



ANNUAL
REPORT
2016-2017

Local Authority Designated Officer

Introduction

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (WTSC 2015) requires local authorities to have a particular officer or a team of officers to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. The officer or team of officers should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to fulfil this role effectively. It also requires newly appointed officers to be qualified Social Workers.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

The LADO oversees individual cases, provides advice and guidance to employers, voluntary organisations and liaises with the Police and other agencies as required. The LADO has a responsibility to monitor the progress of individual cases to ensure they are dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently, as well as identifying significant patterns and trends across the workforce.

In Cheshire East there are currently two part time LADO's and dedicated Business Support Officer; they sit within the Children's Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit.

Context

WTSC 2015 provides the threshold criteria for the management of allegations regarding individuals who work with children and young people. The guidance not only applies to allegations where it is considered that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm but also allegations, which suggest that a person has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child.
- Possibly committed an offence against, or related to, a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children.

These procedures should be applied where there are allegations or concerns that an individual may pose a risk of harm and they are employed on a paid or voluntary basis including casual, agency, commissioned and self-employed workers. The procedures capture concerns, allegations or offences emanating from outside of work, as well as within a person's paid or unpaid role working with children.

WTSC clarifies that the guidance applies in its entirety to all schools, including independent schools, academies and free schools, who all have duties in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

LADO Performance Data: 2016/2017

Referrals

During 2016/17 there were 233 referrals to the Cheshire East LADO.

The LADO's response to referrals are categorised into 3 areas:

- **Consultation:** Referrals where the LADO threshold is not met (as per WTSC 2015 guidance).
- **No Further Action after Initial Consideration:** Referrals where some preliminary investigation is required by the referrer or employer to determine whether further action is required under LADO procedures.
- **LADO Threshold is met:** An investigation with LADO oversight is required and a LADO strategy meeting is needed.

Of the 233 Referrals: 91 (40%) were categorised as Consultations; 85 (36%) as No Further Action after Initial Consideration; and 57 (24%) met the threshold for a LADO strategy meeting.

Table 1 Referral Comparisons 2012 - 2017

	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Referrals met LADO threshold	78 (38%)	63 (19%)	46 (19%)	72 (22%)	57 (24%)
Not met LADO threshold	127 (62%)	262 (81%)	193 (81%)	250 (78%)	176 (76%)
Total	205	325	239	322	233

- The percentage of referrals meeting the threshold for a LADO strategy meeting is largely consistent with previous years.
- The majority of referrals (76%) did not meet threshold for a strategy meeting, which suggests that designated managers across the children's work force might require further training about when to refer their concerns to the LADO. However, the LADO role does involve providing advice to employers and it is expected that the threshold will not be met following every consultation/referral.
- Referrals not meeting the threshold for a strategy meeting came from all organisations: there are no discernible themes in relation to particular sectors or organisations.
- Of the 8 local authorities participating in regional data collection, 4 reported similar data in relation to referrals that met threshold for a strategy meeting (range of 21-24%).

Referrals by Referring Agency (the agency making the referral)

The data in table 2 relates to the 57 referrals that met the threshold for a LADO Strategy Meeting.

Table 2: Comparison Referrals by Referring Agency April 2012 – March 2017

	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Early Years	6	4	4	5	4
Education	25	17	20	14	17
Fostering	12	13	1	12	5
Health	0	1	0	2	0
Leisure LA	0	1	1	2	0
Ofsted	4	2	3	2	3
Police	5	5	6	4	8
Residential	4	11	3	8	5
Social Care	18	7	5	17	12
Transport	3	1	1	3	1
Vol Organisations	1	1	2	3	1
*Other					1
Total	78	63	46	72	57

*Other: Another LADO

- Most referrals were from professionals working in the Education Sector (30%) which is a return to the 2013 – 2015 trend and a 10% increase from last year.
- There were a total number of 56 contacts from education professionals of which 17 (30%) met the threshold for a LADO strategy meeting: 28 (50%) were consultations only and did not need any preliminary investigation to determine whether the threshold was met.
- There was no clear distinction between types of schools making referrals to LADO.
- 21% of referrals came from social care, which is consistent with last year when 24% of referrals came from social care. It should be noted that only 1 (8) % of these referrals related to a social care employee. The remaining 98% related to Education staff (67%); Foster Carers (17%) and transport (8%).
- The total number of contacts with LADO from social care was 39, of which, only 31% met the threshold for a LADO strategy meeting.
- This reporting year, 14% of referrals were from the police, an increase of 10% from last year. 7 out of the 8 referrals came from Cheshire Police, the other came from GMP. None of the referrals related to police officers.
- Cheshire Police have confirmed that the DCI in their Professional Standards Unit is fully aware of their obligations regarding referrals to LADO and is confident that any case that would require a referral to LADO will be made. The DCS has invited PAN Cheshire LADOs to challenge and escalate any cases they are aware of that have not been referred appropriately.

