



# Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006

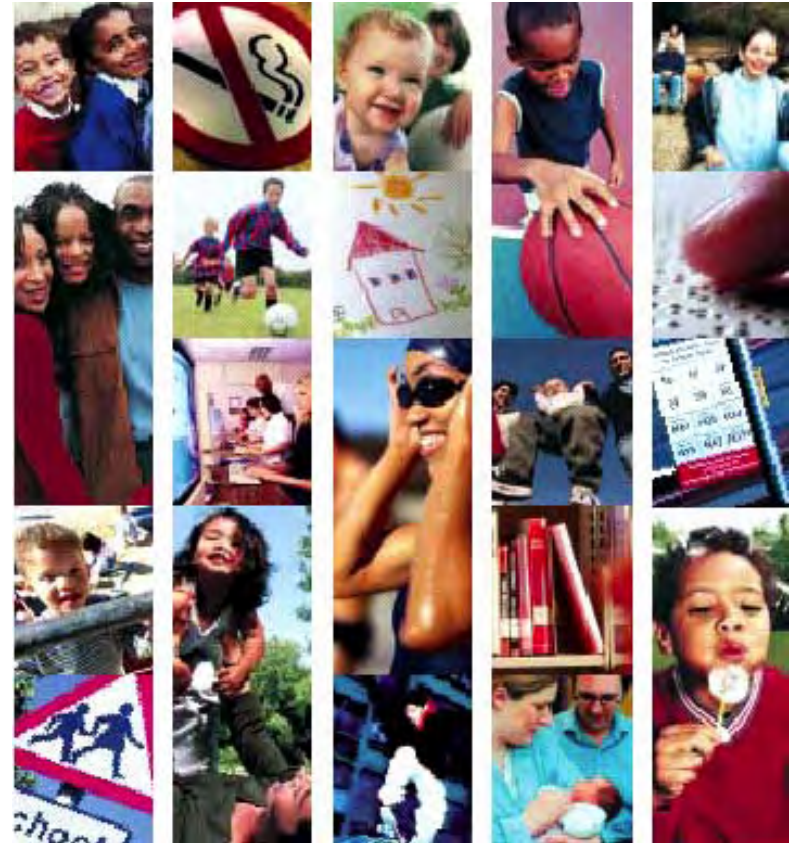
## Why are we considering allegations?

*'...we all share a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people'*

2.2

*'Children can be subjected to abuse by those who work with them in any and every setting. An allegation of abuse or maltreatment by a professional, staff member, foster carer or volunteer must therefore be taken seriously and treated in accordance with consistent procedures.'*

6.20:



# Policies and Procedures

- Recruitment and supervision of people who work with children

For example, by establishing effective policies and procedures, based on national guidance, for checking the suitability of people applying for work with children, and ensuring that the children's workforce is properly supervised, with any concerns acted on appropriately. WT06

3.25 Page 79

- Investigation of allegations concerning people working with children

For example, policies and procedures, based on national guidance to ensure that allegations are dealt with properly and quickly. WT06 3.26 Page 79

# An allegation is...

Information or a concern which suggests an adult working with children and young people has:

- *behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child*
- *possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to a child, a child; or*
- *behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children*

# Examples of actions Interpreted as Abusive

## Physical Abuse

Any form of physical assault (including attempts):-

Kicking

Punching

Pushing

Slapping

Shaking

Throwing a missile

## Sexual Abuse

Abuse of position of trust.

Any form of sexual assault.

Possession of indecent or abusive photographs or images of children.

Showing indecent or pornographic material to children.

Inappropriate touching, language or Behaviour towards a child.

## Emotional Abuse & Neglect

Racial / homophobic comments or Behaviour, or failing to address this in others.

Persistent sarcasm or belittling children.

Bullying children, or failing to address it in others.

Inappropriate punishments.

Creating a climate of fear.

Failing to protect a child from physical danger.

