

Discussion should also take place within this period, about the procedures for responding to, and handling, issues of professional abuse.

5.8 Managerial Concerns

5.8.1. During interviews and through reading related documentation, there is ample evidence to suggest that the arrest of DL came at a crucial time for the Education Service. Should the arrest not have taken place, the Education Service would have been required to consider their position in the light of their knowledge and concerns about DL. Had he continued in his EWO role, the service would have had to identify some way of managing and monitoring his behaviour.

5.8.2. There is a need for a sensitive, considered response to staff facing allegations of abuse. It is acknowledged that false allegations can be made. It must also be acknowledged however, that situations do occur which give rise to doubts about the integrity or intentions of staff. Following the strategy meeting and the disciplinary hearing of DL, there were managerial concerns about this individual which would have warranted urgent attention even had his arrest not taken place.

The Education Service should identify with the appropriate departments and unions, what mechanisms can be used to protect children when a member of the EWS, has been disciplined or investigated, following concerns about professional misconduct relating to children.

Consideration should be given as to the position of the authority, if the management has serious doubts about a member of staff. How can such staff be managed? If the authority takes its duty seriously to protect and safeguard children, then it may find itself liable if it can be shown that the authority knowingly allowed a member of staff to continue to work directly with children when doubts had been raised about their behaviour.

This matter should be addressed as a matter of urgency and with reference to the recommendations pertaining to recruitment and selection procedures

This is an area, which requires further consideration, not just in Rochdale, but also at a national level.