



Policy for Managing Allegations of, or Concerns about, Possible Child Abuse Perpetrated by Anyone Working in Lincolnshire CCGs

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Name of Originator / Author & Organisation:	Jenny Harper Designate Nurse (interim) and the SWLCCG Federated Safeguarding Team
Responsible LECCG Committee:	QPEC
LECCG Executive Lead:	Tracy Pilcher, Chief Nurse
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**South Lincolnshire Clinical commissioning Group
South West Lincolnshire Clinical commissioning Group
Lincolnshire East Clinical Commissioning Group
Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group**

For the purposes of this document the CCGs will be referred to collectively as 'Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group or Lincolnshire CCGs'

Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Groups Version

control sheet

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Policy for Managing Allegations of, or Concerns about, Possible Child Abuse Perpetrated by Anyone Working in Lincolnshire CCGs.

Policy Statement

Background

Lincolnshire CCGs will operate a procedure for handling allegations of abuse which is consistent with the guidance within Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2013, Appendix 5). The CCG's Policy is required to ensure allegations are treated in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 3 of the Lincolnshire Children Safeguarding Board (LSCB) Policies.

Statement

The CCG has a duty to notify LSCB via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) of all allegations of child abuse which are made against their employees or that are brought to their attention by whatever means. They must also notify the member of staff concerned that LSCB maintain a database of all allegations of abuse to children made against staff / volunteers/ foster carers on behalf of all member agencies and that this database will hold personal information including contact details, the nature of the allegation and the outcome.

This policy will apply to any individual against whom the allegation is made that has a working relationship with the organisation. This includes contracted staff, volunteers, people who provide services to the organisation under self-employed status, as well as service providers, voluntary organisations, employment agencies or businesses, subcontractors and others that may not have a direct employment relationship with the organisation but where it would be necessary for the organisation to consider whether to continue to use the alleged person's services, or to provide the person for work with children in future, or to deregister the individual.

Responsibilities

The procedures must be available for scrutiny by service users and must be supported by the training and supervision of staff in accordance with Safeguarding Children legislation.

Compliance with the policy will be the responsibility of all managers and employees.

Training

Directors/Senior Managers are responsible for making all employees aware of the process to be followed and of the appropriate contacts to be made in the case of allegations of abuse against children being made towards any member of staff.

Dissemination

The CCG will ensure that the policy is accessible to all CCG staff and that all CCG staff are made aware of the policy.

Resource Implication

The policy has been developed in line with the LSCB policy to provide a framework for staff within the CCG to ensure the appropriate actions are taken.

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INTRODUCTION

CCG staff should act at all times in such a manner as to safeguard and promote the interests of individual patients and clients.

Where the safety of a child may be compromised, the needs and protection of the child must be the paramount consideration (Children Act, 1989) *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2013) requires all organisations that provide services for children, or provide staff or volunteers to work with or care for children, to operate a procedure for handling allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by a member of staff. This policy is designed to ensure that the CCG complies with that requirement.

The CCG will operate a procedure for handling allegations of abuse which is consistent with the guidance within the *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013* and also ensures allegations are treated in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 3 of the LSCB Policies (<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lscb>).

The Named Senior Officer for the CCGs is currently the Chief Nurses for each CCG

The Named Senior Officer is responsible for:-

- Ensuring that the CCG operates procedures for dealing with allegations in accordance with the LSCB guidance
- Resolving any inter-agency issues;
- Liaising with and notifying the LSCB via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on the subject.

The Identified Alternative Person is: Designate Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Adults Hosted by SWLCCG telephone: 01476 406599.

to whom reports should be made in the absence of the Named Senior Officer or in cases where that person is the subject of the allegation or concern.

The Named Senior Officer or Identified Alternative Person must be informed of all allegations or concerns, where a member of staff or volunteer or other person associated with the CCG may have abused a child.

Lincolnshire County Council has a local authority designated officer (LADO) who manages and oversees individual cases – providing advice and guidance to employers, liaising with police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

The level of manager / senior officer within the CCG who is authorised to suspend an employee in these instances will be **Senior Manager or above**.

