



Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

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CONTENTS

1. FOREWORD

2. SERVICE AND LEGAL CONTEXT

- 2.1 The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- 2.2 Profile of the LADO Service in Hull
- 2.3 LADO capacity
- 2.4 LADO Learning and Development

3. ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- 3.1 The Screening Process
- 3.2 Applying Thresholds
- 3.3 The Volume of Contacts

4. ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT DATA 2023/2024

- 4.1 The Number of Referrals
- 4.2 The Number of Referrals by Referring Agency
- 4.3 The Number of Referrals by Employment Sector
- 4.4 Categories of Referral

5. ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

- 5.1 The threshold for an allegation management meeting
- 5.2 Allegation Management Meetings
- 5.3 Professionals Meetings
- 5.4 Police/LADO Evaluation Meetings/Discussions
- 5.5 Agency attendance at Meetings
- 5.6 Actions Planning

6. ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES

- 6.1 Timeliness of allegation management process completion
- 6.2 Allegations by Outcome
- 6.3 Action taken following an allegation management process.

7. MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 7.1 Management oversight and quality assurance
- 7.2 High profile cases

7.3 Governance

7.4 Dispute Resolution

8. LADO IMPACT 2023/2024

9. LESSONS LEARNT

10. KEY PRIOTITY AREAS 2024/2025

1. Foreword

This Annual Report provides an account of the activity of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Service between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024. It evaluates practice, plans and the allegation management process and the effectiveness of the LADO service in ensuring that Hull Local Authority is discharging its statutory responsibilities.

The LADO plays a pivotal role in ensuring that children are safeguarded with responsibility for independent management and oversight of allegations against people who work or volunteer with children. This report demonstrates the continuous development and improvement in the LADO service over the past year and highlights the identified improvement planned for the coming year.

Note: Throughout this report those responsible for employing individuals who work or volunteer with children will be referred to as employers.

2. Service and Legal Context

2.1 The Role of the Local Authority Designated Officer

The primary role of the LADO is to have independent oversight of an allegation management process when concerns are raised about an individual working or volunteering with children. To facilitate effective communication between employers, police, and children's social care to ensure proportionate and reasonable decisions are made about the individual's suitability to work or volunteer with children. All *employers* who provide a service or resource to children have access to advice provided by the LADO. The LADO offers consultations in the form of support to managers and leaders who may rarely deal with such situations and provide them with specialist knowledge and reassurance to make informed and balanced decisions. The LADO does not conduct investigations directly, but, rather, oversees the investigation process to ensure thoroughness, timeliness, and fairness. To ensure impartiality, the LADO will not, ordinarily, have direct contact with the adult against whom the allegation has been made, or the family of the child/children or adult victim but will, as part of their role, ensure that proportionate information and feedback to them, throughout the allegation process, is considered.

The appointment of the Local Authority Designated Officer (or LADO service) is a **statutory requirement**.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 is the statutory guidance that sets out the requirements and criteria for allegations management.

'Organisations and agencies working with children and families should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Such policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice or a complaint. An allegation may relate to a person who works with children who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children and/or;
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The statutory and practice guidance for the LADO service is found within Working Together 2023 Chapter 4 and in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) Part 4.

The National LADO Network LADO Principles (Nov 2018) offer direction for good practice and are widely adopted nationally and regionally as a good practice guide.

2.2 Profile of the Hull LADO service

The LADO role is located within the Independent Reviewing Service. Hull has 1.6 full time equivalent dedicated Local Authority Designated Officers, during the time covered by this report. The LADO is currently line managed by the Independent Reviewing Service Group Manager. The two LADOs (1.6fte) are social work qualified which is consistent with government guidance for all new appointments to this role and have experience in working in Children's Social Care in safeguarding roles. With over 66 years of combined experience working and volunteering with children and young people across education, the voluntary sector and in children's social care. This includes a combined total of 52 years post-qualifying experience in social work across locality safeguarding, children's disability services, the front door, Children's Homes and Fostering. Also, with experience at Social Worker, Team Manager and Group Manager level and time spent as Independent Reviewing Officers / Child Protection Conference Chair and have spent around five years each in the LADO role.

The LADO is supported through the Independent Reviewing Service Business Support function. Since March 2020, the LADO service has operated a mainly online service. This has seen more regular attendance and contribution to allegation meetings from participants who both work in the city of Hull and those who are required to attend from outside of the city boundary. The allegations management process requires consultation with but not limited to employers, social workers, police officers and governing or registering bodies throughout the United Kingdom and the migration to facilitating meetings through Microsoft Teams has been invaluable and is both cost effective and time efficient.

At the time of writing the report, there is partial cover only for the LADO service for both planned and unexpected absence from role through the support of one experienced Independent Reviewing Officer, who assumes additional responsibility for the LADO Service during these times, alongside their normal duties.

Service resourcing will continue to be reviewed throughout the year to ensure there is adequate capacity to maintain a quality service to effectively manage all contacts with the LADO service. The work of the LADO varies greatly on a case-by-case basis and as a result quantitative caseload analysis is complex. The LADO service (1.6 fte) typically holds on average 135 cases (increased from 100 in the previous year) cases to monitor, track and advise upon, at any one time. This is in comparison to last year 2021/2022 when the LADO service held between 40-75 cases and in 2019, when the transfer of cases from the previous database to Liquid Logic saw 23 open cases being managed by LADO. This work sits alongside the increased requests for consultations (contacts), delivery at training events and workshops and reporting to key partner agency forums or meetings. As part of the role, the LADO service is also

required to respond to internal requests for data analysis including supporting the investigation of complaints, Subject Access Request, Disclosures and Barring and Freedom of Information requests.

2.3 LADO Learning and Development

The LADOs have access to children's workforce-wide training to support their development needs, but it is acknowledged that there is a need to access specialist training to support the distinct areas of knowledge related to the LADO role. This is not unexpected given the relatively specialist nature of the LADO role.

The LADO service has access to a twice monthly regional (subgroup) meeting held with the LADOs from East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire which cover the Humberside Police area, during which access to helpful training, dissemination of training knowledge and case-related matters are shared and lessons learnt to improve practice and service delivery on a consistent basis across the sub-region.

The Hull LADO service is represented at the Yorkshire and Humber Regional LADO practitioner's forum which meets every two months. This forum provides a valuable opportunity to discuss emerging issues and to learn from best practice. The forum has also established a network across regional LADO services where practitioners can seek advice and share information, skills, and knowledge. The forum has representation on the National LADO Network which are actively engaged with leading policy makers in both the police and government departments, most noticeably the Department of Education in the annual review of the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

The Allegation Management Process

3.1 The Screening Process

The referral of allegations is directly to the LADOs in Hull, with no mechanism set up to filter out or record initial details prior to consultation. The contact details for the LADO are displayed on the Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership website and on Hull City Council's public-facing website. A referral form has been made available but is not a mandatory to request a consultation for guidance, as part of the initial referral pathway, at this time. With allegations consultations and threshold application being uncommon ground for many employers, ability to access timely professional advice to assist in the application of threshold considerations and immediate safeguards is important. As is seen, borne out in the data, with significant numbers of employers seeking professional guidance when holding a concern or complaint, which is then determined as below LADO threshold. The LADO Service, however, did create a

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specific sub-regional referral form for Humberside Police, to guide officers and help them embed the culture of referral to LADO, and is placed on the Humberside Police intranet.

