



National
Operational
Guidance

Guidance

Managing Allegations



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Developed and maintained by the NFCC



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Summary - Managing Allegations Guidance

The purpose of this Managing Allegations Guidance is to provide a framework for all UK fire and rescue services to effectively manage cases where an allegation or concern of harm has been made against a representative of service.

This guidance will support services to respond to the local needs of communities, in meeting the national requirements across the UK and support services in England and Wales to meet the [Safeguarding Fire Standard](#) and the [Fire and rescue national framework for England](#). More information can be found in UK Guidance and Legislation section of this guidance.

The terminology and protocols in this guidance may differ in within local arrangements and for devolved administrations. Any reference should be made to local guidance and legislation for further information in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

There is a clear expectation that fire and rescue services offer support and develop partnerships for those identified as vulnerable and at risk of exploitation or abuse to deliver their core functions, including protection and prevention.

Fire and rescue services must also have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place to provide the public with the reassurance and confidence that they have every right to expect.

This Guidance will support the appropriate application of Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks and takes full account of the inclusion of Fire Rescue Authority employees within the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Furthermore, this Guidance supports services to succeed against the [NFCC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Toolkit](#) which helps services to identify progress against the core legal and moral duties contained within both the Care Act 2014 and Children Act 1989, in particular;

- Section 1: Senior Management Commitment to the importance of Safeguarding
- Section 2: Clear Statement of Service Responsibilities
- Section 6: Safer Recruitment and Managing Allegations

Managing Allegations against the workforce have clearly defined responsibilities within the area of safeguarding and are referred to within both the Care Act 2014 and Children Act 2004. As such, it is important that every service ensures a clear definition between conduct and investigations within the people strategy, and allegations raised through key statutory safeguarding partners which include [Common Law Police Disclosures](#).



Good practice is that both the Safeguarding Team and Human Resource Team within services work together to ensure that all concerns are risk assessed to understand if they cross the threshold of the Managing Allegations protocol, as referenced in the Managing Concerns and Allegations against members of the workforce process flowchart, within this document.

The publication of the His Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services ([HMICFRS\) Spotlight Report: Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services](#); highlights key safeguarding responsibilities through its recommendations. The [NFCC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Toolkit](#) provides further explanation and assurance with regards to the legal and moral duties for fire and rescue services.



Introduction - Managing Allegations Guidance

The focus of this guidance is on the management of risk, based on an assessment of actual or suspected abuse or harm. The guidance provides a framework to ensure appropriate actions are taken to manage allegations, against those representing a fire and rescue service, in their private life, or any other capacity.

The guidance is designed to ensure that if information is shared or disclosed, it is done so in accordance with the law but in such a way that allows appropriate and proportionate enquiries to be made that ensures adults and children at risk are protected and public confidence in services is maintained.

This guidance applies when an allegation or suspicion concerning harm, arises about an individual regarding their conduct within the workplace or externally. All allegations of harm by those who work with children and vulnerable adults, whether a member of staff, and/or those volunteering or representing fire and rescue services must be taken seriously and may cover a wide range of circumstances.

This guidance should be applied when there is such an allegation or concern made against a person who works with children or vulnerable adults, or is a Person in Position of Trust (PIPOT) that they have:

- Behaved in a way that may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult or may harm a child or vulnerable adult
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult
- Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults
- Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with

children or vulnerable adults

The points above include behaviour that may have happened outside the organisation that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, this is known as transferable risk.

The Department of Health defines a vulnerable adult as a person aged 18 or over who may need community care services because of a disability (mental or other), age, or illness. A person is also considered vulnerable if they are unable to look after themselves, protect themselves from harm or exploitation or are unable to report abuse.

Public Health England provide further clarity on the [meaning of vulnerability and other terms](#):

Vulnerability

Being [vulnerable](#) is defined as in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect.

Childhood vulnerability

There is no commonly used definition of [childhood vulnerability](#). A child can be vulnerable to risks and poor outcomes due to individual characteristics, the impact of action or inaction by other people and their physical and social environment.

