

TITLE OF REPORT: LADO Annual Report

REPORT OF: Sharon Davey & Haether Jenkins

Purpose of the Report

1. To update on the progress from LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) throughout the year of 2023/2024.
2. Collate themes and learning for the service and partners for 2024/2025.

Background

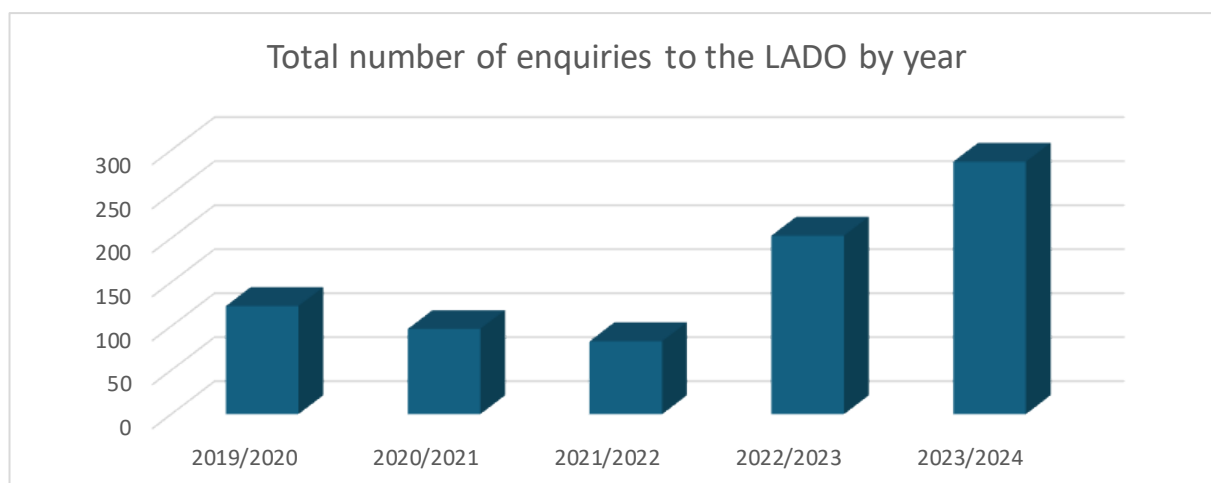
3. The role of the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) was best defined in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Govt) in 2010 and is referenced in subsequent revisions. All Local Authorities are obligated to have a designated officer(s). As of 2018, all new appointments to the role should be a qualified Social Worker.
4. Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2020), sets out the legal duties educational establishments must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Guidance around the management of allegations against the children's workforce is included within this.
5. Safeguarding procedures on managing allegations against staff or volunteers who work with children in Gateshead can be found at:
https://www.proceduresonline.com/nesubregion/p_alleg_against_staff.html#
6. The procedures are applicable when there are concerns, or it is alleged that an adult who works with children, either as an employee or in a voluntary capacity, 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.
 - behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
7. Gateshead LADO is responsible for management and oversight of individual cases and LADO provides advice and provides training and guidance on safer recruitment and managing allegations to the wider workforce, employers and voluntary organisations.

8. Gateshead LADO sits within the Safeguarding Childrens Unit and the IRO/ Conference Chair service. In keeping with Working Together, the LADO is a qualified social worker and registered with Social Work England. The LADO liaises with the police and other agencies, including Ofsted to monitor the progress of referrals ensuring they are dealt with consistently, fairly and in a timely manner.
9. Our LADO is part of a cross region and national network of LADOs, which is developing the LADO handbook provides a unique and important source of advice and guidance and promotes effective communication on cross boundary situations.

LADO Activity

Enquiries

10. An enquiry is assessed as those contacts that only require advice and guidance and does not meet the threshold for a referral. There has been an increase in overall enquiries over the last two years, this in part is linked to improved recording of enquiries and as the data suggests below in Table 2 there is an increase in enquiries from education services and Children’s Homes, (enquiries from Children’s Homes are not limited to their own staff).



11. Between April 2023 and March 2024 there was a total of 287 enquiries made to the LADO service, an increase of 84 from the year prior. This increase was expected given that our LADO has raised awareness of the role and the responsibilities of organisations in safeguarding children.