The LADO provides a well-respected and valued advice and consultation service for both professionals and, occasionally, complainants to seek advice, discuss concerns and determine whether a referral should be progressed. To track decision making and the volume of work coming to the LADO and to ensure a safer more robust record of concerns all contacts to the LADO are recorded and retained, including those which are consulted upon on an anonymous basis which are held against the name of the establishment of employment or place of volunteering. This system of record keeping enables an audit trail providing emerging patterns of behaviour and escalating or cumulative concerns about an individual or setting.

All contacts are initially screened and will either be recorded as 'advice only,' 'below LADO threshold' or are progressed to a referral.

The **three categories** used for screening LADO contacts:

Advice only including other local authority responsibility:

The concern has **not met LADO criteria** for consideration by Hull LADO. For example: the adult does not work with children; there is no allegation against a named individual; the concern relates to someone who does not work or volunteer with children in the city of Hull. Or relates to a request for information on an existing or closed case.

Below LADO threshold:

The concern or complaint has **not met criteria for consideration as a referral**. For example, a low-level concern about professional practice or standard of care; no allegation has been made and no evidence of harm. There is no risk of harm to children and no pattern of concern about the subject is evident. The manager is confident they can deal with issues through their internal processes. The concern is thought to be a training or conduct issue. There will be further enquiries and actions by the referrer to address the issue and a matter can be re-referred to LADO if further evidence increases risk. The referring or employing agency can support any children involved to remain safe.

Met LADO threshold:

If the **concern meets the LADO criteria**; an **allegation** has been made; there is evidence of a criminal offence or harm; there is evidence of risk of harm; with a possible injury, for example, or there could be a pattern of concern about an individual. A multi-agency investigation may be needed, including the employer, HR, police and/or social care. The concerns raise safeguarding questions about the subject's conduct, practice, judgement, or suitability to work with children. There may be evidence of likely

reputational damage or further risk of harm; the child may require support or services from outside of the referring agency. It is also possible that a referral to DBS or regulatory body may be required.

On occasion, referrals are made to the LADO for those in the adult workforce because comparable arrangements in adult safeguarding are less common well developed or known about. These are routinely re-routed into the adult safeguarding process and on some occasions are jointly worked, recognising that the person of concern has roles in both the adult and children's workforce. Close liaison with adult services continues to promote this arrangement. The Person in a Position of Trust procedures remain in place to receive and share information with employers at first disclosure but do not fully replicate the requirement for oversight and quality assurance that is reflected in Working Together or KCSIE.

3.2 Applying Thresholds

The allegation management process is not linear, and the best approach is to evaluate on a case-by-case basis to ensure robust decision making.

The LADO, *employers* and safeguarding partners apply the threshold in an informed and consistent way with the threshold criteria circulated within meeting agenda to aid professionals in their decision making both for threshold determination and consideration of transferable risk to the workplace.

3.3 Volume of Contacts

During the period under review the availability of consultation has remained consistent; with partner agencies reporting that the consultation service is highly valued. In addition to advice and consultation, the LADO provides information to employers, Ofsted, placing authorities, commissioning services, Early Years registration for child minders and the Disclosure and Barring Service about the suitability of individuals to work with children. These are known as "*suitability checks.*"

Allegations are still uncommon in the most part, in most settings and therefore the application of LADO threshold is often unfamiliar for employers which can lead to consultation requests which do not meet the threshold. Contacts, as mentioned above, are recorded and categorised and this statistical information is now being captured to support the LADO service's knowledge of safeguarding partners' understanding of threshold including the volume and nature of the work.

Typically, screening contacts to the LADO as '*advice only*' or '*below LADO threshold*' involves guiding employers through a fact-finding process, supporting them to feel confident in their decision making

around issues or incidents in the workplace and in an employee or volunteer’s personal life – (*Criteria 4 introduced in December 2020 – Working Together to Safeguard Children*)

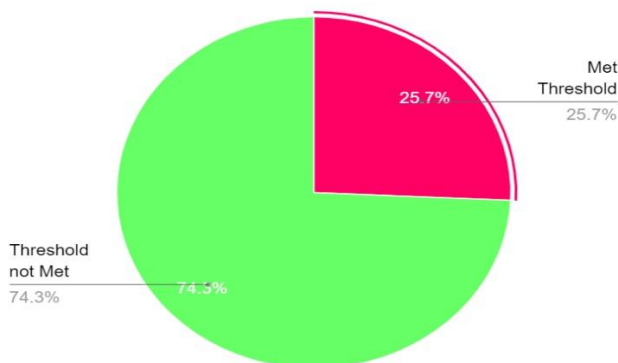
The number of contacts with LADO has increased again year on year, showing that between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024, there were **611 contacts** for consultation in contrast to 424 contacts in 2022/2023 and 310 contacts in the same period in 2021/2022. With a **97% increase** being evidenced in contacts over a 3-year period.

The table below shows the breakdown of the contacts into the three separate screening categories. As the data shows, a sizeable proportion of the work of the LADO is within the advice and consultation or preliminary investigation category referred to as *fact-finding*. With **74.3%** of the contacts being screened as a consultation for advice only, below LADO threshold or incorrectly referred to LADO as compared to 75.7% in 2022/2023; threshold application has remained stable. **25.7% of contacts met threshold** requiring a full allegation management process as compared to **24.3%** in the previous year.

The Table below shows the breakdown of contacts to the LADO into the three categories for screening.

Total Contacts in Year 2023/2024	
Met threshold	157
Did not meet threshold (advice only, Other Lau or below threshold)	454
Total contacts (consultations)	611

Pie Chart



This increase in contacts is somewhat expected in that there has been continued focus on promoting the role of the LADO and helping agencies and individual workers understand the threshold for a LADO referral. The development work completed by the LADO is discussed in more detail in section 11. Whilst the number of contacts shows that agencies have a better awareness of the harm by those who work with children and the need to consult with the LADO when considering how to deal with a concern, the figures may suggest a continuing need to **improve partners' confidence in applying the threshold**; this work continues.

A threshold document has been created to assist those contacting the LADO and forms part of the awareness raising for partners. The threshold is shared with referrers during consultation and is part of the agenda for Professionals Meeting or Allegation Management Meeting, to strengthen referrers and *employers'* practical application of the criteria.

Children's social care, protecting vulnerable people specialist trained police officers, designated officers in City Health Care Partnership/Hull University Teaching Hospitals Trust and Humber NHS Foundation Trust and heads/executive heads and designated safeguarding leads (DSL) in schools are more familiar with the LADO process and these agencies provide appropriate information to enable robust screening to take place. However, there are also *employers* who are less familiar with the process and need additional support in making a referral both at the right time and with the right information. Hull LADO will continue to offer advice and consultation, encouraging partners to consult with the LADO if they are unsure whether the threshold has been met and this makes up a considerable proportion of the work managed by LADO.

90-minute training sessions are open to all agencies including volunteers and feature in the training directory provided to Hull City Council employees and partners of Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership; there is a one-minute guide and links to the policies and procedures governing allegations on a dedicated webpage of the Hull Collaborative Partnership/Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership.

4.The Allegation Management Data 2023/2024

4.1 Number of Referrals

The number of contacts has again increased to 611 from 424 for this reporting year, with **157 cases** progressing past referral point as *meeting LADO threshold*, as compared to **103 cases** last year.

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The LADO was also still managing and overseeing the investigations into 98 additional cases from previous years that had not concluded at the start of April 2024. The table below shows the following cases that were transferred into this reporting period going as far back as January 2020.

Starting Year	Number carried over on 31 st March 2024
2019-2020	2
2020-2021	3
2021-2022	12
2022-2023	14
2023-2024	67
TOTAL c/f	98

A total of **255 active cases** were managed by the LADO Service in the reporting year 2023/2024 as compared to 160 in the previous year, including the 98 cases that remained open at and were transferred into this reporting year from the table above.