Vulnerable adults

The National Health Service (NHS) defines [vulnerable adults](#) as any adult (person over the age of 18) unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from exploitation.

Many factors can influence adult vulnerability, experiences of vulnerability in childhood may negatively impact adults in later life – particularly if someone has fewer protective factors in place, such as a supportive family or a stable household income.

Similarly in accordance with the Care Act 2014, an “adult at risk” is someone identified as being potentially at risk of abuse and neglect because of their needs for care and support (whether or not these needs are being met) – is unable to protect themselves. It is also recognised that a “child at risk”, is someone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday and is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect, or other kinds of harm.

The Care Act 2014 Section 42 states:

“This section applies where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) —

- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.”

An allegation may also be in relation to an adult’s behaviour outside work, and their relationships with others, if they:

- have behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not have to directly relate to a child or vulnerable adult but could, for example, include an arrest for the possession of a weapon or accusations relating to domestic abuse.
- have, as a parent or carer, become subject to child protection procedures

Equality Act and Mental Capacity Act

The [Equality Act 2010](#), the Human Rights Act 1998 and the [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) – these all provide clear frameworks for ensuring people’s rights are central to decision making and practice, and emphasises that public bodies must remain vigilant in upholding these rights

Changing demographics & complexity of safeguarding issues

The demographics of the UK have become more racially, ethnically & religiously diverse as well as the workforce of the fire and rescue service, the fire and rescue service are now dealing with a more complex range of safeguarding issues.

With reference to the experience of various other workplace sectors abuse linked to faith and cultural beliefs, female genital mutilation and honour-based violence and forced marriage have been areas that have had an impact on the workplace & managing allegation & safeguarding issues.

Discriminatory abuse & vulnerability

Safeguarding through discriminatory abuse may take the form of:

- harassment
- slurs or similar treatment because of:
 - race
 - gender and gender identity
 - age
 - disability



- sexual orientation
- religion

Practitioners should familiarise themselves with [the types of discrimination and people's rights](#) as well as rights and responsibilities under the [Equality Act 2010](#). Under the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies are expected to pay due regard for eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and other prohibited conduct under the Equality Act 2010.

Vulnerable colleagues

Discrimination - Vulnerable colleagues can sometimes come across discrimination. It is everyone's responsibility to take steps to ensure that they are not discriminated against or placed into a discriminatory environment. Where this does happen, you must take steps to report and resolve the issue.



The difference between an allegation and a complaint or concern

It might not be initially clear whether an incident constitutes an 'allegation' in comparison to a 'complaint or conduct concern'. It is important to remember that to meet the threshold of an allegation, the alleged incident has to be sufficiently serious as to suggest that harm has or may have occurred, or that the alleged behaviour indicates the individual may pose a risk of harm (or otherwise meet the criteria above).

If it is difficult to determine the level of risk associated with an incident, it is recommended that the Safeguarding team initiate a case discussion with key internal stakeholders such as the Complaints Team, Human Resources and/or Line Manager and the Safeguarding team themselves. Information can be shared as to whether similar allegations have been made against the employee in the past and whether there is a pattern developing.

Where it is decided that the incident does not meet the threshold of harm/risk of harm, then the employer should take steps to ensure any conduct or behaviour issues are addressed with the member of staff through normal Human Resources employment practices.

Whistleblowing - all staff should be made aware of their organisations whistleblowing policy and feel confident to voice their concerns about the attitudes and actions of colleagues.

Raising Concerns - Safe Share

Following the [HMICFRS Spotlight Report: Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services](#); there

were a number of key recommendations, in particular Recommendations 1, 2 and 24.

There are existing examples of good practice that supports these recommendations. One of these examples that Essex County Fire & Rescue Service have implemented, is a Safe Share initiative. Safe Share is an intelligence based early identification and intervention approach that could be available to all fire and rescue service employees as well as those who represent the service (for example, volunteers).

Benefits of Safe Share

Organisational culture is the basis for safeguarding to be practiced well. An example of good practice for safeguarding, includes early identification and intervention enabling the mitigation of risk at the earliest opportunity.