- Referrals from and about those working in the voluntary and faith sectors remain low. LADO's throughout the country have reported similarly low levels from these sectors, however it is reported that relationships with safeguarding leads in the respective diocese is largely positive.
- Given the high degree of non-recent allegations for this sector, and the limited infrastructure for many of the smaller groups, it may be helpful for the LSCB to ask for assurance in respect of current safeguarding practice in these sectors which give assurance that there are no flaws in their processes for recognising, identifying and responding to allegations.
- Alongside this, the LADO plans to meet with the respective Cheshire East LSCB representatives for the faith and voluntary sectors to discuss the possible reasons for low referral rates and how best to promote the LADO service in faith and voluntary settings.
- There have been 15 referrals in relation to Children with Disabilities, of which 7 (12% of the total) met the threshold for a LADO strategy meeting. All the allegations related to physical harm. All 7 allegations were thoroughly investigated and the child's specific needs were considered throughout the process.
- The LADO will meet with Head Teachers from specialist provisions and Local Authority Managers with responsibilities for children with disabilities to: ensure children, parents, carers and those working/volunteering with such children are aware of Managing Allegations procedures and the LADO role; and discuss how best to support children with communication difficulties to raise safeguarding concerns and make allegations.

Referrals by Employing Agency (the agency where the adult is employed)

The data in table 3 relates to the 57 referrals, which met the threshold for a LADO Strategy Meeting.

Table 3: Comparison Referrals by Employing Agency April 2012 – March 2017

	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Early Years	7	5	4	9	9
Fostering LA	7	10	1	13	2
Fostering Non LA	7	5	0	6	4
Social Care	2	2	1	6	2
Leisure LA	1	1	1	0	0
Health	0	2	0	3	0
Residential	8	11	3	7	5
Education	32	19	23	18	27
Self Employed	7	4	5	3	1
Transport	3	2	2	5	3
Other	0	0	1	0	1
Vol Organisation	3	2	5	2	3
Total	78	63	46	72	57

- Most referrals relate to adults who work in schools: 27 referrals (46%). These can be broken down into type: primary school 35%; specialist school 31%; secondary school 26%; independent school 4%; free school 4%.
- There has been a 21% increase in referrals relating to adults who work in schools since last year. There is no apparent reason for this and apart from an expected decrease in referrals in August; referral rates have been consistent throughout the year.
- 21 (77%) referrals about adults who work in schools related to allegations of physical harm to pupils. 2 (8%) related to sexual harm of pupils and 4 (15%) related to adults posing a risk of harm to pupils. Allegations related to employees' alleged behaviour both in the workplace and their personal life.
- 9 (16%) referrals related to early years settings: 1 related to a childminder; 3 after school club staff and 5 children's day nursery staff.
- There has been a sharp fall (16%) in referrals relating to Cheshire East Foster Carers. This has been highlighted with the Service Manager and it is agreed the LADO will attend a team meeting to promote the LADO service and local and statutory guidance about managing allegations.

Categories of Harm

Table 4: Comparison Categories of Harm April 2012 – March 2017

	2012 / 2013	2013 / 2014	2014 / 2015	2015 / 2016	2016/2017
Emotional	2	4	0	2	2
Risk of Harm	38	25	11	15	14
Physical	31	27	22	40	33
Sexual	7	7	13	4	8
Neglect	category not used			1	0
Total	78	63	46	72	57

Table 5: Categories of harm by agency setting.

	Physical	Risk of Harm	Sexual	Emotional	Neglect
Early Years	2	5	0	2	0
Education	21	4	2	0	0
Foster Carer	3	2	1	0	0
Residential	4	0	1	0	0
Social Care	0	2	0	0	0
Sports	0	0	2	0	0
Self Employed	0	0	1	0	0
Transport	2	0	1	0	0
Voluntary	1	0	0	0	0
Total	33	14	8	2	0

- Referrals relating to physical harm continue to account for the majority of referrals: 56% in 2015-16 and 58% in 2016-17.
- The amount of referrals relating to the more general category 'risk of harm' has remained static at approximately 20%. Almost all referrals in this category related to the adult's alleged behaviour towards children outside their workplace.
- Referrals relating to sexual harm have remained static as have those relating to emotional harm.
- No referrals were due to neglect and this is most likely a result of relatively low numbers of referrals about foster carers and residential settings where neglect would be most likely.

Outcomes

The following data and analysis relates to the referrals that were concluded during the reporting period April 2016 – March 2017.

Table 6: Outcomes of referrals closed during 2016-17

Substantiated	17
Unsubstantiated	17
Unfounded	12
Malicious	0
Total Cases Closed	46

- There has been an increase (18%) in substantiated allegations in comparison to last year and a decrease in unsubstantiated allegations (25%).
- Unfounded allegations have increased by 13% since last year. It is worth noting that 50% (6) of these allegations related to physical intervention by staff in schools, which is the sector which generates a high proportion of allegations. In 4 of these cases it was proven that staff had physical contact with children, however they were acting in accordance with statutory guidance and agency procedures and there was no intention to harm the child. The remainder of unfounded allegations relate to concerns raised about the adult's behaviour outside the workplace.
- Having less unsubstantiated allegations and more allegations either unfounded or substantiated should be viewed positively as it provides greater clarity for both the involved children and staff members.