These 98 longer term cases are typified by long-term and complex criminal investigations. Although this is unsatisfactory, it is acknowledged that for exceptional cases, this is appropriate and necessary.

There has been a significant increase in the number of contacts to the LADO Service on a year-on-year basis. In 2020-2021, 230 contacts were recorded. In 2021-2022, 310 contacts were recorded showing a 34.8% increase. Over the year 2022-2023, 424 contacts were received, which amounted to a 36.8% increase. In the most recent financial year, 2023-2024, that covers this reporting period, 611 contacts amount to a 44.1% increase.

Reporting Year	Total Contacts
2020-2021	230
2021-2022	310
2022-2023	424
2023-2024	611

It should be noted that this figure included referrals taken in the month of March 2023, which may include those still in the fact-finding stage.

4.2 Number of Contacts by Referring Agency

Agency: Source of Referral	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Education	77	132	191
Social Care	90	118	145
Police	31	37	66
Fostering (HCC and Agency)	23	31	47
Residential (HCC and Agency)	15	23	36
Voluntary, Community, Sports, Faith Groups	13	11	21
Health	20	20	23
Early Years	5	15	14
Other inc. Anon and Parents	30	24	56
Ofsted	6	5	2
Independent Living	-	2	8
NSPCC	-	6	2
Total	310	424	611

Children's Social Care and education settings, continue to be the main source of contacts and referrals to the LADO, followed by the police. It is recognised that Police, Health, Social Care and Education setting have a lead role in safeguarding as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, but this does not take away from the key roles in safeguarding, for all settings that work with children, including the voluntary and community settings. This is also reflective of these agencies understanding of the role of the LADO. This trend has remained consistent over past years but with a noticeable shift last year, seeing the primary source of referrals coming from the education sector, which would be consistent with the ongoing high profile of safeguarding improvements and requirements in education settings, seeing schools keeping more comprehensive records of lower-level concerns and complaints, therefore more education leaders seeking a view from the LADO.

Helpfully, the LADO is now invited to attend **strategy meetings**. Although not a decision maker, as independence from child protection decisions is vital to the LADO role and remit, it has proven to be an effective method of gathering first hand multi-agency information on which immediate advice can be offered to all parties. Secondly, but equally importantly, it reduces the need for the key parties to attend a separate LADO allegation meeting to discuss the same information.

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In February 2023, Humberside Police serving officers and staff were identified as a person in a position of trust and authority over children and coming into contact with children as part of their work, therefore requiring them to be also scoped into the allegation management process. This is not a change in guidance or LADO approach but a change in police interpretation of policy based on the National Police Chiefs Council directive following a challenge by the LADOs from Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, North and Northeast Lincolnshire councils supported by their respective Directors of Children Services. The referral rate for this group of the children's workforce will be considered later in the report.

Health colleagues across Hull University Teaching Hospitals Trust, City Health Care Partnership and Humber NHS Foundation Trust continue to have a consistent and positive working relationship with the LADO service, with referrals featuring conduct in a person's private life featuring largely in these numbers.

Contacts and referrals from the residential sector, including independent children's homes, has remained relatively consistent with the overall increase in contact with the LADO and reflects the existing awareness of the requirement to refer and consult with LADO by residential managers, as first receiver of a concern or complaint. Within this data there is evidence of repeat allegations made by a small number of children and particular care is taken when filtering or managing these contacts. It should be noted that there is separate data for referrers from the independent living sector (post 16). Of particular interest to the LADO is that this sector has been primarily unregulated and often uses casual or self-employed staff. It is anticipated that as more independent living organisations come under the scrutiny of Ofsted and requirements to manage concerns and complaints transparently, this could see an increase over the coming year from this sector and from Ofsted.

The contact and referral rate for fostering has increased again in the Hull area from Hull Fostering, other local authorities, and independent fostering agencies where the carers live in the Hull boundary. However, this again is consistent with the overall increase in the contact and referral rates in 2023/2024. Hull Fostering continue to be the largest provider of foster care placements in the Hull area, and it should be recognised that several Hull Fostering carers will reside outside of the Hull area, in neighbouring authorities and further afield. The responsibility for managing allegations against foster carers lies with the authority in which the carer lives; this being a home-based occupation. Refresher training focussing on the fostering role and managing allegations has been delivered to all fostering team members as part of a stop the clock day.

Contacts from the early years sector has remained static after seeing a significant increase last year. With more guidance going into nurseries by Early Years Quality and Improvement Officers to reduce the number of inappropriate or below LADO referrals, this figure may be appropriate, but will require further

exploration in the current year. Many Early Years settings are independently owned or self-employed professionals and therefore can be harder to reach when promoting training or publicising the role of the LADO. The requirement to consult with LADO continues to be advised by the Early Years Regulatory Inspector for the Northeast, Yorkshire & Humber region.

In the previous year's report referrals from independent children's homes providers were counted in the residential figure and the referrals from NSPCC were also counted in the "Other" figure; this year and going forward will be separated for greater transparency but also includes anonymous referrals and direct reports taken from parents and carers about other professionals.

4.3 Referrals by Employment or Volunteering Sector

The allegations against professionals and volunteers cover all statutory and voluntary organisations that provide services for children in Hull.

Employment Sector of Subject	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Education inc. agency personnel	108	168	250
Fostering inc. agency	46	53	72
Health	30	44	50
Voluntary, Community, Sports, and Faith Groups	30	28	50
Residential inc. agency	32	25	40
Early Years	17	24	20
Social Care/Social Work	7	23	26
Transport/Taxi/Home to School	13	10	15
Police	5	6	23
Independent Living 16-18	-	5	15
Children's Centres	-	3	0
YOT	-	1	1
Other OLA/Adults/Inappropriate/Unknown	22	34	49
Total	310	424	611

Staff working in education settings, including support staff, continue to be the most represented employment sector referred to the Hull LADO for consultation. Many allegations are against teachers or teaching assistants, which would be expected as this is the area where children are in contact with professionals for a greater time compared to other activities which take place out of school. Of the overall children's workforce, there has been a slight increase in referrals about education staff from 39.6% last year to 40.9% this year. The education referrals consist of primary, secondary, further education settings and higher education settings (where there is a requirement to undertake placements towards professional qualification, in education settings). It should be noted that all students will be classified according to the area of their specialism, so for example, Trainee Teachers will be classified under Education, with Student Nurses at University being classified as Health.

The education referral rate also reflects the size of the workforce, the contact with more children in Hull than any other sector and stringent reporting procedures. All establishments are required to have safeguarding policies in place to ensure designated safeguarding staff, senior management, governors, trustees, and non-teaching staff are aware of their role and responsibility to safeguard children. The work of the Education Safeguarding Manager further reinforces the requirement to consider consultation and referral to LADO through regular Designated Safeguarding Lead and Heads of School meetings each year.

It had been noted that trustees and governors were under-represented in the Safeguarding and Managing Allegations training offered over the last three years, and training has begun to be delivered. And despite efforts to engage trustees and governors in allegations training during the past year, this has not been successfully taken up which is of concern given that serious concerns about employees and volunteers of education settings should be and would be alerted to the governors/trustees.

Referrals from education settings are predominantly about actions taken to manage challenging behaviour and safe practice during physical intervention with children within schools. Conduct issues including inappropriate behaviour and language also feature which is consistent with the strengthening of the government guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 in which the process for recording, retaining, and addressing "**low level**" concerns is set out. As part of Section 4 of this guidance, education settings are advised to contact the LADO should these lower-level concerns persist or be cumulative in nature.