- Safe Share provides a further internal route, managed by professionals from the Safeguarding and Human Resources teams, that supports the services commitment to a positive and healthy culture, where anyone in, or impacted by an organisation is empowered to report concerns where they may arise.
- Safe Share further supports a person-centred approach that incorporates the wishes and feelings of those that would like to seek advice and guidance, and where they chose to access this.
- Safe Share provides a further internal route, one that provides the option of anonymised reporting of concerns, concerns relating to self and/or others.

Safe Share enables a central hub that gathers intelligence from all existing routes to inform a culture dashboard that will enable an intelligence lead approach to future practice, early intervention, and identification of existing or emerging risks.



UK Guidance and Legislation

The statutory guidance in the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 all require Safeguarding Partnerships to establish and agree a framework and process to respond to allegations against anyone who works either paid or unpaid with adults with care and support needs, and/or children/young people in any setting. Allegations should be dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the adult(s), child(ren) and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Statutory guidance applies to the local authority, all partner agencies and commissioned local



authorities' relevant partners, and those providing care and support services.

Where concerns are raised about someone who works with children and/or adults with care and support needs, the employer or voluntary organisation must assess any potential risk to adults with care and support needs who use their services, and, if necessary, to take action to safeguard those children and/or adults.

There are differences in the way allegations should be handled in each nation of the UK.

In England, the national guidance is [Working together to safeguard children](#); a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. (Department for Education, 2018). Local safeguarding partners will also have child protection procedures. There is separate statutory guidance for schools in England; [Keeping children safe in education](#): statutory guidance for schools and colleges (Department for Education, 2022).

In Northern Ireland, the national guidance is [Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland \(Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2017\)](#). Section 7.2.10 covers allegations of abuse by a person in a position of trust. Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) has also [published a circular](#) advising school principals and governors on how to manage an allegation of abuse against members of staff (DENI, 2015).

In Scotland, [Safer recruitment through better recruitment](#) (Care Inspectorate, 2016) includes guidance on dealing with concerns or allegations about a worker's fitness to practise or harm to a user of a service.

In Wales, [volume 5 of Working together to safeguard people](#) deals with handling individual cases to protect children at risk, including managing allegations of abuse (Welsh Government, 2019). Working together to safeguarding people (2021) is the statutory guidance in relation to [Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#). The guidance for schools is [Keeping learners safe](#) (Welsh Government, 2021).



Local Authority Responsibilities and Processes

Legislation in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland may differ in terms of both language and detail, but the principles are similar. It is recommended that, every fire and rescue service is familiar with the information, policies and procedures published on their local Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Partnership websites.

Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO)

For England, the [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) requires each local authority to ensure that allegations against people who work with children and young people are not dealt with in isolation and, that any corresponding action to address the concerns relating to the child is coordinated without delay.

Local Authorities should have a Designated Officer(s) (qualified social workers) as part of their multiagency arrangements, dedicated to the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. Their role is to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations on how to deal with allegations and to ensure that arrangements are in place to liaise with the police and other agencies to monitor the progress of cases, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

Person in a Position of Trust (PIPOT) Protocols

It is also a requirement of the Care Act 2014 (England) that Safeguarding Adult Partnerships establish an agreed framework and process for any organisation to respond to allegations against anyone who works (in either a paid or unpaid capacity) with adults with care and support needs.

Whilst there is not a dedicated role within Adult Social Care as per the LADO function, all partner agencies are individually responsible for maintaining organisational procedures for dealing with PIPOT concerns, overseen by a dedicated PIPOT lead. The latter will have responsibility for sharing and escalating information outside of their organisation (proportionately and appropriately), if required to do so, to further protect the adult(s) at risk. Whenever there are concerns about an adult at risk of abuse or neglect a safeguarding concern should be made to Adult Social Services to consider the most appropriate adult safeguarding enquiry route.

It is important that when an allegation is made against someone who works with children consideration is given to any role that they have in working with vulnerable adults and vice versa. It is everyone's duty to refer any current or historical allegations of abuse against children to Children's Services, whether the alleged source of harm is in a position of trust or not.

