what the likely outcome would have been if the person had not resigned/left employment.

80. Settlement Agreement should be completely avoided where there has been a safeguarding concern. LADOs should advise employers in line with KCSIE guidance which is clear on the need to provide accurate and factual references for staff members, particularly regarding safeguarding concerns even in relation to settlement agreements.
81. LADOs should also share safeguarding information as necessary, especially where an individual may be working across borders and/or where an individual may pose a risk in an area where they have taken up new employment. The LADO with information should share with the cross-border LADO where required.

## **Quality Assurance and Local Authority Oversight**

82. Local authorities must ensure their LADO provision is fit for purpose and meets expected service standards. This includes robust quality assurance, management oversight, and auditing mechanisms to assess threshold decisions, outcomes, and promote reflective practice.
83. Complaints about service delivery should follow standard local authority complaints procedures. Where complainants remain dissatisfied following the conclusion of local processes, they may choose to refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
84. If an allegation involves the LADO, or where there is a potential or perceived conflict of interest, there should be an internal process to identify and ensure the most appropriate individual undertakes the investigation and oversight. This supports independence, impartiality, and continuity of service. Such arrangements do not in themselves imply that the individual is unfit for their role.
85. An annual report should be submitted to the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership, detailing LADO activity, workforce trends, and outcomes. The

Partnership should also publish its governance arrangements with LADOs to clarify roles and accountability.

## **Support and Continuing Professional Development**

86. LADOs can access peer support locally, regionally, and nationally via the National LADO Network. However, *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026* makes clear that all safeguarding professionals must receive formal supervision from their employer. Local authorities must therefore ensure LADOs receive appropriate supervision and support.
87. Training is primarily delivered through the National LADO Network's annual conference and other sessions. In line with *Working Together To Safeguard Children 2026*, local authorities must ensure LADOs are suitably trained and supported to fulfil their role effectively.

## **Section E: Appendices**

### **Appendix A: The 'Managing Allegations LADO Checklist'**

#### **Initial Review:**

- ☐ Assess if Paragraph 27 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)*, which sets out when an allegation meets the threshold for LADO involvement, criteria are met
- ☐ Determine if more information is needed from the referrer

#### **Multi-Agency Liaison/Investigation Strands:**

- ☐ Check with the employer

- ☐ Consult Police (if appropriate)
- ☐ Check with Ofsted where appropriate
- ☐ Consult Children's Social Care if needed
- ☐ Check with Local Authority Education Safeguarding Team where required

#### Referral Decision:

- ☐ Refer to CSC/MASH if child is at risk of significant harm where appropriate
- ☐ Coordinate across local authority boundaries if needed

#### Allegation Management:

- ☐ Use Allegations Management Meeting/Allegations Management Discussions
- ☐ Use Strategy Meeting if Section 47 applies
- ☐ Use Child Protection Procedures for medical checks where required

#### Communication Guidance:

- ☐ Advise employer when/how to inform parents and person subject to allegation
- ☐ Advise employer to ensure support/wellbeing for the subject of the allegation
- ☐ Ensure information sharing is timely and appropriate

#### Reporting & Monitoring:

- ☐ Annual Report for comparison & best practice
- ☐ Monitor external agency delays & regional variations

#### Non-Recent Allegations:

- ☐ Treat same as current allegations
- ☐ Check if person still works with children. If so, the LADO should ensure the employer or organisation is aware of the allegation so they can take immediate safeguarding steps.

## Appendix B: Flow chart for allegations (This is a formal LADO process)