The Named Senior Officer (NSO) has a duty to notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) of the LSCB of all allegations of child abuse which are made against their employees or that are brought to their attention by whatever means.

NB. It is not appropriate at this stage of the process to alert the staff member to the concerns being expressed.

This policy will apply to any individual against whom the allegation is made that has a working relationship with the CCG. This includes contracted staff, volunteers, people who provide services to the organisation under self-employed status, as well as service providers, voluntary organisations, employment agencies or businesses, subcontractors and others that may not have a direct employment relationship with the organisation but where it would be necessary for the organisation to consider whether to continue to use the alleged person's services.

2. SCOPE

For the purpose of this procedure, the scope applied is to a wider range of allegations than those in which there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. It also caters for cases of allegations that might indicate that the alleged perpetrator is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has;

- a) behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- b) possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or,
- c) behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation which are:

- Child protection enquiries, relating to the safety and welfare of any children who are or who may have been involved including the alleged person's own children or children within his/her care.
- A police investigation into a possible offence.
- Disciplinary procedures, where it appears that the allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct on the part of staff. A similar, process will need to be in place for responding to concerns about volunteers. In the case of day care providers, issues of continuing approval will need to be addressed.

The Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO are based at the County Offices, Newland, Lincoln, and can be contacted on 01522 554674

The guidance is separated into:

The procedure to be followed in managing allegation of abuse against staff / volunteer working with children in any setting

The standards and principles to be followed by all agencies and individuals caring for children in relation to managing allegations of abuse to children.

3. PROCEDURE

The procedures must be available for scrutiny by service users and must be supported by the training and supervision of staff.

3.1 Initial Consideration

The first priority must be to ensure the immediate safety of the child and any other children affected or in contact with the individual (including their own children). If this applies to employees working in a residential setting, it will be appropriate to consider what supervision arrangements are required to safeguard the child.

Procedures need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to Children's Services and the Police for investigation. Others may be much less serious and at first sight might not seem to warrant consideration of a Police investigation, or enquiries by Children's Services. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are examined objectively by someone independent of the case. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations will provide this independence.

3.2 Initial Evaluation (Step 1)

The LADO should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the criteria / scope of this policy as described above. It is expected that employers will make arrangements to ensure that all allegations with regard to individuals who work with children will be notified to the Named Senior Officer and the Head of Safeguarding within the organisation. The NSO will liaise with the LADO and establish the following:

- That the allegation is within the scope of these procedures.
- That the allegation is not demonstrably false or unfounded
- The nature of the concerns, how and why they have arisen, and any previous information about the child/ accused person and their relationship (relevant previous information about the accused person / alleged victim can normally be shared as background information)
- Any background information relevant to the allegation.
- Any arrangements to secure the immediate safety of the child/ren including ensuring the individual's own children are safeguarded
- Necessity for a strategy meeting and if the police and children's services should be contacted.

The LADO should also be informed of any allegations that are made directly to the policy (which should be communicated via the Police Force' Designated Officer) or to Children's Services. The LADO will ensure that allegations which meet the criteria are logged within the Customer Service Centre (CSC) for Children's Services.

If the parents/carers of the child concerned are not already aware of the allegation, the LADO will also discuss how and by whom they should be informed. In circumstances in which the police or children's services may need to be involved, the LADO should consult those colleagues about how best to inform parents. However, in some circumstances an employer may need to advise parents of an incident involving their child straight away. The employer should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the LADO. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or it is clear that police or children's Services may need to be involved, that should not be done until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person. If the person is a member of a union or professional association s/he should be advised to seek support from that organisation. However it is anticipated that even if Police /Children's Services involvement is required; the person will be notified of the allegation's existence within 3 working days.

3.3 Outcomes of the initial evaluation

There are 4 possible outcomes to the first steps of the investigation:

1- There is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm – in this event a referral to Customer Services Centre (CSC) of Children’s Services must be made. They will undertake an initial assessment in line with LSCB procedures and if there remains concerns that the child remains at risk of suffering significant harm Step 2 strategy meeting (see below) should be followed.

2- The threshold of significant harm is not considered to be reached, but there is cause to suspect that a criminal offence has been committed and a police investigation is necessary.