An overview of the key points involved in the LADO (children's workforce) process will be provided in Appendix B, but these should also be considered when an allegation is about a PIPOT, and an adult is at risk of harm.



Behaviours

These behaviours should be considered within the context of the categories of abuse identified in The Care Act 2014 (England) and support statutory guidance (section 1 of the Care Act 2014):

- Physical abuse
- Domestic violence or abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Self-neglect

Concerns relating to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or vulnerable adults as well as other concerns for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under the age of 18 even if consensual (see [s16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)).
- 'Grooming', such as meeting a child under the age of 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see [s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)).
- Other 'grooming' behaviour, that raises concerns of a broader child protection nature (such as inappropriate text / e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising).
- Physical assault such as smacking or hitting a child or vulnerable adult.
- Possession of indecent photographs / pseudo-photographs of children or vulnerable adults.

Allegations of historical abuse should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns. A requirement in such cases is to find out whether the person against whom the allegation is made is still working with children and/ or vulnerable adults or continues to hold a position of trust. If so, refer to your Fire and Rescue Service's Safeguarding Team who will threshold assess whether further engagement with the Local Authority safeguarding team (including teams within Local Authority safeguarding teams, such as Local Authority Designated Officer 'LADO' and/or Persons in Position of Trust 'PIPOT' officer) is necessary. The Local Authority safeguarding team would need to undertake an enquiry if safeguarding concerns are determined.





The Fire and Rescue Service

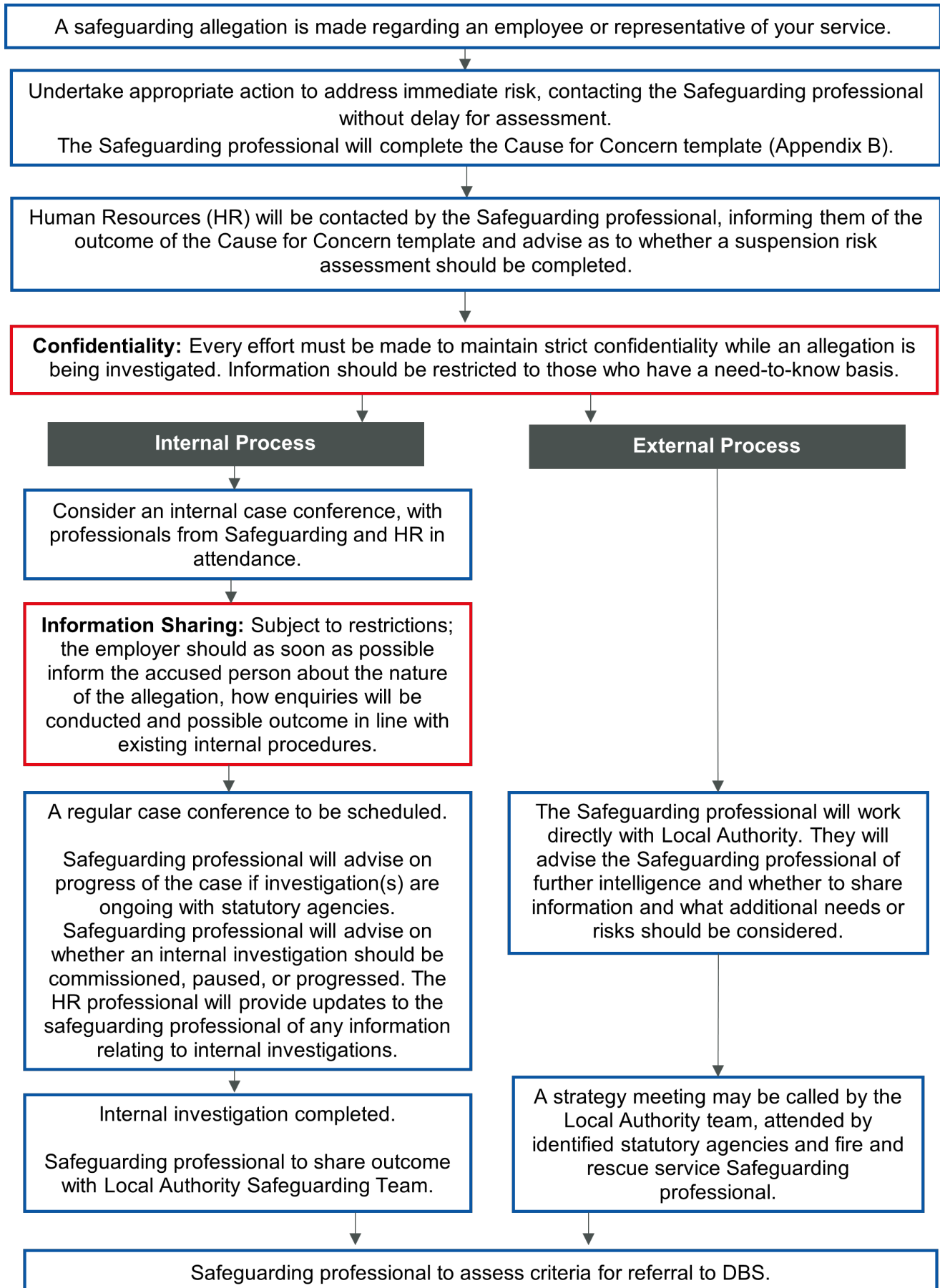
Every person representing, working, or volunteering for fire and rescue services must work honestly and ethically. The public expect services to do the right thing in the right way at the right time. These principles reflect the personal beliefs and aspirations that in turn serve to guide behaviour and shape the services' culture. The combination of principles and standards of behaviour encourages consistency between what people believe in and aspire to, and what they do.

