

7-minute briefing | Managing a Complaint- Allegations against Staff

1 Think Safeguarding

Following any complaint, consider Safeguarding. Where there is an allegation of abuse or neglect from a member of staff, inform the practice safeguarding lead and seek advice from the Leeds ICB Safeguarding team.

Following a risk assessment have a conversation with HR. The decision to suspend an employee is the responsibility of the practice and should be dependent on their role and the nature of the allegation.

If the staff member works at another organisation or is part of a professional body, you will need to consider the need to share information.

2 Practice Policy and Procedure

The practice should have **Complaints policy** in place that enables them to respond appropriately when suspicions or concerns are raised about a member of practice staff. This must include arrangements for raising concerns to the local authority as well as managing concerns within the practice.

Chaperone policy covering the safeguarding aspect of the [Chaperone role](#). As well as being there to support the patient, the chaperone also provides a safeguard for both patient and Dr/ practitioner. It can also discourage unfounded allegations of improper behaviour.

Background

A practice received a complaint about inappropriate touching of a female adult patient by a male GP. The GP was completing a chest examination after the lady came in with a lump under her left arm. The GP did not have a chaperone during the appointment, or discuss this with the patient.

The following week the practice manager received a letter of complaint about the incident, with the patient not understanding why a breast examination was required when the lump was under her arm.

As per the practice policy this complaint was given to the GP who the complaint was about. He contacted the patient to discuss this, which the lady found incredibly uncomfortable and felt unable to discuss the issue.

3 Referrals

It may be necessary to contact the **Police**.

The [Local Area Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) should be notified within one working day of all allegations, if the staff member has contact with children and young people. A LADO should be considered even if the complaint isn't about a child.

The LSAB guidance [Person in Position of Trust](#) is available to help you assess and manage the risk of staff members who have contact with vulnerable adults.

The above steps should be considered individually and may all need to be completed.

4 Support staff member

A balance must be struck between supporting the alleged victim and the person alleged to have caused harm.

The suspect of the allegation should be informed that concerns have been raised against them, without disclosing the nature of those allegations until further enquiry has taken place.

The suspect of the allegation should not respond to the complaint or contact the alleged victim regarding the incident at any point, this may re-traumatise. Re-traumatisation is a conscious or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in a re-experiencing of the initial traumatic event.

5 Support alleged victim

Consider any safeguarding referrals for the patient – e.g. children or adult social care.

Consider any other support required for the patient – e.g. mental health.

Key points

- Think Safeguarding with any complaint.
- Inform the practice SG lead and get advice from the Leeds ICB Safeguarding team.
- Consider referrals to the local authority and police, consider the Person in Position of Trust guidance.
- Support the staff member at what will be a stressful time and the wider team.
- Support the alleged victim, consider safeguarding referrals and any other referrals such as mental health.

Resources

- [Managing Allegations | Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership \(leedssc.org.uk\)](#)
- [People In A Position Of Trust \(leedssafeguardingadults.org.uk\)](#)
- [Learning from allegations of sexual assault \(medicalprotection.org\)](#)

The Leeds ICB Safeguarding team have a template policy document that can provide guidance on what to include. Contact for a copy wyicb-leeds.safeguardingteam@nhs.net.