Sector of Enquiries	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Adult Services	2	16	17
Care staff/agency	6	9	10
Charity	0	0	3
Childrens home	9	14	33
Children's Services	1	5	5

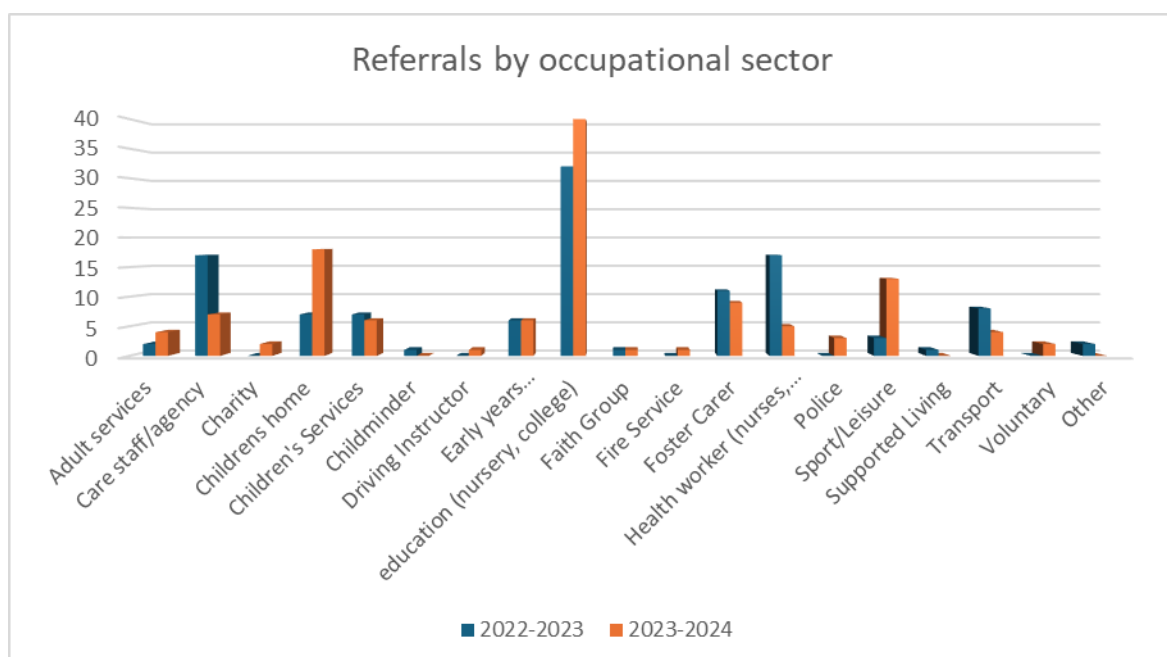
education (including college)	38	85	118
Early years (nursery/childminder)	1	19	28
Faith Setting	0	0	3
Foster Carer	7	10	13
Health worker (nurses, hospital staff, GP)	2	15	16
Library	1	0	0
Parent	3	5	3
Police	1	1	1
Self employed	0	0	2
Sport/Leisure	4	11	10
supported accommodation	0	1	1
Technology/communication	0	1	0
Transport	2	7	8
Voluntary	0	0	6
Youth Organisation	2	0	0
Unknown/Other	3	4	10
TOTAL	82	203	287

* Unknown/Other relates for example to Freedom of Information requests.