A national [Core Code of Ethics](#) for Fire and Rescue Services in England has been developed in partnership with the National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Association, and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by fire and rescue services in England. This will help to improve the organisational culture and workforce diversity of FRSs, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.

It is essential that any allegation made against any members of staff, volunteers, or those representing fire and rescue services is dealt with fairly, quickly, proportionately, and consistently. This should be conducted in a way that provides effective protection for the adult(s), child(ren) and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. As such, good practice suggests that the first point of contact must always be your Safeguarding Team. The Safeguarding Team should contact a member of the Human Resources Team, and the two teams must work collaboratively to ensure the professional views of both safeguarding and human resources are considered throughout and that relevant information is shared to enable a proportionate and efficient response. In the event that the HR Team are informed of an allegation, good practice suggests that immediate contact is made with the Safeguarding Team to follow the above process.

When required, action will be taken to ensure that individuals who are not suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults are prevented from doing so by notification to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and any other relevant and professional bodies. This is illustrated in the DBS Barring referral flow chart, refer to [Appendix A](#) for more information.

Fire and rescue services are committed to the rehabilitation of offenders, as such the risk assessment incorporates appropriate and proportionate responses. Refer to Appendix B - Managing Allegations - Cause for Concern Template for more information.



Process considerations

The member of staff/volunteer who is subject of the allegation should:

- be treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed and processes involved.
- be offered the appropriate wellbeing support measures identified such as signposting to trade union representation or occupational health referral.
- kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation and the implications for any disciplinary or related process.
- If suspended be kept up to date about events in the workplace.

Allegations against staff in their personal lives - if an allegation or concern arises about a member of staff, outside of their work and this may present a risk of harm to a child/children or vulnerable adult(s), the principles and procedures described in this guidance will also apply.

Police investigations - an internal process can be carried out whilst a police investigation is ongoing. Police investigations can take a long time to complete and to wait for its conclusion could be costly to the public purse. It is important to consider that the employee may not want to engage in the internal process for fear of jeopardising their defence in the criminal case. Likewise, the police may be reluctant to share information that would prejudice the internal investigation. Any internal investigation must strike a balance with the Police investigation. Where appropriate, your Safeguarding professional will liaise with the Police and/or LADO/PIPOT and share information which will assist in the decision making as to whether to pause or progress internal investigations.

Resignations and “compromise agreements” - It is the duty for regulated activity providers to make a referral to DBS when they have dismissed an employee working in regulated activity, following harm to a child/vulnerable adult, or where there is a risk of harm. For more information refer to the [DBS Barring referrals Guidance](#).