Further in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023, there was a continued emphasis on to education settings to follow through with concerns or allegations about agency or temporary/commissioned staff, which in practice has seen more joint fact-finding and investigations by

the employment agency and the commissioning school. Balancing this with the clear directive that agency staff should not be ceased from working or removed from contract without full fact finding being undertaken.

KCSIE 2023 also prevents education staff leaving under compromise or settlement agreements during a safeguarding allegation with there being a clear expectation of the education setting to complete their investigation to the best of their ability and decide on suitability even where a staff member has resigned, retired, or otherwise left their employment. This had initially brought some employers into conflict with local teaching and support staff unions, however a joint approach over the last few years by the LADO and the Education Safeguarding Manager ensuring that local union representatives were offered training and awareness of the expectations as laid out in KCSIE has subsequently reduced these issues, locally. It should be noted, at this point that the LADO relies heavily on the Education Safeguarding Manager to direct and support education settings to undertake fact finding and investigations. The Education Safeguarding Manager not only provides this reassurance to the LADO that evidence is gathered, but that appropriate learning is implemented. In some cases, this has led to full reviews of safeguarding practice and procedures in education settings; the learning from this has upskilled and uplifted safeguarding across all education settings and is disseminated by the ESM.

Of significant interest this reporting year is the increase in the number of contacts about serving police officers and civilian staff, which is consistent with the issuing of the above-mentioned directive from the National Police Chiefs Council that all forces in England and Wales should refer into LADO in line with all other members of the children's workforce where concerns arise.

The cases identified as Other Local Authority/Adults and Inappropriate were identified at contact or shortly afterwards as requiring advice only or referral to adult safeguarding for those individuals working or volunteering with vulnerable adults or in other settings that would not be identified as "*working with children.*" For the cases identified as unknown, the referral or contact either had insufficient information to identify the subject of the allegation or their place of employment was unable to be identified.

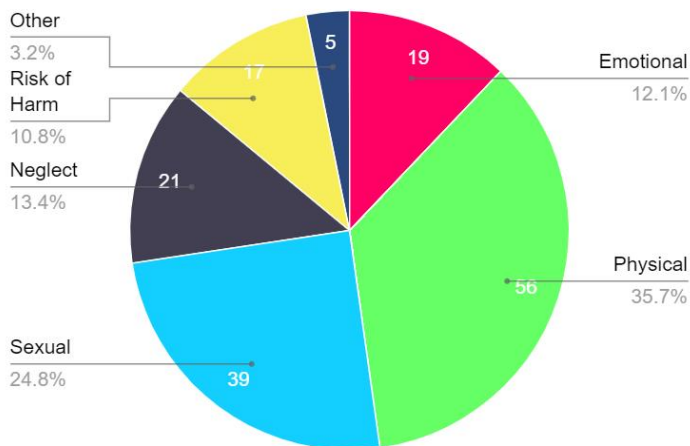
The contacts and referrals for those who are self-employed or do not have a registering or governing body remain a unique challenge to the allegation management and safeguarding processes; not only because they are working with children often in an unsupervised setting but also because they are harder to reach to address low-level concerns, with no employer investigation and a reduced ability therefore to reach determination of suitability to work with children. This will often leave the LADO in a position of having to contact the person of concern directly and undertake these discussions; with determination of outcome difficult to achieve impartially.

4.4 Categories of Referral

Contacts by Nature of concern or allegation

Category	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Threshold met - conversion
Physical	104	175	219	56
Emotional	48	39	76	19
Sexual	81	79	105	39
Neglect	26	40	79	21
Risk of Harm/Unsuitability	2	12	43	17
Other inc. unprof. conduct	49	79	89	5
Total	310	424	611	157

Primary Category of Concern



The above table and chart section indicates that the most significant category of referral is allegations of **physical harm**. This remains consistent across several years and as a national picture with a 30.2% increase on the contacts that met threshold for physical harm of either adults or children, since last year. This is followed by **sexual harm** which has increased from 18.6% to 24.8% and emotional harm increasing in referral type from 9.2% to 12.1%, in the last reporting year. The number of referrals categorised as unsuitable to work with children is the new category added from 2020 for anyone working with children. This now brings into the LADO scope allegations of harm, risk and crime against **another adult** and conduct in an individual's personal life which may indicate that they are unsuitable to work with children (*4th criteria*).

Sexual Harm

This category had seen a rise over the previous year in contacts and those becoming active referrals and includes any person who is alleged to have behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner or has sexually harmed a child either within their own family or within their work; this includes allegations of non-recent abuse. This figure has increased in percentage terms but has remained roughly consistent on the figures from the previous year.

This category also includes people who are suspected of conducting inappropriate relationships with young people aged sixteen or over. In such cases, the professional may have committed a "*abuse of position of trust*" offence dependent on their professional role. This category also includes allegations of online offending such as sexual communication with a child, possession, or distribution of indecent images, for example.

The rise in contacts (maintained this year) may be explained by the continued significant focus in schools to raise awareness of sexual harm and sexual abuse in schools following the Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges by Ofsted in June 2021 and the public consultation that saw a review of the government guidance to senior leadership which laid out whole school responsibilities and expected responses to child-on-child sexual violence and harassment. This has brought into sharp focus for teachers and students alike, an awareness of potential sexual harm, expectations of professional conduct and provided an environment in which a student can raise such concerns. Although, the scope of the guidance is primarily sexual harm between students it is relatively easy to see how this has potentially influenced the raising of sexual concerns in schools.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014224/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>

There continue to be increased complexities around the cases of online activity where an adult contacts a child online (or someone they believe to be a child) with the intention of sexual harm and those subjects who download and/or distribute indecent images of children. Investigations are lengthy due to the requirement for forensic examination of digital devices creating volumes of data. This has a detrimental but necessary impact on the time between referral to conclusion of the allegation for the school, the subject of concern and the child (if known). This is borne out in the data presented earlier, with the cases held over a year being categories as sexual or sexual (IT). It is accepted by Police authorities that there is a deficit in the provision of forensic examination resource nationally which is now standing at 13 months from arrest to the data being returned.

With the introduction of the fourth criteria of behaviour that may bring into question someone's unsuitability to work with children, this category also includes sexual harm and sexual assault allegations of an adult victim, in a subject's personal and work life. The LADO service is aware that health colleagues are now active in setting in clear standards of behaviour in hospitals between employees and has started to see an upturn in the referral numbers for sexually inappropriate conduct.

It should be noted that these categories do not correlate exactly with those used within child protection conferences and will also always feature consideration of the transferable risk into the workplace of the alleged behaviour in a subject of concern's personal life or in the community.

Physical Harm

This category includes any concern relating to disproportionate physical intervention between a professional and a child or young person that is not felt to be sexual in nature and which may arise from a physical intervention/restraint or assault both in the workplace and in the subject's personal life. Referrals under this category include relatively minor physical interventions that are nonetheless unacceptable in the context of the professional guidance, training, or work environment. This category also features assaults or physical harm of adults in a subject's personal and work life. This year we have seen an increase again in the number of lower-level physical interventions or interactions being reported by parents as common assault or lower-level criminal assaults, to Humberside Police. This also includes assaults of another adult by a person working or volunteering with children, which appear to be of a more serious nature and are often typified as allegations of domestic abuse within an adult relationship, which is not predominantly, emotional (coercive or controlling behaviour), financial or sexual abuse.

In the same period last year, 43 referrals of physical harm were identified as meeting threshold. This would also reflect the guidance to schools, for example, to consider discussion with the LADO for relatively minor or lower-level concerns that on scrutiny can be managed by the internal safeguarding and management procedures, as mentioned previously.