In cases where the threshold of “significant harm” is not reached, but further investigation such as police investigation is required the LADO should have further discussions with the police, the employer, and any other agencies involved to evaluate the allegation and decide how it should be dealt with. This can be face to face or by other communication means. The LADO should share available information about the allegation and the person against whom the allegation has been made, consider whether a Police investigation is needed and if so, agree the timing and conduct of that. In cases where a police investigation is necessary the initial evaluation should also consider whether there are matters which can be taken forward in a disciplinary process in parallel with the criminal process, or whether any disciplinary action will need to wait completion of the police enquiries and/or prosecution. It will be normal for these cases to be led by the **Public Protection Unit**. If the initial evaluation identifies concerns about the welfare of a child a referral should be made to Children’s Services with parental consent. Children’s Services will conduct an initial assessment.

3- The threshold of significant harm is not considered to be reached and a police investigation is not necessary, but the employer may wish to take disciplinary action in respect of the individual. This is a matter for the employer and employee with advice from the LADO (refer to flowchart for timescales).

4- No further action is required.

3.4 The Strategy Meeting (Step 2)

If there is **cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm**, a referral must be made to Customer Service Centre (CSC) within Children’s Services. CSC must obtain the following information as a minimum in addition to the current required dataset:

- o Adults name who the allegation is made against
- o Adult’s address
- o Adults date of birth
- o Employer
- o Employers address
- o Date of incident and date allegation made
- o Nature of allegation
- o If the adult who the allegation is made against has children residing with them

CSC will take the above information and forward to:

- The LADO
- Planned Assessment Team (PAT) who will undertake initial assessment.

- If the case is an open case to Social Care, to the relevant Social Worker

Any investigation may have three related, but independent strands:

- Child protection enquiries, relating to the safety and welfare of any children who are or who may have been involved including the alleged person's own children or children within his/her care
- A police investigation into a possible offence.
- Disciplinary procedures, where it appears that the allegations may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct on the part of staff. A similar, process will need to be in place for responding to concerns about volunteers. In the case of day care providers, issues of continuing approval will need to be addressed.

It is essential that the common facts of the alleged abuse are applied independently to each of the three strands of possible enquiries/investigation. The fact that a prosecution is not possible does NOT mean that action in relation to safeguarding children, or employee discipline, is not necessary. The important thing is that each aspect is thoroughly assessed, and a definite conclusion reached.

The LADO will be responsible for providing monitoring information to LSCB and for tracking outcomes of cases.

On receipt of a referral of an allegation children's social care will liaise with the Police and make enquiries using the initial core assessment. If the assessment identifies the child is at risk of significant harm/has suffered harm a strategy meeting will be arranged to plan the section 47 enquiries.

Experience has shown that the strategy meeting is crucial to the effective planning, coordination and carrying out of enquiries, and that a meeting, rather than a telephone discussion, is essential in these cases. In some cases it may be necessary to initiate enquiries following a telephone discussion, for example in order to interview a child quickly or to preserve forensic evidence, but a strategy meeting should still follow.

The Chair will be responsible for ensuring the meeting is properly recorded and that details of decisions made are sent to all invitees. There is a need to ensure that the Chair is not familiar with any individual involved in the allegation so that they can be independent.

The following should be invited to the meeting except where it may be prejudicial to the investigation:

- The statutory agencies responsible for carrying out the investigation, i.e. LADO, Police/Children's Services.
- Named Senior Officer, Senior manager and the Head of Safeguarding, taking care to avoid any conflict of interest.
- Advisory staff e.g. the employing organisation's Human Resources Advisor / Legal Services Advisor / representative from the Local Authority Legal Services.
- In the case of alleged abuse in a registered or regulated setting, there should be liaison with the relevant regulatory body e.g. OFSTED and they should be invited to strategy meetings. **The employing organization will hold copies of protocols and take responsibility for liaison with the relevant regulatory body.**

Particular attention needs to be given to the following issues in the Strategy meeting:

- Whether the criteria are met for a criminal and/or child protection investigation as opposed to or as well as a disciplinary or complaints investigation. If the criteria are not met, the meeting will refer the matter back to the responsible agency to consider any remaining personnel issues. If the criteria are met, the remaining issues should be considered.
- How information can be shared between the three strands (see P6). Within agreed bounds of confidentiality, information should be shared as freely as possible in the interests of both fairness and a thorough assessment of all the facts. Many organisations allow statements and staff interviews given as part of an investigation to be used in internal disciplinary processes and this must be made clear in the organisation's procedures. It is good practice to advise those interviewed that information and evidence may be shared between the three strands.
- Who will be responsible for carrying out social work enquiries and how can the required independent element be ensured. There are a range of options which can be considered, (where the case is open to social care, the child's social worker will have a key role): an independent agency could be commissioned to undertake the investigation, staff from another Local Authority can be invited to undertake the investigation or staff from another area who do not know the staff / volunteer involved could be asked.
- Identify the manager or HR representative who will provide support to the staff member/volunteer, including keeping them informed of the process and decisions relating to the allegation. It is good practice for the accused person to be provided with the substance of the allegation within 3 days. Review meetings relating to the investigation should be conducted at least 4 weekly with the person being updated on the outcome by their manager.
- Any immediate issues of safeguarding children, if not already addressed.
- What will the timescale for enquiries be? It is in everyone's interests to ensure that enquiries are completed as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough assessment.
- The police and other relevant agencies should agree jointly when to inform the accused person of allegations which are the subject of criminal proceedings. The general principle is that the person must be kept informed in a timely manner. Within the CCG this will be the role of the Senior Manager and Senior HR Business Partner.
- What information will be shared with the child's parents/carers (or the parents/carers of other children affected) and when.
- Whether the strategy meeting should reconvene to review progress, and make further plans. If so, a time and venue should be set. This must be no later than 4 weeks from the initial meeting.
- Consideration of notification to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) where required. This is a legal duty for organisations.

The strategy meeting must consider any risks to the alleged individuals own children.

- If the person is subject to registration or regulation by a professional body, the strategy meeting should discuss if informing the professional body is appropriate at this stage of the investigation.
- If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the police should take account of the fact that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour, under s550A of the Education Act 1996. DfES guidance about this can be found at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools>

The standards and principles to be followed by the organisation in relation to managing allegations of abuse are documented below.

Those undertaking investigations should be alert to any sign or pattern which suggests that the abuse is more widespread or organised than it appears at first sight, or that it involves other perpetrators or institutions. It is important not to assume that initial signs will necessarily be related directly to abuse, and to consider occasions where boundaries have been blurred, inappropriate behaviour has taken place, and matters such as fraud, deception or pornography have been involved.

The risk of harm to children posed by the person under investigation should be effectively evaluated and managed - in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations, and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life.

A record should be kept of the main discussion points, decisions agreed and reasons for those decisions. The Record of Outcomes of Strategy Meeting must be completed.

3.5. Outcomes of the Strategy Meeting

The threshold of significant harm is considered to be reached and a police investigation is necessary, and the employer may wish to take disciplinary action in respect of the individual

If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, an enquiry in accordance with the procedures set out in Section C of the LSCB procedures should be completed. The core assessment is the means by which an s47 enquiry is carried out.

If a criminal investigation is required, the police will aim to complete their enquiries as quickly as possible in a manner which is consistent, fair and thorough and which will keep the progress of the case under review. They should set a target date for reviewing progress of the investigation and consulting the Crown Prosecution service (CPS) about whether to proceed with the investigation, charge the individual with an offence, or close the case. Wherever possible that review should take place no later than 4 weeks after the initial evaluation/ strategy meeting. If the decision is to continue to investigate the allegation, dates for subsequent reviews should be set at that point.

If the police and/or CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the police should pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the employer without delay. In those circumstances the employer should proceed as described below.

3.6. Action following a criminal investigation or a prosecution

The police or the CPS should inform the CCG's Named Senior Officer and LADO straight away:-

- when a criminal investigation and any subsequent trial are complete
- or**
- if it is decided to close an investigation without charge
- or**
- not to prosecute after the person has been charged.