Every effort should be made to reach a conclusion even if the individual refuses to cooperate or it is not possible to apply any disciplinary actions if a person’s period of notice expires before the process is complete.

A settlement or compromise agreement must not be used, as this may prevent the employer from making a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service when the criteria are met and failure to do would likely result in a criminal offence for failure to comply with the duty to refer.



Support

In managing any allegation there is a need to consider the support needs of individuals involved.

The support they require depends on the circumstances of the case and will have to be negotiated and agreed on a case-by-case basis. It may include support for the:

- person who raised the concern at the outset
- person who is the subject of the allegation
- the person who was subject to alleged harm

Confidentiality - every effort must be made to maintain strict confidentiality and guard against any publicity while an allegation is being considered or investigated. Information should be restricted to only those that need to know.

Information Sharing - should be justifiable and proportionate based on the potential for actual harm to adults or children at risk and the rationale for decision-making should always be recorded. There must be a legal basis for doing so (Children Act 1989 and Care Act 2004), information should be limited to what is relevant and necessary, specific, and timely and must be shared securely.

HMICFRS request notification of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct. This reporting process is to be considered in addition to Local Authority managing allegations procedures.

Record Keeping - employers should keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the case record on a person's confidential and personal file. The record should include details of how the allegation was followed up, the decisions reached, and the action taken. It should be kept until the person reaches retirement age or for ten years if longer



Relevant Legislation or Guidance

- [Care Act 2014](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children Act 2004](#)
- [Common Law Police Disclosure](#)
- [Crime & Disorder Act 1988](#)



- States any person may disclose information to a relevant authority under Section 115 “Where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of the Act (reduction and prevention of crime and disorder)”
- [Data Protection Act](#)
- [DBS Barring referrals Guidance](#)
- [Fire and rescue national framework for England](#)
- [Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004](#)
- General Data Protection Regulations
- [HMICFRS Spotlight Report: Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
 - Article 6 – right to a fair trial, presumed innocent until proven guilty.
 - Article 7 – may bring proceedings against public authorities.
 - Article 8 – right to respect for private and family life.
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [NFCC Safeguarding Guidance for Children, Young People and Adults](#)
- [NFCC Safeguarding Self-Assessment Toolkit](#)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975
- [Safeguarding Fire Standard](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
 - Defines regulated Activity (for DBS certificates)
 - Sets out the ‘Duty to refer’ for regulated activity providers
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguarding Children](#)
- Scotland
 - [Safer recruitment through better recruitment](#) (Care Inspectorate, 2016)
 - [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
 - [Disclosure Scotland](#)
- Wales
 - [Working together to safeguard people](#)
 - [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)
 - [Keeping learners safe modules guidance](#)
- Northern Ireland
 - [Co-operating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland \(2017\)](#)
 - [Children \(NI\) Order 1995](#)
 - [Sexual Offences \(NI\) Order 2008](#)
 - [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups \(NI\) Order 2007 \(as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012\)](#)
 - [Public Interest Disclosure \(NI\) Order 1998](#)
 - [DENI Circular 2015/13 - Dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of](#)



[staff](#)



Appendix A: DBS Barring referral flow chart

The following flow chart to help you decide if it is appropriate to refer someone to us.



Appendix B: Managing Allegations – Cause for Concern Template

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Questions	No cause for concern	Some cause for concern	Cause for concern
1. Has the individual behaved in a way that has harmed children or may have harmed children, which means their ability to hold a position of trust must be reviewed?	No	Cause for concern that harm has taken place or concerns of harm may take place.	Serious harm alleged or serious potential of harm concerns.
2. Has the individual has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed an Adult with care and support needs which means their ability to hold a position of trust must be reviewed?	No	Cause for concern that harm has taken place or concerns of harm may take place.	Serious harm alleged or serious potential of harm concerns.
3. Has the individual otherwise behaved in a way that indicates they may be unsuitable to work with children or adults for example, is there a risk to the safety or welfare of others?	No	Cause for concern regarding welfare or safety for others.	Yes
4. Has the individual committed a criminal offence against child(ren) or adult(s)?	No	Cause for concern that this may have taken place.	Yes