Neglect

This area of concern is used to categorise contacts/referrals which both relates to actual or potential neglect of a subject's own children, that could be seen as **neglect of a child** therefore leading to actual or potential harm and for **cumulative or serious standard of care concerns** by foster carers or prospective adopters or where failure to safeguard a child by a professional has led to neglect or harm.

Analysis of the data shows that professionals are referred to LADO where domestic abuse is identified as a factor within their personal lives/families or when an employee has a child who is subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect and their behaviour has contributed to the level of risk i.e., they are the perpetrator or abuse or are failing to protect their child or children from abuse.

Emotional Harm

The data held by LADO evidence that there are equal contacts for consultation of an allegation in respect of emotional harm to a child in the workplace and emotional harm to a child in the subject's own family. Close working relationships with Children's Social Care, both in Hull and out of area is facilitated in these cases. This was a similar picture in the previous period.

Risk of Harm / Behaviour Unsuitable to Work with Children

There are cases where a criminal threshold may also have been met, as identified in an earlier section. This primarily reflects conduct or behaviour away from the workplace and can include harm to an adult or other behaviour that would bring into question suitability to work with children. Harassment and stalking behaviour, threats of violence, conduct in which drugs, firearms, terrorism or hate crimes are all examples of such behaviour.

The category of **Other** is used only when the referring concern does not fit within the above categories and is primarily used when a concern also has not met threshold, such as conduct issues, professional practice issues, mental health concerns. This category is also used when the LADO receives requests for information or providing evidence to the Disclosure and Barring Service or registering or governing body,

for example. Although not a new referral, this type of work can be time consuming and requires extensive fact checking with other agencies.

5. Allegations Management Meetings

5.1 The Threshold for holding a Meeting.

An Allegations Management Meeting is an effective multi-agency forum for sharing and checking accuracy of information or evidence, establishing an agreed understanding of risk, and planning to ensure that identified safeguarding concerns, both in relation to the child or adult victim and the children associated with the individual's employment, are addressed.

Working Together indicates that an allegations management meeting does not need to be held in every case and there is no set timescale for holding such a meeting, should it be convened. It is more important to be **clear about the threshold** for holding an allegation management meeting and the **ability to coordinate an effective response, maintain robust oversight** of investigations and avoid duplication of meetings. Sometimes, it is agreed between the LADO and *employer* that there is no value to holding an allegation management meeting; an example of this may be where it is a single agency investigation where there is no requirement for police or social care information sharing.

Regardless of whether a formal meeting is planned, there will always be a safeguarding discussion held with the *employer*. The LADO will record information shared, safeguarding decisions made, and actions taken. This is particularly pertinent currently with discussions to identify on-going risk to victims in domestic abuse relationships, to consider the potential of any increase of risk to a victim by the employer of the perpetrator addressing the allegations with them, through their employment relationship. In only 2 cases last year, no approach could be made to the alleged perpetrator, despite evidencing a role with children due to the likelihood of increasing the risk to the victim and the victim being unwilling or unable to provide sufficient evidence on which to progress the allegation: often withdrawing cooperation with supporting agencies or the Police. Without willingness to progress this information sharing by the victim and in these cases, no active engagement with domestic violence services, the risk was deemed too significant to progress.

5.2 The LADO Professionals Meetings

Some contacts and referrals require information sharing between agencies at an early stage in the threshold determination, typically where there are several strands of concern, cumulative concerns or where multiple partner agencies hold information in part, but not in full. Where the threshold for allegations management procedures may not be clear at the onset or require information sharing to

determine whether threshold is met, then a LADO Professionals Meeting can be convened. This allows for a fuller and more robust consideration of the threshold criteria with the employer and other safeguarding partners and therefore a more proportionate and reasonable decision as to whether the matter should be considered under LADO procedures.

5.3 Police Evaluation meetings/discussions

Referrals to LADO may indicate that a potential crime may have been committed against a child or, less frequently, against an adult by an adult who works or volunteers with children. Where this has not been escalated or alerted to the police at point of contact, agreement is reached about whether the referrer or the LADO would be best placed to hold an evaluation discussion (sometimes in the form of a meeting) with a representative decision maker from the police authority that covers the area in which the potential crime is alleged to have occurred.

Where this is required, these are to happen within one working day of the information being shared with LADO. The formal arrangement agreed currently to facilitate this with Humberside Police is to escalate through the Vulnerability Hub. This has now returned to effective arrangements where the LADO can have a discussion with a Vulnerability Hub Detective Inspector directly, replicating the direct access to decision makers that had been in place some 3 years ago but had been changed to require written submission of a request for consultation, sitting alongside often more pressing requests for strategy meetings submitted by Children's Services. During the period in question, efforts have been made and have proven successful to support the alleged victim to make a complaint to the police themselves, which can then be progressed by contact by the LADO, with the allocated officer. For those that cannot or do not follow this preferred route, then improving relationship between the Vulnerability Hub and the LADO Service has proven fruitful.

The LADO/Humberside Police bi-monthly meetings continue under a different format over the last reporting year with focus being primarily on the referral of serving officers and staff to the LADO rather than the operational relationships between specialist teams and the LADO service, which has continued to improve decision making and information flow, as noted above.

5.4 Agency attendance at meetings

Partnership attendance at allegations meetings is good. Where attendance is not possible, a report is requested to ensure that full information is available. Non-attendance without explanation or report is formally challenged with partner agencies.

Since April 2020, the attendance at meetings moved to being online using Microsoft Teams. This has seen a significant increase in the attendance of parties from outside of the city of Hull, for example representatives from governing bodies or national organisations such as the Scouts (based in Maidenhead) and the Football Association (Wembley). Prior to this, there had been limited meaningful attendance in allegations meetings from representatives of national organisations outside of the city of Hull, with regional representatives being the conduit of information held or decision making taken by their national colleagues. This move towards online meeting has been both successful and time efficient for all.

In terms of police attendance, the requirement is for the officer in charge of the investigation to attend, or to send a detailed update. As noted in an earlier section, where possible, attendance at a strategy meeting convened by children's social care will reduce the need for an early allegation management meeting allowing time for sufficient enquires to be made providing more useful and detailed information to the *employer*. Of note, those officers who have had specialist training such as Protecting Vulnerable People officers, or Police online Investigation Team (POLIT) are well versed in the requirement to attend meetings and share information with the LADO in full. This is not the same picture with non-specialist officers, such as Patrol or Response Officers. For example, where an allegation/complaint of physical harm (ABH/Affray/Common Assault) has been made by one adult against another. The knowledge of the role of LADO within these teams and the requirement to share information to allow safeguarding measures to be put in place, is poor. An approach has been made to upskill new officers on the role of the LADO, as part of the safeguarding element of their training. Humberside Police and the LADO have accepted this has now scheduled dates to deliver this training to new recruits as they move through their training before going out into deployment.

Regulatory or governing bodies are always invited to attend Allegation Management Meetings but may not always attend in person. Updates are provided to regulatory bodies who can then take their own respective course of action in response. It is interesting to note that sporting governing bodies tend to be represented well at these meetings with less noticeable attendance from Ofsted and the Charity Commission.

Although *employers* can attend strategy meetings, where appropriate and in limited circumstances, this does not always feature in the preparation for strategy meetings in Hull, at this time as their focus is, legislatively to consider risk and likelihood of risk to a child not the wider information that may be available from an employer. Separate discussions are held with employers by the LADO to ensure that effective safeguards are in place during the enquiries or investigation.

