

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:

Further Guidance

Link to NYC Allegation Procedures:



Adapted and updated version of a document originally produced by the national network of Investigation and Referral Support Co-ordinators

GUIDANCE FOR FOSTER CARERS

Allegations

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' and applies to all 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.

Initial Action

Where necessary, a North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) Child Protection Strategy Discussion and/or an Allegations Meeting will take place 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 as appropriate and be provided with the full opportunity to respond to any allegations.

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 from either The Fostering Network or FosterTalk. 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.

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. 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.

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.