



Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy

Introduction

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the wellbeing and very best outcomes for those in receipt of a service from PartnershipProjects. We do, however, recognise that sometimes allegations of abuse are made.

We recognise that allegations, when they occur, are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that some allegations are genuine and that there are adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse others.

All staff (including volunteers and associates) need to know that:

- Inappropriate behaviour with or towards those in receipt of a service from PartnershipProjects is unacceptable. This includes:
 - any form of sexual conduct, including sexually suggestive comments;
 - engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
 - giving service users inappropriate drugs or other inappropriate substances;
 - lending or borrowing of money or property;
 - giving or receiving gifts;
 - exclusive or secretive relationships;
 - giving of home numbers/personal mobile numbers or home address details to service users;
 - taking service users to a staff member's home
- it is an offence for a person over 18, to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the relationship is consensual and even if they do not work directly with them [Sexual Offences Act 2003];
- all staff (including any agency staff or volunteers are expected to maintain standards of conduct in line with PartnershipProjects' 'Code of Conduct'.

Any member of staff receiving details of a suspicion or allegation should:

- act with tact and care (always remembering to keep an open mind);
- listen and treat the concern seriously;
- communicate as appropriate to the age, understanding and any communication or language difficulties of the individual reporting;
- avoid leading questions;

- avoid expressions of sympathy that may pre-judge issues of potential abuse;
- avoid any promise of confidentiality, but reassure the individual reporting the concern that information will only be passed to those who have a 'need to know';
- We will take all possible steps to safeguard our service users and to ensure that the adults in our organisation are safe to work with children and vulnerable adults. We will always ensure that the statutory guidance outlined by [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) is adhered to. We follow the local procedures for the management of allegations in the area we are delivering our services and will seek appropriate advice from the Designated Officer for the Local Authority (formerly known as LADO in previous versions of Working Together to Safeguard Children which this procedure will continue to use for ease of reference).

If an allegation is made or information is received about any member of staff (or volunteer) who works in our setting or another setting who 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children;
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

The member of staff receiving the information should inform the Director for Safeguarding at the earliest opportunity. This includes concerns relating to agency and supply staff and volunteers.

Should an allegation be made against the Director for Safeguarding, this will be reported to an alternative Director.

The Director for Safeguarding can be contacted by email On:
gabrielle@partnershipprojectsuk.com

The Alternative Director can be contacted by email on:
jackie@partnershipprojectsuk.com / rachael@partnershipprojectsuk.com

or by phone on Jackie: 078 5545 4386 Rachael: 079 8313 3258

The Director for Safeguarding or Alternative Director will:

- Seek advice from the LADO at the earliest opportunity (at least within one working day). *The LADO who needs to be contacted is the LADO where the individual is working with children.* No member of staff will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the LADO.
- If it is outside of normal working hours and there is an immediate risk to a child, the local authority emergency duty team for children's social care will be contacted. The LADO should be informed as soon as possible;
- An immediate risk assessment will be carried out; (this can be used to implement any interim measures in terms of the employee whilst any investigation process is in place and also further support any identified risks

and appropriate actions in relation to the child along with relevant actions and timescales;

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns within PartnershipProjects should contact the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole LADO (where the PartnershipProjects' company registered address is) directly on 01202 456744 or email: lado@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

Further national guidance can be found at: [Advice on whistleblowing](#). The [NSPCC whistleblowing helpline](#) is also available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – this line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday or via e-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk.

If the matter does not require LADO oversight either due to it not being perceived to meet threshold for LADO oversight or following discussion with the LADO, it will be considered as a 'concern' to be investigated under the PartnershipProjects' Disciplinary Procedures.

Outcomes Following an Investigation

As an outcome to investigations that have been managed under the LADO procedures, the following definitions will be agreed in conjunction with the relevant LADO overseeing the investigation:

Substantiated:

There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm.

Malicious:

There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive. The police should be asked to consider what action may be appropriate in these circumstances.

False:

There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation, however, there is no evidence to suggest that there was a deliberate intention to deceive.

Unsubstantiated:

There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

Unfounded:

There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might also 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.

References in cases where the allegation is false, unsubstantiated or malicious

Cases in which an allegation was outcomed by the LADO process to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be included in employer references. A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will also not be included in any reference.

Record keeping in relation to the outcome of an investigation

Details of allegations that are outcomed by the LADO process to be malicious will be removed from personnel records. However, for all other allegations, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, will be kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The purpose of the record is to enable accurate information to be given in response to any future request for a reference, where appropriate. It will provide clarification in cases where future DBS checks reveal information from the police about an allegation that did not result in a criminal conviction and it will help to prevent unnecessary re-investigation if, as sometimes happens, an allegation re-surfaces after a period of time. The record will be retained at least until the accused has reached normal pension age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

Referring to DBS

PartnershipProjects has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff (including volunteers or associates), a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR.

Learning Lessons

At the conclusion of any case managed under these procedures, the Director for Safeguarding will review the circumstances of the case with the relevant involved individuals to determine whether any improvements can be made to the PartnershipProjects' practice or procedures to help prevent similar occurrences in the future.

This policy has been approved & authorised by:

Name: Jackie Lindeck and Rachael Aylmer
Position: Company Directors
Date: January 2023
Policy Review Date: January 2026



Independent
Safeguarding
Service *CIC*
Member