In those circumstances the organisation should decide whether any further action is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed. The information provided by the police and/or children's services should inform that decision. Disciplinary or Human Resource management action by the employer (CCG), including dismissal, is not ruled out in any of those circumstances and should be undertaken using the Disciplinary Policy.

The range of options open will depend on the circumstances of the case and the consideration will need to take account of the result of the police investigation or trial, as well as the different standard of proof required in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.

If the threshold of significant harm is not considered to be reached and a police investigation is not necessary, the organisation should undertake an internal investigation in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and take disciplinary action if appropriate in respect of the individual.

If the complaint or allegation is such that it is clear that investigations by police and/or enquiries by Children's services are not necessary, or the strategy meeting / discussion or initial evaluation decides that is the case, the organisation may want to undertake disciplinary or Human Resource management action. In such a case the organisation may need to undertake a further investigation to enable a decision to be made about how to proceed. This investigation will normally be undertaken internally unless the nature and complexity of the allegation indicates a need for the organisation to commission an independent investigation. Any commissioned investigation must make it clear that all information obtained as part of the investigation will be shared with the LSCB investigation team if any related subsequent allegations are made within a relevant timescale and the organisation considers them to be related. This will be submitted as background information.

Should disciplinary action be considered the Named Senior Officer for the Lincolnshire CCGs should be kept informed throughout and will be available for advice and support to health management and will monitor the process of the Child Protection enquiry.

3.7. Action in respect of false or unfounded allegations

If an allegation is deemed to be unfounded, Lincolnshire CCG's (NSO) will inform LADO who will decide whether to refer to children's services to determine whether the child concerned is in need of services, or may have been abused by someone else. In the rare event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the police should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate against the person responsible.

3.8. Action on conclusion of the case

If the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the organisation ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his/her services, the CCG should consider notification to the ISA, also whether a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is required, or advisable, and the form and content of a referral. Also, if the person is

subject to registration or regulation by a professional body or regulator, for example by the General Social Care Council, General Medical Council, RCN, OFSTED etc. the LADO should advise on whether a referral to that body is appropriate. If the professional body has already been notified, they must be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

If it is decided on the conclusion of the case that a person who has been suspended can return to work the organisation should consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a very stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The organisation should also consider how the person's contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still in the workplace.

At conclusion of a case it is essential that agreement is reached on the following:

- What information will be given to the child/ parents and persons affected by the investigation and how and by whom this will be done.
- What information will be placed on files relating to children and staff.
- The employer is informed about the outcomes of any criminal or child protection enquiry.

4. SUPPORTING THOSE INVOLVED

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They should also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, children's social care, or the police as appropriate, should consider what support the child or children involved may need.

The employee's Senior Manager should also keep the person who is the subject of the allegations informed of the progress of the case, and arrange to provide appropriate support to the individual while the case is ongoing. This may be provided via HR or Occupational health. This should also occur if the person is suspended.

The employee's Senior Manager should inform the accused person verbally and in writing about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the LADO. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or it is clear that police or children's Services may need to be involved; this should not be done until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person. There may be a requirement to delay informing the accused person in order to preserve evidence. It is envisaged that the accused person will be informed that the allegation has been made as soon as possible and that the details of the allegation will be shared within 3 days of the allegation. It is expected that 4 weekly reviews will be undertaken and the accused person should be informed of the decisions made at review meetings unless the meeting recommends otherwise.

It is good practice for the accused person to have access to the following:

- LSCB Procedure on Allegations of Abuse made against a Person who works with children www.lincolnshirelscb.org.uk, Safer Recruitment
- Information on how to access legal/ union advice and representation
- Relevant information on the process. This does not replace the need for a face to face

discussion, but provide a framework for discussion

- Information on the process of the enquiry and the planned timescales
- Information on interviews which may be conducted
- Information on independent support which may be available

4.1 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered.

4.2 Resignations and “Compromise agreements”

The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. It is important that every effort is made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety and/or welfare of children including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible the person should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it, but the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available should continue even if that cannot be done or the person does not cooperate. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in those circumstances, and it may not be possible to apply any disciplinary sanctions if a person’s period of notice expires before the process is complete, but it is important to reach and record a conclusion wherever possible.

