

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY

05 January 2026

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### DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

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#### SUMMARY REPORT

##### Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the progress and performance of the Designated Officers' (DO) response to all contacts received relating to allegations/concerns of abuse by those who work with children for the period April 2024 to March 2025.

##### Summary

2. In line with national guidance, the Designated Officer function is to ensure that:
  - a) advice and guidance are provided to partner agencies and staff where an allegation is made against a person who works with children (paid or voluntary capacity).
  - b) the Designated Officer will facilitate and oversee this process. The Designated Officer does not investigate. Investigation is the role of the employer or the police where a criminal offence has been committed.
  - c) an agreed outcome of the investigation is established.
  - d) allegations are appropriately managed by employers to protect not only the welfare of children but also staff.
  - e) support actions are taken without delay to protect children.
  - f) all learning is effectively disseminated.
3. All organisations working with children in Darlington are required to have policies and procedures in place in relation to what their organisation should do when an allegation is made against an employee/volunteer who has contact with children. These policies and procedures should be in line with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership multi-agency procedures.
4. The allegation can be in connection with:
  - a) employment
  - b) voluntary activity
  - c) work placement

- d) the individual's own children
- e) related to the community or private life of a partner, member of the family or other household member.

### Recommendations

5. It is recommended that:

- a) the contents of the report and the work undertaken during 2024/25 be noted.
- b) the annual report be agreed.

**Chris Bell**

**Assistant Director of Children's Services**

### Background Papers

- No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Shirley Saunders, Designated Officer  
Extension 5319

Council Plan	This report is relevant to Children and Young People – supporting the best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.
Addressing inequalities	There are no issues relating to inequalities which this report needs to address.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no issues relating to climate change.
Efficient and effective use of resources	This report has no impact on the Council's Efficiency Programme.
Health and Wellbeing	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual group is considered to be minimal
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report will assist in advising on matters that impact on Looked After Children.