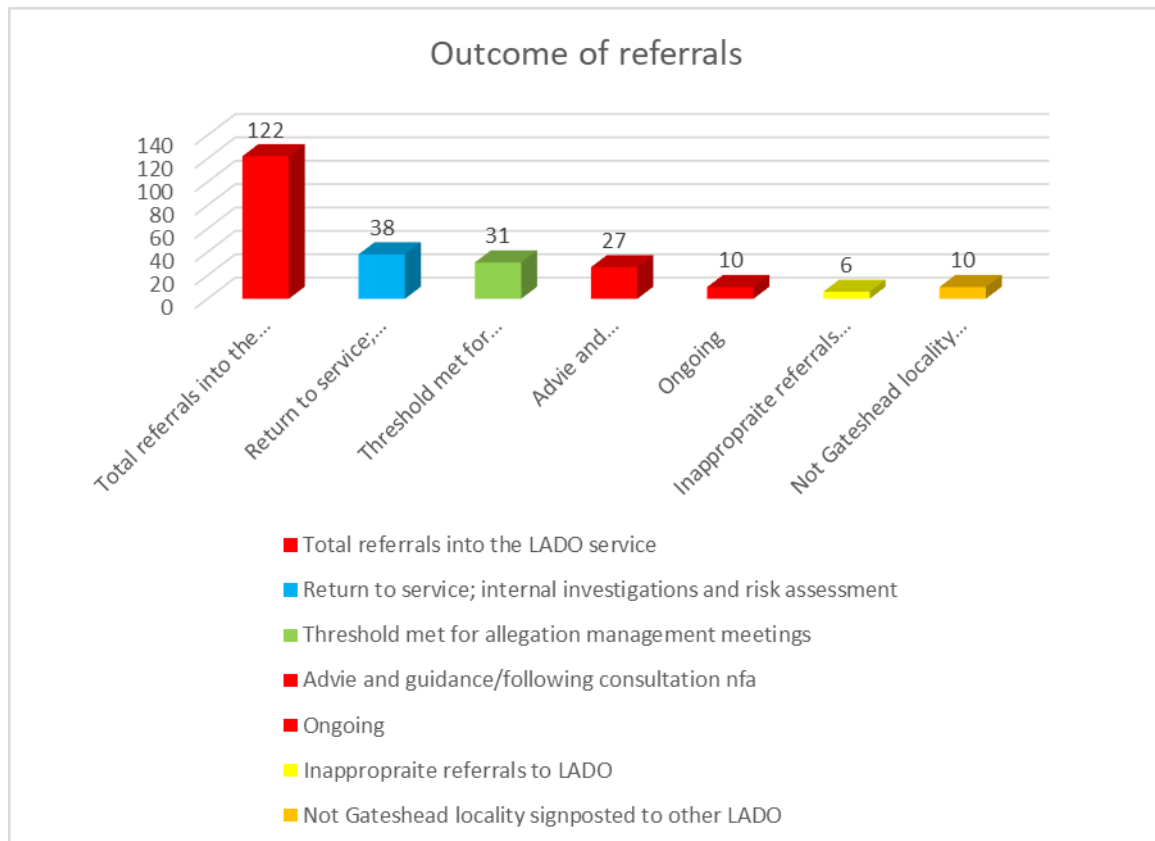
12. Education settings continue to make the highest number of enquiries, and this would be anticipated given the role and size of their workforce and the amount of time children spend within their settings.

Referrals

13. There has also been an increase in referrals from 115 in 2022/23 to 122 in 2023/2024.



14. We have had an increase in referrals from Education and Sport/Leisure. There has been a national recruitment of sport welfare officers across England to support National Governing Bodies (NGB) and their local clubs and this may explain the increase in referrals in this sector. Education as stated in enquires is the largest workforce who work with children on a daily basis. The increase in referral from Childrens Home is in line with the increase of training and awareness over the year.
15. The chart below shows the outcome of each referral made to LADO during the period 2023/24.



Allegations Management Meetings & Outcomes

16. LADO takes a multi-agency approach to managing allegations, ensuring the management of the allegations has a strong partnership engagement and coordination. There has been a total of 31 allegation management meetings held during this reporting period.

Sector where staff are employed.	Allegations Management Meetings
Care staff/agency	4
Childrens home	3
Children's Services	2

Education (including college)	13
Early years (nursery/childminder)	2
Foster Carer	3
Sport/Leisure	3
Transport	1
TOTAL	31

17. Outcomes are judged on the Children Act “balance of probabilities” threshold rather than the higher “beyond reasonable doubt” threshold. The below table shows the outcomes of investigations for the alleged adult.

Outcome	Meaning/Definition	2023-2024 Number
Substantiated	There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation	12
Unsubstantiated	There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation	8
Unfounded	To reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation/s being made	7
False	An unfounded allegation which has been made with the deliberate intention to deceive. Some parts may have been fabricated around an actual incident.	1
Malicious	Deliberate intent to cause harm to the person who is the subject of the allegation. Evidence will be required to prove the intention to cause harm.	0

*3 investigations remain ongoing due to criminal investigations.

