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**Outcome**

The Fostering Service will inform the Foster Carer(s), who is / are subject of the allegation, or adult household member, of the outcome of the allegation (including No Further Action) in writing including:

* A comprehensive summary of the allegation
* Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
* Relevant actions taken and decisions reached
* Whether the allegation will be referred to in future references
* How long any records will be retained in line with procedures
* If there will be a referral to DBS and / or any regulatory body

If the allegation is Substantiated **and** the carer(s) is / are deregistered then the person who is the subject of the allegation must be referred to the DBS by the Fostering Service.

If the allegation against an adult household member is Substantiated, consideration must be given to whether they should be referred to the DBS by the Fostering Service.

**Record Keeping**

A comprehensive summary of a safeguarding allegation including how it was followed up and resolved and the decisions and actions taken should be kept on your confidential personnel file and you should be provided with a copy.

|  |
| --- |
| **Fostering Team Manager:** |
| **Fostering Team Practice Supervisor:** |
| **Supervising Fostering Social Worker:** |
| **Independent Support:** |
| **Counselling / GP:** |
| **Other:** |

Link to NELC Allegation Procedures:

[SaferNEL | Report a concern - SaferNEL](https://www.safernel.co.uk/report-a-concern/)

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**Guidance**

**for**

**Foster Carers**

**– Allegations**



Issued 2020

**Initial Action**

Where necessary, a Strategy Discussion will be undertaken by SaPH (Safeguarding Partnership Hub) or the relevant Children’s Social Care Team and/or an Initial Allegation Meeting will be held by the LADO in order to share relevant information and determine whether an investigation needs to be undertaken and if so, by whom (see below).

The meeting will discuss any child(ren) who may be at risk including the child(ren) you foster, your own child(ren) and any other child(ren) with whom you have contact, including through any other paid / voluntary work. You will not be invited to attend these meetings.

The allegation process is managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the area in which you reside and will involve the Fostering Service, the Social Work Team who support the child and the Police (if the allegation may meet the criminal threshold).

You will be informed as soon as possible by the Fostering Service of the details of the allegation, unless the Police or Children’s Social Care need to be consulted to agree what information can be disclosed.

**Investigation(s)**

Depending on the allegation type, an investigation will be led by either the Police or by the Fostering Service. You will be informed with as much information as appropriate and be given the full opportunity to respond to any allegations.

Information shared may be dictated by the Police and the status of the investigation. In some cases the process may take a significant length of time, dependant on the complexity of the allegations, however this will be subject to regular review and you will be kept informed.

Where the Police indicate the referral does not meet the criminal threshold, the Police will formally confirm this to the LADO in a timely way and the Fostering Service will subsequently undertake an internal investigation.

The LADO does not investigate any allegations.

**Independent Support**

If any investigation(s) needs to proceed, the Fostering Service will arrange independent support for foster carers. This will be offered and arranged via the foster carer’s Supervising Fostering Social Worker. It is strongly recommended that the offer of independent support is utilised.

**Being put ‘On Hold’**

Although normal disciplinary procedures do not apply to Foster Carers; a decision will be made if you can continue caring during the investigation(s) and / or whether any conditions should be put in place and / or whether you are put ‘On Hold’ as Foster Carers. This will result in you being suspended from fostering duties.

**Fostering Review**

If following an investigation, there are some concerns, then an early Foster Carer’s Review will be convened to decide any next steps. The review will take place where there are concerns about the care provided by yourself and as a result of a complaint or allegation.

Following the early Foster Carer Review, the case will be returned to a Fostering Panel, to consider the case and make their own recommendation regarding on-going suitability to foster. You will have the opportunity to contribute fully to the review processes as usual.

**Presentation to the Agency Decision maker**

Once presented to the fostering panel , the report will be presented to the Agency Decision Maker for a decision with regards to your suitability and whether the terms of approval remain suitable.  In reaching their decision the Agency Decision Maker will take into account the panel’s recommendation.

**Introduction**

An allegation of abuse or neglect is something that foster carers may experience during their fostering career. This is inevitably a stressful and distressing experience for all those involved. This leaflet is designed to provide you with some basic guidance and understanding to the processes that will be followed.

The allegation process is defined in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2020’ and applies to all who persons who work, foster or volunteer with children.

**What is an allegation?**

An allegation is an assertion from any person that a foster carer or another member of the fostering household 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 he or she 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 allegation may be in relation to the child(ren) you foster, your own child(ren) and / or child(ren) you work or volunteer with.

The allegation criteria defined above is a separate process to where there is a complaint regarding Standards of Care. This will be managed through its own separate process by the Fostering Service.