

may have abused a child should be reported, and should make sure that all staff and volunteers know who that is. The procedures should also identify an alternative person to whom reports should be made in the absence of the named senior manager, or in cases where that person is the subject of the allegation or concern, and include contact details for the LA designated officer responsible for providing advice, liaison, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possibly consistent with a fair and thorough process.

### Initial Considerations

13. Procedures need to be applied with common sense and judgement. Some allegations will be so serious as to require immediate referral to social care 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 social care. However, it is important to ensure that even apparently less serious allegations are seen to be followed up, and that they are examined objectively by someone independent of the organisation concerned. Consequently, the LA designated officer should be informed of all allegations that come to the employer's attention and appear to meet the criteria in paragraph 1, so that's/he can consult police and social care colleagues as appropriate. The LA designated officer should also be informed of any allegations that are made directly to the police (which should be communicated via the police force' designated officer) or to children's social care.
14. The LA designated officer should first establish in discussion with the employer that the allegation is within the scope of these procedures, see paragraph 1, and may have some foundation. If the parents/carers of the child concerned are not already aware of the allegation, the designated officer will also discuss how and by whom they should be informed. In circumstances in which the police or social care may need to be involved, the LA officer 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, for example if the child has been injured while in the organisation's care and requires medical treatment.
15. The employer should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting the LA designated officer. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or it is clear that police or children's social care 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.
16. If there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion should be convened in accordance with paragraph 5.54. N.B. in these cases the strategy discussion should include a