5.5 Action Plans following Allegations Management Meetings

Actions agreed at the conclusion of allegations management meetings are distributed with the agreed recommendations from the meetings within one working day to all those who attended or sent apologies. This has been made possible by the provision of a business support worker who works with the LADO alongside their review or child protection work. The LADO business support convenes all professionals and allegation meetings, produces formal minutes for distribution and is delegated to pick up work that does not involve professional advice or decision making such as the migration of data from old LADO databases to the current Liquid Logic system, where appropriate to do so and consistent with the Retention Schedule agreed for allegations work.

6. Allegation Management Outcomes

6.1 Timeliness of the allegation management process completion

A key quality assurance task for the LADO is to ensure that referrals are completed in a timely manner, avoiding unnecessary drift and delay whenever possible. There are, however, no timescales to which the LADO must adhere in Working Together or Keeping Children Safe in Education. The LADO is mindful, however, that the timely conclusion of contact and referral consideration and conclusion of allegations is beneficial to both the alleged victim or complainant, the subject of concern and the setting in which they volunteer or work with children.

Below LADO threshold: Time for contact to determination	2022/2023	2023/2024
Within 1 day (or same day)	34%	45%
Within 1 week	20%	31%
Within 1 month	25%	14%
Beyond 1 month	20%	9%

The data above corresponds to contacts only and shows that only 76% of all consultations that were at “Below LADO threshold” were concluded within 1 week. Below LADO Threshold includes those incorrectly routed to LADO in Hull, where advice and guidance was necessary only with no further fact finding to consider. This compares favourably to the previous year’s figure of 54%. It is noted that these figures do not take account of weekends and non-working days, nor does it accurately reflect those that were concluded just outside the 1-week stage.

Only in exceptional circumstances (9%) does the decision making on whether a referral meets threshold extends beyond 1 month. Cases of this nature are typified in the data as cases where contact with the original complainant is problematic for one of the key safeguarding partners or employer/employment status cannot be confirmed immediately.

Of the 157 cases that were identified in 2023/2024 as meeting threshold and progressing to enquiry and investigation, the following section identifies the outcomes, as of 31st March 2024. It is noted that in the previous year there had been 94 cases that had progressed to full investigation. With 67 cases remaining open from the last reporting year 2023/2024 transferring across to the new reporting year. It is also noted that there were a further 31 cases from previous years that were also not concluded to transfer over. In total, the LADO service progressed and concluded 90 individual cases reported in and managed to conclusion in this reporting year.

6.2 Allegations by Outcome

2023/2024 outcome		
	Number	Percentage
Substantiated	35	22.5%
Unsubstantiated	32	20.5%
Unfounded/False	21	14%
Malicious	2	1%
Remained open at 31-Mar-2024	67	42%
Total	157	100%

Substantiated: There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.

Unsubstantiated: Insufficient identifiable evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.

Unfounded: No proper basis on which the allegation is made. *The referrer may have misinterpreted the incident, did not have knowledge of all the circumstances or was mistaken what he/she saw.*

False: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation

Malicious: There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive or cause harm to the person subject of the allegation

6.3 Action taken following an allegation management process.

Suspension

In all LADO cases where threshold is identified, safeguarding measures are advised to reduce the transferable risk to the children with whom the person of concern works or volunteers. Suspension is no longer considered a neutral act as it fundamentally changes the relationship between the employee/volunteer and their *employer*. In Hull, most *employers* consider managing risk in the workplace and will only implement suspension in the most serious of cases or where not doing so may impede or jeopardise the investigation by Police or by the *employer* (or both), or where there is a clear or potential transferable risk to the children within that setting. The LADO will continue to support colleagues and partners to consider alternative arrangements to suspension, where appropriate.

Police investigation

In most cases (*please note the qualifying issue earlier in the report relating to non-specialist trained officers*), where the allegation indicates that a crime may have been committed against a child or an adult, this will be alerted to the relevant police authority. Within the Humberside Police area, information relating to the first accounts of the alleged victims, the interview of the person of concern, the investigation plan, evidence, witness statements and progress to charge/caution or conviction is, in the most part, shared with employers without restriction. At each stage, there is a determination of what evidence can be shared with the employee/volunteer as part of the *employer* investigation to firstly ensure the safeguarding of children and secondly to ensure the integrity of the criminal investigation.

It should be noted, at this point, that the evidential threshold for safeguarding children and in employment law is different from that required by the criminal court to secure a conviction or by the crown prosecution service to recommend charging of an offence. The police and Crown Prosecution Service require the evidence to be beyond reasonable doubt and further, that there is a realistic prospect of a successful prosecution and that this would be in the public interest. Whereas, outside of these strict parameters, the evidential threshold within the allegation management process continues to be that of evaluating the evidence on the *balance of probabilities*.

Referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service

At each stage in the allegation process, there is consideration of whether there is a duty or power to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service. The LADO guides *employers* to consider their legal duty to refer a person of concern to the DBS. This is now supported by the active link to the DBS regional adviser, appointed two years ago, who provides a first point of contact for LADO and employers when advice has been sought about the timeliness or proportionality of a referral for barring to the DBS.

In principle, the regional adviser has advised early alert of information to the Disclosure and Barring Service recommended during a LADO case in which there are, by their very nature, safeguarding concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children.

It should be noted that the LADO is not routinely advised of the outcome of the DBS barring consideration once a referral has been made and must lodge a *legitimate interest* request where it can be established that the person of concern may be actively seeking employment with children. See also below.

Removal from role

Of the **157 new cases** most have included a period in which the subject of concern was removed from role (including placing in alternative work) to safeguard children, or to allow for investigation by the police and/or their employer. 78 of these new cases were determined with outcomes of Substantiated (sufficient evidence to prove the allegation) or Unsubstantiated (Insufficient evidence to prove or disprove). Of these 78 cases in the last reporting year, 32 individuals were permanently **removed from working with children** either through dismissal, resignation, retirement, or cessation of use whilst under investigation or subject to an allegation. Resignation or retirement does not prevent the investigation concluding and, in all cases, referral for barring was undertaken. The outcome of the Disclosure and Barring Service considerations is not known as LADOs were not considered to have a legitimate interest in the outcome, until last year when a LADO can submit a request for update if a "legitimate interest" can

be identified. This criterion only allows for legitimate interest to be evidenced where the LADO can demonstrate that they are continuing to manage an on-going risk, which in real terms limits the potential for recording the outcome of the Disclosure and Barring Service decision making on any case.

It is also noted that due to the longevity of some criminal investigations, a decision is made to permanently remove an individual from working with children based on “*Some Other Substantial Reason*” and referral to registering body and DBS is considered and advised.

Over the reporting period, this course of action has been used more frequently by employers who consider the evidence **on balance of probabilities** not on the higher evidential threshold of **beyond a reasonable doubt** as in criminal cases. In the cases, where there is a criminal investigation that extends beyond an employer consideration of suitability, the LADO will always maintain oversight of the police investigation, should this still be active, to ensure that the employer is updated on charging recommendations by the crown prosecution service and are prepared should there be media interest when the case is *in the public domain*. Advice and consideration of how employers can manage communication with existing staff members, children and parents is also integral to these later discussions not only in terms of managing reputational damage to their organisation but to provide reassurance to the parents and children who use their service or setting.

It should also be remembered at this point, that not all substantiated cases result in an individual being removed from working with children, in that consideration is given to the transferable risk into the workplace and the mitigating factors that may reduce the likelihood of potential harm in the future alongside the evidence of seriousness or impact of the harm to a child or adult.

Equally, in some unsubstantiated cases, where there is **insufficient evidence to prove or disprove** an allegation, however, the decision is sometimes taken by an *employer* that they feel unable to manage the potential risks going forward. This particularly features in allegations involving schools, foster carers and residential/independent living support staff and is often considered alongside previous or lower-level concerns in that the cumulative concerns about an individual determine that they are unsuitable to work with children.