*The outcome are National Approved Outcomes with Working Together.

18. Not all allegations lead to an allegation management meeting, for instance one referral was made by police in relation to a self-employed driving instructor. A meeting was not held as there were no other agencies involved. LADO maintained regular contact with the police about their investigation and LADO made contact with Professional Association of Driving Instructors (PADI).

19. Timescales for completion of referrals is a fundamental part of the LADO role. The original Working Together guidance sets out that 80% of cases should be resolved within one month, 90% within three months and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within 12 months. This year 90.95% (372 cases) of allegations were completed within a month this is an increase from last years 72.58%.

Feedback

20. There has been no challenge from the outcome of any Allegations Management Meetings. There has been 1 complaint. This low number reflects the continued quality of the service provided in a sensitive area of work.

- ✓ “Thank you for all your help today. It’s a joy working with you.” (Registered Childrens Home Manager – 27.10.23)
- ✓ “Thank you, Michelle. Always polite, supportive, and your help is, as always, appreciated.” (Head teacher at a faith school 22.11.23.)
- ✓ “Thank you, Michelle, – that was a useful overview. Very useful, I have learnt a lot – thank you. Thank you really helpful.” (All participants gave positive feedback this is a selection from those given – GSCP training- Responding to allegations against professionals – 29.2.24.)
- ✓ “Thank you, Michelle this was very informative and helpful. Thank you, Michelle very informative, really good hour thank, you. Fantastic, very helpful and informative. Thank you. Excellent, thank you so much very informative.” (All participants gave positive feedback this is a selection from the Early Years, Nurseries and Childminders – LADO awareness training delivered 28.6.23.)

Next Steps for 2024/2025

	What Needs to change, or continue?	What needs to happen?	Outcome	When will this be done by?
1	Continue the development of collaborative working relationships across Children’s Services and LADO.	Attend Children’s Services Team meetings annually. To talk about the role of LADO and the referral process.	This enables coordinated and consistent approach to allegations management for children in Gateshead and supports the development of organisational responsibility and cultural changes which facilitate safeguarding.	Annually
2	Continued focus on educating Foster Carers and relevant teams on the process of LADO and	LADO has requested bi-monthly meetings with the fostering manager to explore ongoing allegations/patterns of behaviour/Ofsted reporting/LADO	First session arranged 8/4/24, did not take place. Next session is planned 3/6/24.	Bi-monthly

	when it is appropriate to refer. This is in response to the referral rate being considered low from this sector.	training offer to foster carers.		
3	Strengthen the Partnership working of LADO.	Deliver training to the children's work force across Gateshead about the role of LADO and the referral process. Attend Education and Childrens Services Reference Group.	To increase the right level of referrals and offer appropriate advice and guidance.	Throughout 2024/2025 Throughout 2024/2025
4	Strengthen the recording and monitoring measures used by the LADO.	Create a single allegation management case recording system.	LADO has consulted with another Authority who use Mosaic to learn about their recording system. There is a planned LADO learning lab on the 13.6.24 to move this forward.	Complete by end of 2024.
5	Continue to raise the profile and professionals standards of LADO.	Attend National and regional LADO meetings	To increase the right level of referrals and offer appropriate advice and guidance.	Throughout 2024/2025

Recommendations

It is recommended that

- (i) Note the content of this report.

for the following reason(s)

- (i) Improve on service delivery and explore where any areas of practice can be strengthened.
- (ii) To provide consistent feedback.

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Policy Context

1. This report is in line with the LADO procedures and provided annually.

Background

This report is in line with the LADO procedures and provided annually.

Consultation

2. This report will be presented to the Safeguarding Partnership.

Alternative Options

3. There are no alternative to present.

Implications of Recommended Option

4. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – There is no change to report since 2023/2024.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – This report is to be held by HR for future reference.
- c) **Property Implications** - There is no change to report since 2023/2024.

5. **Risk Management Implication** – The detail of this report is confidential due to the nature of enquires.

6. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – There is no change to the previous 2023/2024.

7. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There is no change to the previous 2023/2024.

8. **Health Implications** - No implications

9. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** – No implications.

10. **Human Rights Implications** – No implications.

11. **Ward Implications** – No implications

12. **Background Information:** None