# NSCB Shared Objective

- Provide a safe environment for children and young people.
- Identify children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and **take action** with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and within other settings

# Professional Behaviour

- Employers and managers have a responsibility to ensure that professional behaviour applies to relationships between staff and children.
- All staff need to be clear about what constitutes appropriate behaviour and professional boundaries.
- Employers and managers who address these issues will enable staff to approach their role with confidence.

## Examples of Actions that may be Interpreted as both Abusive and Non-abusive

- Inviting children to their homes
- Giving children gifts
- Offering children lifts outside normal duties
- Singling individual children out for special attention
- Seeing children socially



Many of the above behaviours may be at odds with employers and professional bodies codes of conducts.

# Roles and Responsibilities

LSCB member organisations should have a **named senior officer** who has overall responsibility for: ensuring that the organisation operates procedures for dealing with allegations in accordance with statutory guidance; and liaison with LSCB *and*

LSCB ensures that there is an **LA designated officer** (s) to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases (WT 2006,6.23)

LSCB advises on role of **Senior Managers** in employers' procedures.

# Local Authority Designated Officer

“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.” WT06 App5 Para 13

- Management and overview of cases from all agencies, if criteria met
- Give advice and information to Senior Managers
- Monitoring progress of cases, to timescales
- Consistent thorough application of policy and process
- Maintains information databases for all allegations
- Produce qualitative and quantitative reports for the LSCB

# Cont...

- Contributes to strategy discussions
- Liaison with Police/CPS
- Work with Senior Managers to refer to Independent Safeguarding Authority and professional regulatory bodies
- In summary, LA designated officers have oversight of the process: provide advice to employers, liaise with the police and other agencies, monitor progress of cases and collate data.

# The Named Senior Officer (NSO) for NSCB member organisations:

- Ensures that their organisation operates procedures for dealing with allegations that are compliant with Working Together; NSCB procedures; Section 11 Children Act 2004
- Resolves any inter-agency issues.
- Liaises with NSCB on the subject

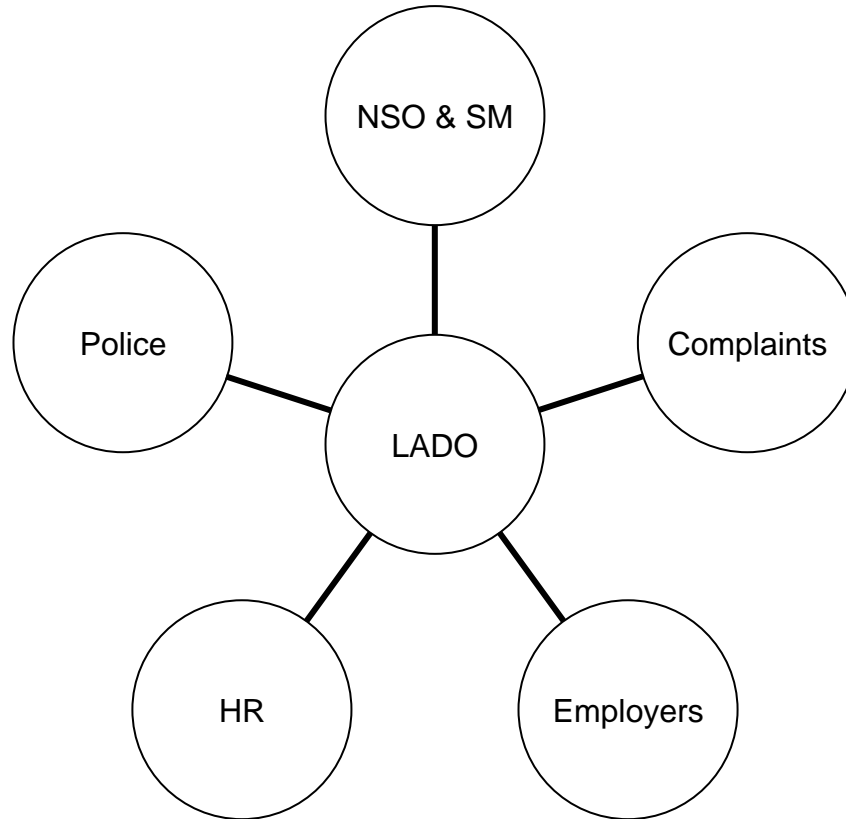
# The Senior Manager for Organisations:

- Organisations must identify a senior manager who has overall responsibility for ensuring procedures are followed at an operational level, and to whom all allegations are reported.
- This person may be, or may represent the organisation; In a school this is the head teacher, and the chair of governors in the event of an allegation against the head.
- A deputy must also be identified to cover in the absence of the senior manager, or if the allegation is against them.

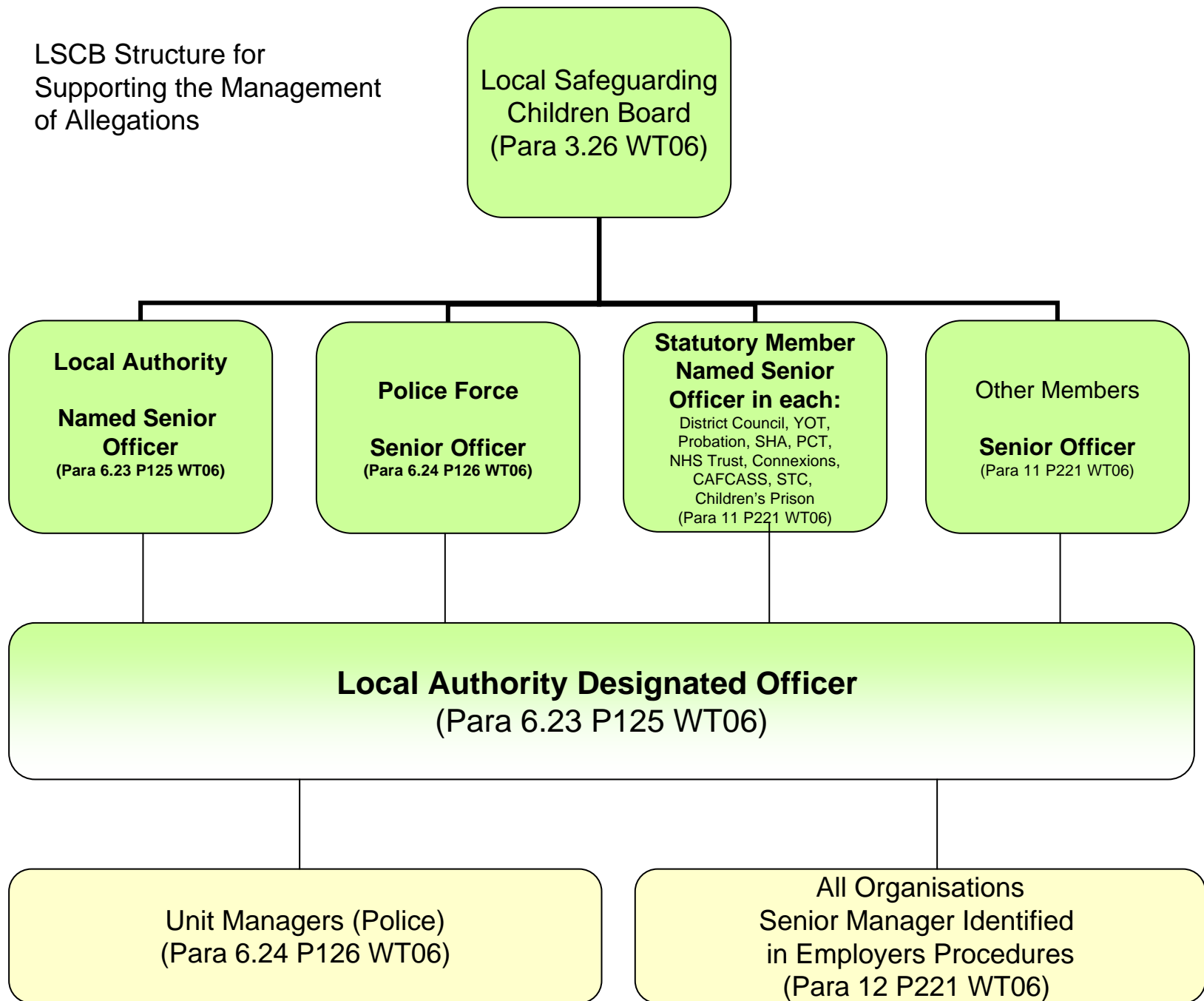
# Achieving the Shared Objective Requires Systems Designed to . . .

- Prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people.
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice.
- Identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare, and take appropriate action to keep them safe.
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children.

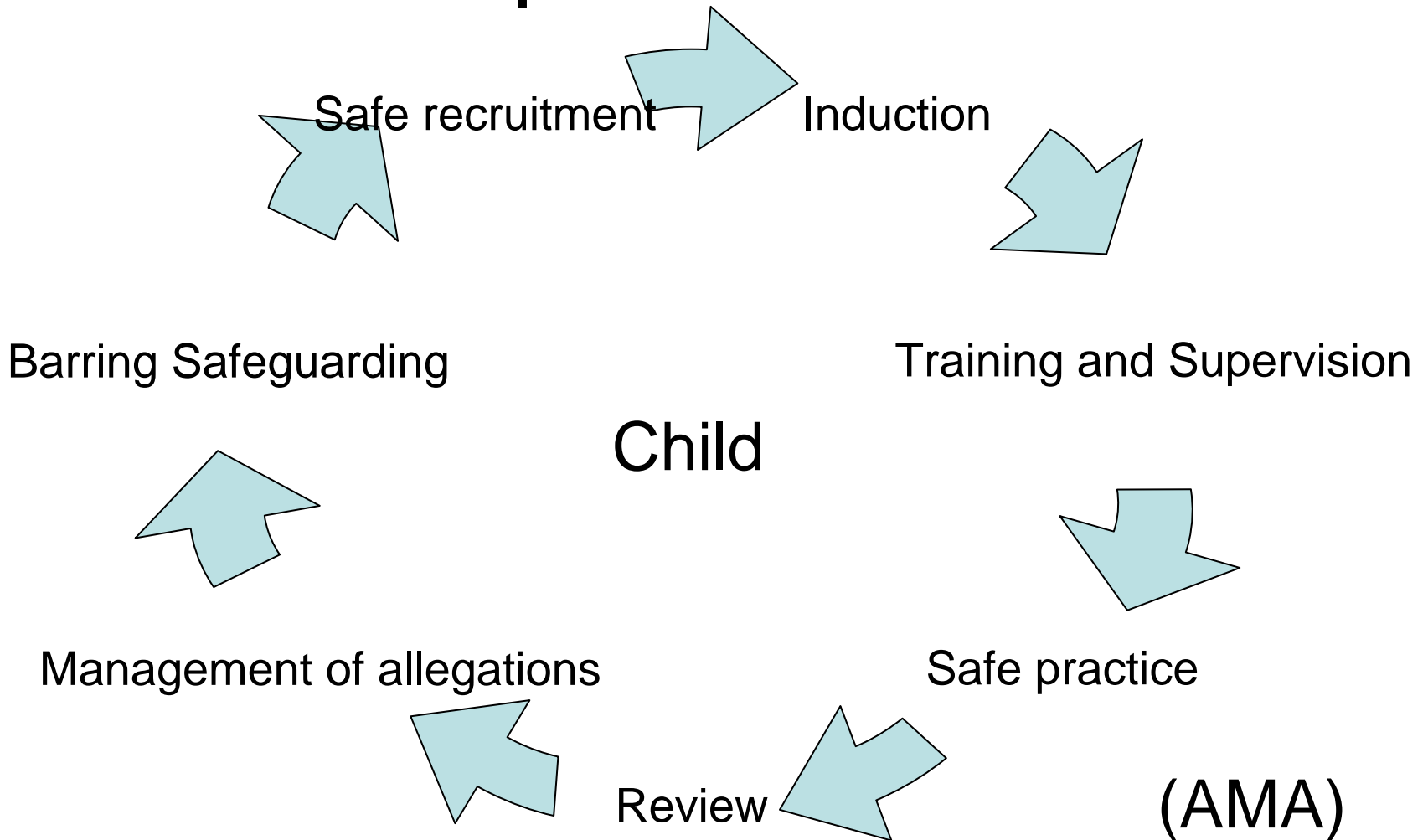
# LADO Role



LSCB Structure for  
Supporting the Management  
of Allegations



# Linking to an effective cycle of practice



# Summary of process

- Allegation is made.
- Senior manager refers to LADO – 1 day
- Initial consideration, allegation possibly true/false
- Not obviously false, strategy discussion inc LADO and employer
- Possible criminal offence – LADO informs police

# Cont

- Non disciplinary action within 3 working days.
- Disciplinary hearing – within 15 working days.
- Further investigation, investigating officer reports to employer within 10 working days.
- On receipt of the report the employer should decide within 2 working days if a disciplinary hearing is required.
- If disciplinary hearing is needed it should be held within 15 working days.
- Referral to POCA within one month.

# Concerns of the Workforce

- Lots of allegations are false and malicious;
- Cases take a long time to resolve – people are suspended for long periods without support;
- People are named and attract damaging publicity in the local or national press so careers are destroyed even if the person is innocent.

# Facts

- Very few allegations are deliberately invented or malicious;
- 55% of cases are resolved in under a month, but 22% take up to 3 months and the remainder can take up to a year or more;
- A person is suspended in only 20% of cases;
- Most reports in the national press are about people charged with an offence or a criminal trial.

# Suspension or Not?

- Decision to **suspend** or **temporarily re-deploy** staff is made without prejudice and the decision rests with the employing agency.
- Suspension should not be automatic, but it should be considered in any case where:
- Not to suspend may continue or increase the risk of significant harm for any child
- Not to suspend may hamper investigations or
- The allegation warrants investigation by the police, or
- The allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

# Aims of the New Arrangements

- To resolve 80% of cases in under a month, 90% in under 3 months, and all within a year;
- Better case management and decision making built on close cooperation between Agencies;
- LSCB to oversee implementation and monitor and evaluate effectiveness
- Better support and advice to employers;
- Better and quicker information sharing.

# Aims (cont)

- Close liaison between the Police and CPS on criminal investigations
- A National standard process for everyone who works with children built on effective practice

# Additional Points

- The employer must facilitate appropriate support to the individual during the process i.e. occupational health
- The LADO must be informed of all developments and outcomes at each stage of the process.
- Where the person resigns or ceases to provide the service, the allegation must still be responded to and concluded in line with procedures.
- The child who is the subject of the allegation with their parents/carers must be provided with appropriate support, advice and guidance.

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# Conclusion

You should now be familiar with:

- To develop an understanding of the process that must be followed.
- How to access the '[Newcastle Safeguarding Children Procedures](#)' with particular reference to Managing Allegations Against Staff, Carers and Volunteers
- What to do and what happens, if you think a member of staff, carer or volunteer has harmed or may harm a child



***Please remember, if ever you are in doubt, there is always someone available to discuss your concerns with.***

***Don't just leave it to someone else !***

# Managing allegations against adults who work with children

Peter Cobb