7. Management Oversight and Quality Assurance

7.1 Management Oversight and Quality Assurance

The LADO service is staffed by 1.6 fte LADOs at Team Manager level, who have extensive management experience with one LADO undertaking professional development consistent with the quality assurance elements of the role, specifically focussed on ensuring that *employer* investigations are conducted appropriately and transparently having attended the Arbitration and Conciliation Service (ACAS) – Conducting Investigations training.

The LADO service has also been directly involved in the development of the Allegations workspace on Liquid Logic to ensure that the data and information stored within it is relevant to the role, consistent with current government guidance and can provide data analysis and creation of meeting formats, when needed. Although, this workspace has improved over the last two years, there is still a deficit in the ability to scrutinise data and information held on the system and the system does not provide sufficient robustness in monitoring workload. However, steps have been taken to introduce an alert to review all cases monthly, with a Liquid Logic report running at the beginning of every month which evidences which cases have been subject to a review by Allegation Management Meeting or specific LADO Case Review (a manually entered monthly overview of the case and any outstanding work). The allegations workspace is not set up with the same functionality as the wider children's services workspaces which has proven problematic even with the improvements and there is still reliance on a complementary excel data base that runs alongside Liquid Logic to provide data and information accurately and to prepare the annual report.

During this reporting year, although provisional agreement had previously been reached with Information Governance to allow the sharing of sensitive and confidential information between the sub-regional group of LADOs for Hull/East Riding/North Lincolnshire and Northeast Lincolnshire to allow peer audit activity to occur. This was unable to be fully implemented with some of the sub-regional group being unable to progress this effectively, in terms of information sharing and data protection requirements within their council.

The LADO is also mindful that the current LADO workspace on Liquid Logic is not set up to routinely require management oversight of cases which has been an area of interest during recent Ofsted inspections involving LADO services regionally and this is part of the LADO service forward plan as the service continues to advance further. This will promote better quality assurance.

7.2 High Profile cases

High profile or high-risk cases are identified by the allegation management process and the LADO at an early stage and regular updates are given to line management through supervision or specific case discussion. The LADO also ensures that senior leadership in children's services are informed of any high-profile cases where there is significant risk, there is likely media interest in the case or where there is sensitive information to be carefully managed. Updates about these cases are shared with senior leaders and where appropriate the Safeguarding Children Partnership Manager via the use of the Need-to-Know notification form; updates then follow using this form as and when there is a key development.

The positive working relationship between the LADO and Education Safeguarding Manager has provided the opportunity to periodically update on all education setting allegations and ensure that senior leaders within Education and Skills are sighted on such matters at an early stage.

7.3 Governance

Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership highlight the importance of the work of the LADO on their website and is the point of reference for guidance on managing allegations, hosting access to procedures, referral forms and guidance.

The Partnership expects that member organisations have a named senior officer who has overall responsibility for ensuring that the organisation operates procedures for dealing with allegations and a senior manager within the organisation to whom allegations or concerns that a member of staff or volunteer may have harmed a child or adult should be reported.

8. LADO Impact- Service development from the previous year 2022/23

8.1 Improving the wider understanding of the LADO role within Hull City Council and partners.

5 (90-minute training) sessions are scheduled and delivered each year as part of the LADO service commitment to the partnership training offer. This training is accessible by any partner agency including the voluntary and community-based services.

LADO has also delivered Managing Allegations training to specific teams and settings including, Multi Academy Trusts and through the Education Safeguarding Meetings and Trust specific delivery, Hull University Teaching Hospitals Trust, Hull Fostering, the Virtual School and the Voluntary and Independent sector via North Bank Forum and Hull CVS.

In total 416 people have received the Managing Allegation Training over this reporting year either through the scheduled Learning and Development diary or through specific agency requests.

Given the success and extent of the training to education professionals in the previous reporting period, the training has been taken into the University of Hull with training delivered to students on Post Graduate Certificate in Education and Social Work programmes. There are also plans, as mentioned in the earlier section to deliver training to all new police officer recruits as part of their safeguarding training.

8.2 Working with Humberside Police.

The sub-regional LADO group meet with representatives from Anti-corruption Unit, Professional Standards Department and Safeguarding Governance on bi-monthly basis, to consider cases that should be referred into the allegation management process, which previously had not been. This saw an artificially higher spike of referrals initially, understandably. This followed the successful challenge to the National Police Chiefs Council by the Directors of Children's Services for the four local authorities, Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire and Northeast Lincolnshire in February 2023. Quarterly reporting to the Director of Children's Services, Hull (then to the other responsible Directors in NE Lincolnshire, ERYC, and N Lincolnshire) and to Humberside Police is currently being led by the Hull LADO Service for the whole sub-region. This requires coordination of information from Humberside Police and the 4 local authorities. Currently, due to the reorganisation of the Professional Standards Department, Anti-Corruption Unit and Safeguarding Governance Unit, the normal flow of information has been interrupted. This will be a focus of attention going forward into the next reporting period.

8.3 Taxi Licensing

Hull LADO Service were the first Local Authority Designated Officer service to be asked to speak at the Institute of Licensing national conference last year. This follows on from the work with Stephen Turner, Hull City Council Lawyer, and Deputy National Lead for the Institute of Licensing. Stephen became interested in the role of LADO after cases involving taxi drivers in the Hull area and offered this opportunity to "*spread the word*" about the need to consult, refer and manage allegations against all taxi drivers not only those engaged with Home to School Transport at the conference in November 2023. This is now hoped to lead to a jointly authored article in the Institutes publications. However, of greater importance is that Licensing Authorities are starting to recognise and appreciate that as a registering authority they hold an explicit safeguarding responsibility to children and vulnerable adults.

8.4 LADO to attend regional, and where possible, national LADO meetings and contribute to decision making with regards collating data on regional trends and variations.

The LADOs from Hull regularly attend the bi-monthly regional meeting which see attendees from all the Yorkshire authorities and from North Lincolnshire and Northeast Lincolnshire. This front-line meeting works to ensure parity in applying threshold, processes, and outcomes across the LADO role. The Yorkshire and Humber region has representation to the National LADO Network Meeting, in turn.

8.5 Reporting system for lessons learnt via ICT

The LADO Service has within the last reporting year, worked with ICT Officers to develop a reporting system for lessons learnt during cases. This has allowed the LADO service to capture case specific information that may have a wider reaching potential including being able to evidence monthly agency specific lessons and improvements. See below section.

8.6 Locating the LADO service alongside the Early Help and Safeguarding Hub and Police Decision Makers.

Analysis of the contacts and referral sources alongside the key parties involved in evaluating contact information, continues to show that operationally, it is EHASH, Fostering and Humberside Police who play significant roles in the decision making on allegations, in the initial stages. Alongside key roles in the investigations by workers in Permanence, Leaving Care and Adult Service also being beneficial. Given that these services are co-located in Kenworthy House, approaches were made to consider providing a work base for LADO within this building which was achieved in the last reporting year.

9. Lessons Learnt

In this reporting year, the LADO Service has started to capture Lessons Learnt through LCS on individual cases. These key aspects of learning would identify specific safeguarding or operational, remedial actions that would need to be taken by partners involved in the LADO process going forward. It may also identify key issues that have affected the LADO process. These are then captured at the end of each month by LCS Report for both LADOs to view and consider if this requires escalation to the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The LADO service have seen a negative impact on the timeliness of concluding cases, and impact on the ability of employers to consider concerns under disciplinary procedures, due to the length of time that forensic digital examinations are taking as part of criminal investigations. This has been an increasing

difficulty for Humberside Police and the LADO process, showing currently that mobile phone analysis results are taking between 12 to 18 months to return. It is recognised that this is a national challenge and not only locally. However, there will continue to be discussions about the best way to expedite investigation times and ensure there are appropriate safeguards during these times.