Employer Action Following Investigation on Cases Closed April 2016-March 2017

Cessation of Use	2
Dismissal	5
No action/NFA	12
Employer Risk Assessment	1
Resignation	7
Further concerns/Training Needs Identified	18
Deregistered	1
TOTAL	46

- A high proportion of investigations (39%) concluded there was a need for further training and this is consistent with the previous year's data. The majority (78%) related to unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations where employers recognised staff training will support the prevention of future allegations.

- Although a relatively high number (26%) required no further action it is worth noting that 50% of these were unfounded allegations and 17% related to historic allegations where the adult no longer worked with children.

Time from Referral to Completion April 2016-March 2017

Time taken	Total
Less than 1 month	8
1-3 months	27
4-6 months	5
7 months +	6
Total Cases	46

- The LADO has continued to ensure that allegations are managed in a timely way: 76% of referrals were concluded within 3 months.
- Of those cases that took longer than 7 months to conclude, 33% involved complex police investigations and subsequent court proceedings. The remainder related to a period of staff changes in the LADO service resulting in cases remaining open on the database, which ordinarily would have been concluded within 3 months.
- There have been several cases which have incurred significant delay (more than 12 months) once they reach the court arena. The delay appears to be a result of judiciary capacity and beyond the involved agencies control. Such delay is reported to have had a substantial detrimental impact on the emotional well being of both the alleged victims and the alleged perpetrators and their respective families. The delay also impacts on resources as the alleged perpetrator is likely to be suspended pending the outcome of the court process.
- The LADO completes a 4 weekly review on all open cases to ensure there is no unnecessary delay and drift

Service Delivery, Reflection and Improvement

- Implementation of a simplified, more transparent data recording and collection system has enabled effective working arrangements between two or more people covering the LADO duties and supported greater management oversight.
- The improved recording of consultations with LADO, where the threshold for further action has not been met, is ensuring information regarding individuals who potentially pose a risk of harm is being collated for future reference. This provides greater safeguards for children in Cheshire East.
- Cheshire East LADO practice standards, setting out shared expectations between LADO and organisations providing services to children in Cheshire East have been implemented.
- The LADO One Minute Guide has been updated to reflect changes from WTSC 2015 and to include information on the LADO / managing allegations process.

- The LADO has met with Cheshire East's Transport Service Solutions (TSS) and Taxi Licensing to challenge the lack of children's safeguarding training for taxi drivers and passenger assistants. It is reported that a children's safeguarding training programme is now being developed by TSS and will form part of the driver and passenger assistant induction.
- The LADO delivers Managing Allegations training twice a year, with the support of the LSCB Training Manager. The training content has been updated and is now delivered in a half day session. Feedback has been positive with delegates citing trainer knowledge and experience as key aspects of their learning experience. Delegates also commented on the benefit of being trained by practitioners: being able to put a face to the name: meeting the LADO gave them greater confidence in approaching the LADO for advice.
- Managers from the voluntary sector are underrepresented at Managing Allegations training which will be addressed by additional promotion (see below).
- The LADO continues to attend quarterly North West Regional LADO meetings and participates in joint development initiatives via a shared regional work plan. Current Work Plan activity includes the development of a shared threshold in relation to LADO strategy meetings and the redevelopment of leaflets for those involved in an allegation. Cheshire East LADO is leading on this task.
- The LADO participated in a regional practice audit: it was confirmed that practices, standards and procedures for managing allegations in Cheshire East are consistent with other local authorities in the region.
- The LADO attended the National LADO conference in March 2017 and continues to provide feedback on development initiatives which aim to provide a collective LADO voice regarding the development of legislation and statutory guidance regarding the managing of allegations.
- The LADO attended a national seminar in March 2017: Predators In Positions Of Trust. This highlighted the need for employers to create safe environments for children and young people and for professionals to pay more attention to research from studies with convicted sex offenders. This has been reflected in the Managing Allegations training delivered by the LADO.
- Promoting the LADO role and LSCB Managing Allegations procedures will remain a priority in the coming year:
 - The LADO will meet with the LSCB's designated leads for the Faith and Voluntary sectors.
 - The LADO will meet with the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) County Lead
 - The LADO will lead on the implementation of multi-agency working agreements and pathways in relation to appropriate referrals and efficient management of allegations.
 - The LADO will meet with Head Teachers from specialist provisions and Local Authority Managers with responsibilities for children with disabilities to: ensure children, parents, carers and those working/volunteering with such children are aware of Managing Allegations procedures and the LADO role; and discuss how best to support children with communication difficulties to raise safeguarding concerns and make allegations.

Appendices

Appendix 1: LADO Business Plan 2017/18



LADO Business Plan
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Appendix 2: One Minute Guide



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