By the same token so called “settlement agreements” by which a person agrees to resign, the employer agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, **must not** be used in these cases. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where appropriate. Nor can it override an employer’s statutory duty to make a referral to the DBS where circumstances require that.

4.3 Record keeping

It is important that a clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on a person’s confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned. The record should be retained at least until the person has reached normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

Notes of each strategy meeting will be sent to:

- Social worker
- Chair of strategy meeting
- Police if present
- Child Protection Support Officer for tracking purposes
- NSO for CCG.
- Invitees

Copies will be sent to the Named Senior Officer who, with the express permission of the Chair, will
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Lincolnshire CCGs
Lincolnshire East CCG
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send a copy to the employee's Senior Manager and HR Business Partner but this **must not** be disclosed to the individual without permission from LSCB.

4.4 Timescales

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible whilst ensuring the investigation is conducted in a consistent, fair and thorough manner. Every effort should be made to manage cases to avoid any unnecessary delay recognising that the time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness, and complexity of the allegation.

4.5 Suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed – in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations, and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases this will require the organisation to consider suspending the person. Suspension should be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. People will not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. The organisation will consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children until the allegation is resolved. N.B. the local Authority, the police, or Children's Services cannot require the CCG to suspend a member of staff or a volunteer. The power to suspend is vested in the organisation alone and will be a decision in consultation with the Senior HRBP by the employee's Senior Manager.

Where a strategy discussion or initial evaluation discussion concludes that there should be enquiries by children's services and/or an investigation by the police, the views of police/children's services about whether the accused member of staff needs to be suspended from contact with children should be canvassed in order to inform the organisation's deliberations of whether or not to suspend.

If there is any disagreement about suspension, the Chair or individual members of the strategy meeting may consider writing to Lincolnshire's (NSO) requesting further consideration of the issue.

4.6 Monitoring progress

LSCB will regularly monitor the progress of cases. The first review should take place **no later than 4 weeks** after the initial action / strategy meeting and subsequent reviews should be conducted at fortnightly or monthly intervals depending on the complexity of the case. In addition the organisation should regularly monitor the progress of cases either by review strategy meetings or through liaising with the Police / Children's Services as appropriate.

The LADO will notify the LSCB of the outcome of the case and the outcomes and timescales of all reviews.

4.7 Information Sharing

At the initial consideration/evaluation stages the agencies concerned, including the CCG should share all relevant information they have about their employee (i.e. the person who is the subject of the allegation) and/or the alleged victim. This should include any previous disciplinary investigation of a relevant nature and any soft information from the line manager / colleagues which may be relevant to the enquiry and that has occurred within relevant and appropriate timescales.

Wherever possible the police will obtain consent from the individuals concerned to share the statements and any evidence they have obtained with the CCG and/or regulatory body, for disciplinary purposes. That should be done as the investigation proceeds rather than after it is concluded. That will enable the police and CPS to share relevant information without delay at the conclusion of their investigation or any court case.

Children's services should adopt a similar procedure when making enquiries to determine whether the child or children named in the allegation is in need of protection or services so that any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case can be passed to the employer or regulatory body without delay.

4.8 Learning lessons

At the conclusion of a case in which an allegation against an employee is substantiated the organisation should review the circumstances of the case to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to its procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

If an allegation is substantiated, the managers or commissioners of the relevant service should think widely about the lessons of the case and how they should be acted upon. This should include whether there are features of the CCG's culture or processes which may have contributed to the abuse occurring, or failed to prevent the abuse occurring. In some circumstances, a serious case review may be appropriate.

5. PUBLICITY

If there are serious allegations against staff, there is a possibility of publicity. The Named Senior Officer of the organisation should liaise with the CCG's media/communications manager and a decision made about informing the LSCB representative of NHS England.

6. AUDIT

It is the responsibility of the Named Senior Officer for Lincolnshire's CCG to ensure an audit is undertaken to:

- Assess if this procedure is fit for purpose
- Collate statistical information of cases
- Clarify outcomes of cases to identify trends and recommendations for future practice.

This should be integrated into Clinical Governance arrangements.