5. Is there a risk to reputation if the individual is allowed to work?	No	Yes	Yes
6. Is there a risk to internal or external investigation (for example potential for interference)?	No	Yes	Yes
7. Are there other identified risks (for example patterns of behavior or concerns)?	No	Yes	Yes
RESULT	ALL GREEN	MORE THAN TWO AMBER	ONE OR MORE RED
ACTION	No immediate Safeguarding concerns	Safeguarding procedures to be implemented and immediate referral to PIPOT and/or LADO	Safeguarding procedures to be implemented and immediate referral to PIPOT and/or LADO
<p>HMICFRS Spotlight Report: Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services; Recommendation 17 states: With immediate effect, chief fire officers should notify HMICFRS of any allegations that have the potential to constitute staff gross misconduct that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • involve allegations of a criminal nature that have the potential to affect public confidence in FRSs; • are of a serious nature; or • relate to assistant chief fire officers or those at equivalent or higher grades. 			



EqIAs - Managing Allegations - July 2023

Note for all: Equality Impact Assessments are live documents and updated accordingly for revision.

Managing Allegations

The NFCC Managing Allegations Guidance is one of the three pieces of guidance being published in July 2023. This guidance is a framework which has been produced for all UK fire and rescue services to effectively manage cases where an allegation or concern of harm has been made against a representative of your service.

The guidance affects all representatives of the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England (and devolved administrations), including those who are employees, employers and volunteers. This guidance will support services to respond to the local needs of communities, in meeting the national

requirements across the UK, however it is noted that some terminology and protocols in this guidance may differ within local arrangements and for devolved administrations, such as Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These inclusions have been confirmed and peer reviewed by representatives from Scottish FRS, Northern Ireland FRS and on behalf of all three Welsh fire and rescue services.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been conducted on the NFCC Managing Allegations Guidance and addresses the following of the nine protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010:

It is apparent that the guidance document will have a positive impact the nine protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010:

For example, in terms of 'Age', references to language and terminology used throughout the document is inclusive language, within the context of safeguarding when referencing 'children and vulnerable adults'. Further mention of 'adult social care' is in reference to persons in position of trust (PIPOT), this is in accordance with legislation for Adult Social Care, whereas LADO is in reference to 'safeguarding children'. Reference made to the term 'retirement' is for recording keeping (in accordance with local GDPR).

Definitions within the guidance have been identified and developed for a clearer understanding, such as a "vulnerable adult" as defined by the Department of Health, similarly an "adult at risk" or "child at risk" is in accordance with the Care Act 2014, section 42.

A section on the Equality Act and Mental Capacity Act highlights changing demographics and emerging complex safeguarding issues.

All language in guidance is gender neutral but it is to be highlighted terms used "himself or herself" is as described in the Care Act 2014, section 42 – this a legislative document and therefore unable to be amended unless a legislation review is undertaken.

This guidance effectively manages cases where an allegation or concern of harm has been made against a representative of service regarding their conduct within the workplace or externally.

As identified in the section on **age**, definitions within the guidance in terms of 'Disability' have been identified and developed for a clearer understanding, such as the definition of "vulnerability" as defined by Public Health England and those "with adults with care and support needs, and/or children/young people in any setting" in accordance with the Care Act.

For the other seven characteristic groups (race, gender re-assignment, religion/belief, sexual orientation, sex, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity and gender identity), this guidance will have a positive impact. Highlighting the section on UK Guidance and Legislation references relevant guidance and legislation which is inclusive of the UK.



There is additional information under 'relevant legislation of guidance' which is also included and incorporates all UK FRSs. Such as, the Care Act 2014 which is a national framework which determines whether a person has eligible needs. The Act creates a legislative basis for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to make cross-border placements for those who require care in residential accommodation in Scotland.

In conclusion, the guidance specifically recognises and references the need for practitioners to view safeguarding and vulnerability within context of the equality protected characteristics.