



RNPSLO

Procedures for managing and responding
To allegations of harm towards a child
Against a staff member or volunteer.

Allegations against a staff member

RNPSLO 'S procedure to follow if an allegation should be made is –

To consider the safety of the child, other children, and practitioners, including the member of staff involved.

Do not automatically suspend the staff member without consulting with the Local Authority Designated Officer, tel 307144 before making such a decision. (Except in an emergency situation where the decision to be made is clear) should be contacted within one day of the allegation.

If suspension is deemed appropriate, consult and agree the decision with the registered person and follow guidelines set out in the disciplinary procedure. Legal advice should be sought

If suspension is deemed not appropriate, it may be still be advisable to recommend the staff member takes some time off whilst the allegation is being addressed.

RNPSLO will under no circumstances investigate the allegation themselves. The duties to investigate are the responsibility of Children's, Young Peoples and Families Department and where appropriate the police.

The Local Authority Designated officer should be contacted in the first instance should any allegations be made. Ofsted should also be made aware of the situation. Information should be shared on a need to know basis only.

The local Authority Officer will advise on the next steps to take. In many circumstances a strategy meeting will be held with a number of senior professionals to determine whether a child protection investigation is required and whether any further actions are required.

RNPSLO will follow advice given by the Local Authority Designated Officer and undertake any actions recommended through the strategy meeting.

The organisation will ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer actions whilst in the setting, which may include an allegation of abuse. RNPSLO has a separate whistle blowing policy and a separate complaints policy.

Ofsted telephone number 0300 123 1231

**Sharon Ackbersingh is the Local Authority Designated Officer.
Plymouth 01752 307569 or email LADO@plymouth.gov.uk Contact for safeguarding queries and advice within setting.**

The organisation will follow guidelines of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.

The organisation will respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.

We refer any such complaint immediately to the local authority's social service department to investigate to Ofsted and to Royal Navy Royal Marines Welfare Service (RNRM)

The organisation will co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the Police.

The organisations policy to suspend the staff member for the duration of the investigation, this is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the children and families throughout the process.

Procedure for responding to an allegation against a member of staff, or a volunteer.

We understand that a child may make an allegation against any practitioner within a setting. We recognise that dealing with such allegations is difficult but we will endeavor to take such incidents seriously and deal with them carefully and fairly.

We will instigate an investigation where it is alleged that they have –

Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child.

Possibly committed a criminal offense against a or related to a child Behaved in an appropriate way towards a child which may indicate that they are unsuitable to work with children.

We may also apply such procedures where –

- There are concerns about a practitioner’s behaviour towards their own children.
- Children unrelated to their employment or voluntary work and where there has been a recommendation from a strategy discussion that consideration should be given to the risk posed to those they work with.
- When an allegation is made about abuse that took place some time ago and the accused practitioner may still be working or having contact with children.

In some cases we will be clear that we must take immediate referral to advice and assessment.

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed within one working day. The LADO is responsible for managing allegations against anyone who works with children in an employed or voluntarily capacity.
- Ofsted will be informed as the regulator of any allegation or concern made against a member of staff in any day care establishment.

This will apply where a child has appeared to have been hurt or at risk of harm, or where a criminal act appears to have been committed.

In some cases it may be difficult to make a judgment based on information available and allegations may relate more to inappropriate, unprofessional behaviour rather than abuse.

We do not have a duty to investigate such allegations or the power to make an assessment of whether a concern relates to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. We therefore treat all such allegations seriously, dealing with them objectively and in a timely manner, we take reference from Dealing with allegations against adults that work with children – PCC Lado Threshold document (June 2020) and referring to the LADO for further advice. We will act on the advice of the LADO at all times.

If it is deemed as a result of an allegation a child has been injured or there is clear evidence of significant harm or risk of significant harm we will make an immediate referral to advice and assessment or to the Police in line with our child protection procedure.

Suspension

We consider suspension as a neutral act. This means that suspension does not indicate whether an accused practitioner is guilty or not. Suspension is considered a necessary step in certain situations to enable a full and fair enquiry to be carried out into any allegations made.

A decision to suspend can only be made after full consultation with and by the registered person/ trustees who are responsible for the employment of staff. We will seek advice from the LADO before making any decision to formally suspend an accused practitioner. If a decision to formally suspend cannot be made in a timely manner we will insist the accused practitioner takes a few days leave whilst further actions are considered. We will seek the necessary legal advice and ensure guidelines are followed in line with our settings disciplinary procedures.

We will consider suspension where –

- There is a cause to suspect, or it is clearly evident that a child is at risk or has suffered significant harm.
- The allegation warrants a police investigation
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.
- The continued presence of the accused practitioner at the setting may hinder or impinge on any investigations carried out by CSC and the Police.

We will evaluate the possible risk to children by the accused practitioner and how the situation can be effectively managed in order to ensure safety of the individual child involved, and all children within the setting.

We will also consider if suspension is necessary in the best interest of the accused practitioner, to protect them from harassment or any of the undue treatment.

If allegations are substantiated we will proceed with our disciplinary procedures, only after liaison with the LADO, CSC and the Police where appropriate, to avoid any interference with or jeopardy to any on going external investigations. We will report the incident to the safeguarding children's unit as appropriate.

Whistle Blowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where practitioners fail to do so, and therefore we have a formal whistle blowing policy.

We encourage practitioners to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon them there is a separate Whistle blowing policy for staff / volunteers. Copies of the policy are displayed within the settings.

RNPSLO has enrolled in an Employee Assistance programme to support staff with counseling, advice guidance, occupational health, financial advice and support as well as other benefits.

Responding to a concern about a child's welfare/ abuse and neglect.

If we have concerns about a child's welfare or whether they are being abused we will -

- The key person will discuss the concern with the DSP, following this conversation the concern will remain the same or be alleviated. Staff referring to what to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015) edition for guidance.
- If after step one the concern remains the same the DPS will determine whether the child/family would benefit from other services. The DPS will determine whether the child is at significant risk or is a child in need.
- If the DPS considers the child is at risk or significant harm a referral will be made immediately. If the DPS considers a child to be in immediate danger they will also notify the Police.
- Where possible the DPS will notify the parents before making the referral to advice and assessment, however if the child would be placed in increased danger/ risk the parents will not be notified. Advice and assessment will advise before making this decision.
- If the DPS considers the child is a child in need they will consider whether targeted services could be provided through a Common Assessment Form (CAF) with full consent from the parents.
- If consent is refused then the DPS will consider whether such a response constitutes risk to the child or whether without the support of additional services the child is at risk of being separated from their family, if such a risk is considered then a referral to advice and assessment will be made.
- The DPS will contact advice and assessment if the parents have not yet been informed by this stage, the DPS will agree with advice and assessment what the child and the parent will be told, by whom and when.
- A referral will be followed up in writing within 48 hours and will forward any relevant documentation as appropriate for example CAF from and copies of any records. Advice and assessment should acknowledge the referral within one working day. If this

acknowledgement is not received within three days, the DPS will follow up the referral again.

- The DPS may without identifying the child discuss the concerns with senior colleagues including advice and assessment in order to develop a further understanding of the child's needs. If unable to make this judgment the DPS will seek guidance from advice and assessment.

Signed

Date

Reviewed