The LADO Service are also seeing an increase of cases where there is cross over with the Person in Position of Trust (PIPOT) procedures (adult safeguarding). However, the PIPOT government guidance is not aligned to LADO guidance, focussing on threshold and initial disclosure to employer only and not overseeing and managing the case to outcome. This has seen the LADO Service being the primary case holder for such cases, as the PIPOT requirements lapse, even when the primary role of the person subject to the allegation is with adults. If they also work with 16- and 17-year-olds, such as in adult wards in Hull Royal Infirmary, for example, there is a statutory expectation that the allegation management process will continue under LADO but no equivalent expectation to continue under PIPOT.

Hull City Council commissioned a managed team to support Children's Services improvement plan. Concerns were later raised which were shared with the LADO service about an individual employed within that company. This led to lessons learnt regarding safer recruitment and due diligence. Some of the learning related to how information was addressed about this individual by the local authority in which they had previously worked. The LADO service ensured that feedback and challenge took place with the senior leadership of the local authority where this occurred. As a result, the learning from this case was taken forward and assurances gained to ensure safeguards were in place. Hull City Council have reviewed & enhanced the effectiveness of our procurement process through Matrix. These changes ensure that Hull City Council will see all safer recruitment checks of employees within commissioned services.

10. Key Priority areas for 2024/2025

In 2024/2025 the LADO service will continue to work to ensure that the children and young people are safe in Hull, that their experiences are positive and that they are happy, healthy, safe, and successful. The LADO service will use its expertise to collaborate with partner agencies to ensure that allegations against staff working with children are addressed in a proportionate, appropriate, and timely manner and that the voice and needs of children and young people are central to planning.

It is noted that the LADO service continues to see a significant increase in throughput and workload over a 5-year period with the service itself seeing a 0.6 fte LADO staffing increase. The LADO service has had to reduce its commitment to offering training other than that which has been agreed to the end of the next reporting period. Currently, no further agency specific training will be offered, and no further

masterclass events can be delivered until such time that there is a review of staffing and capacity. Discussions are happening at this time so that service delivery is not impacted going forwards and a review will take place. The concern is that delay in reaching a conclusion will contribute to this aspect of the service aims not progressing due to service capacity. However, there are current discussions between the Group Manager, Head of Service & Strategic Lead to review the LADO service capacity and consider additionality to bolster capacity of the service.

Comparisons have been made with statistical neighbours proportionate to caseloads. Northeast Lincolnshire council for example, have two full time LADOs and administrative support managing on average 60-70 open LADO cases at any one time, significantly lower (50% lower) than that which is managed by the LADO service in Hull.

Despite the previous development plan identifying several areas of key development it has not been possible to achieve progress in auditing and oversight functions of the LADO service which is a concern, but this has been due to the increasing demand of the service proportionate to the staff available and this will be factored into the current staffing considerations taking place. It would be recommended that this area, is given priority, in that it is expected to offer reassurance of appropriate application of LADO threshold in government guidance but also of the primary role of quality assurance. As a LADO service, the primary function is that of quality assure the management of allegations by other agencies, the service will be able to give this greater emphasis and time with additional staffing. The government guidance, as it stands currently, lays out that the LADO service or LADO should offer “*advice and guidance*” to those who are aware of or are holding allegations against people who work or volunteer with children. In the LADO service’s view this mandates the continued dialogue between employers and voluntary organisation leaders and the LADO when a concern or complaint is raised with them.

The LADO service is also awaiting the latest additions to Working Together 2023, which although not anticipated to be a re-write of the guidance, is expected to have a specific addendum added focussing on the role of the LADO in identifying setting or agency specific concerns. This has been considered by the government following enquiries into organisational abuse in settings across the country, not least that undertaken in the Doncaster area. At the present time, the LADO has responsibility to oversee individual cases only, held in distinct and separate LCS records for everyone referred into to LADO. The current LCS database is not set up for managing allegations against numbers of individuals from the same setting or where the individuals are not known but the setting is identified. This presents a unique challenge to the LADO service. The update to Working Together is due at the end of the year 2024.

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Practice improvement	What will we do and when?
A full staffing review of LADO to consider work input and output with a view to enhancing service capacity to improve on efficiency and quality of the service.	This is to be achieved by the LADO Group Manager, Head of Service and Strategic Lead through vacancy management panel no later than October 2024.
To continue to improve the management oversight of the allegation management process and outcomes.	<p>Review effectiveness of management oversight process, once implemented after 3 months.</p> <p>Consider functionality of Liquid Logic to support management oversight task (by end of September 2024);</p> <p>Formalise process and update procedures (by end of September 2024).</p>
Develop routine and regular peer audit processes and functionality across Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.	<p>Revisit and evaluate current Teams functionality and early experience feedback (August 2023) – support required.</p> <p>Trial/problem solve and implement new remote audit protocol with peer LADOs monthly (December 2024).</p> <p>Update managing allegations procedures online to reflect quality assurance audit process (March 2024)</p>
Develop a response to the anticipated update to Working Together 2023.	Make improvements to the current recording forms and tools available to allow for scrutiny and recording of agency specific quality assurance and allegation management information.
<p>How will we evidence success/Impact?</p> <p>The LADO annual report 2024/2025 will be able to offer information, data and evidence from the management oversight and peer audits, key lessons learnt and practice improvements once in place.</p>	

Strengthening Partnership working	What will we do and when?
Continue to develop and implement the protocol by which allegations against serving officers and civilian staff in Humberside Police will be managed.	Continue dip-sampling and review of existing cases held by Humberside Police, including Anti-Corruption and Professional Standards units at bi-monthly meetings with PSD, SGU and ACU leadership.

Improve the early notification to LADO of criminal investigations relating to people who work or volunteer with children.	Seek to develop the working relationship with Humberside Police Common Law Disclosures Team, previously Notifiable Occupations Team, who are routinely alerted by investigating officers of information relating to people who work or volunteer with children.
Improve the early notification to LADO of criminal investigations relating to people who work or volunteer with children.	Continue to provide some training offer to new recruits at Humberside Police as part of the safeguarding element of their basic training prior to deployment.
<p>How will we evidence success/impact?</p> <p>As a key safeguarding partner, Humberside Police will be the focus of LADO development throughout the reporting year 2024/2025, with quarterly reporting on the dip-sampling meetings and referrals for officers and staff updated to the Director of Children’s Services.</p>	

<p>Strengthen understanding of managing allegations in education settings (<i>Criteria 4 - behaviour indicating unsuitability to work with children</i>)</p>	<p>What will we do and when?</p>
<p>To build on the existing awareness raising work with education settings through the Education Safeguarding Manager HCC to ensure that all decision makers responsible for the governance of schools have a sound knowledge of allegation management procedures.</p>	<p>Provide guidance to the newly appointed Education Safeguarding Manager and contribute to publications and newsletters disseminated to education settings in the Hull area.</p>
<p>To build on the existing awareness raising work with education settings through the Education Safeguarding Manager HCC to ensure that all decision makers responsible for the governance</p>	<p>Consider the viability and effectiveness of routing initial concerns for schools and other education settings through the Education Safeguarding Manager, where possible.</p>

of schools have a sound knowledge of allegation management procedures.	
How will we evidence success/impact? Reduction in the number of contacts from schools and education settings directly to LADO that do not meet LADO threshold.	

Jacque Edhouse – Local Authority Designated Officer

On behalf of the LADO Service (Hull CC)