



Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

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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 2024/2025

- 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 2024/2025

9. LESSONS LEARNT

10. KEY PRIOTITY AREAS 2025/2026

1. Foreword

This Annual Report provides an account of the activity of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Service between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. 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 (2024) Part 4.

The National LADO Network LADO Principles (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. During the period of the report, Hull had 1.6 full time equivalent dedicated Local Authority Designated Officers. 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 68 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 54 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 before assuming 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 both cost effective and time efficient.

During this reporting period, there was partial cover only for the LADO service for both planned and unexpected absence from role through the support of two experienced Independent Reviewing Officer/CP Chairs, who assumes additional responsibility for the LADO Service during these times, alongside their normal duties.

Service resourcing was 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 120/130 cases to monitor, track and advise upon, at any one time. This is similar to last year, but significantly different to 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 would seem to indicate that the LADO service has hit a plateau of consistent referral levels over the last three reporting periods. The LADO service continue to delivery at training, learning events and workshops alongside the primary role. 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 expected 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 Collaborative Partnership website and on Hull City Council's public-facing website. A referral form is available, but is not a mandatory, to request a consultation. 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 developed a 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, parents to seek advice, discuss concerns and determine whether a referral should be progressed with LADO oversight. 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 setting. 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. Responding to a consultation request is normally actioned the same working day, with very few referrals being held over to the next working day.

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 practice 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 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 specific in Government guidance and less well developed or known about. These are routinely re-routed into the adult safeguarding process and on some occasions are jointly collaborated with the Person in a Position of Trust Officer (PIPOT), 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 (2023) or KCSIE (2024). Therefore, this has seen the LADO service take the leading role and burden of work in all cases where health staff on adult wards are subject of allegations, recognising that 16- and 17-year-olds are admitted to adult wards.

3.2 Applying Thresholds

The allegation management process is not linear, and the best approach is to evaluate on a case-by-case and dynamic 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 Ofsted, 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*)

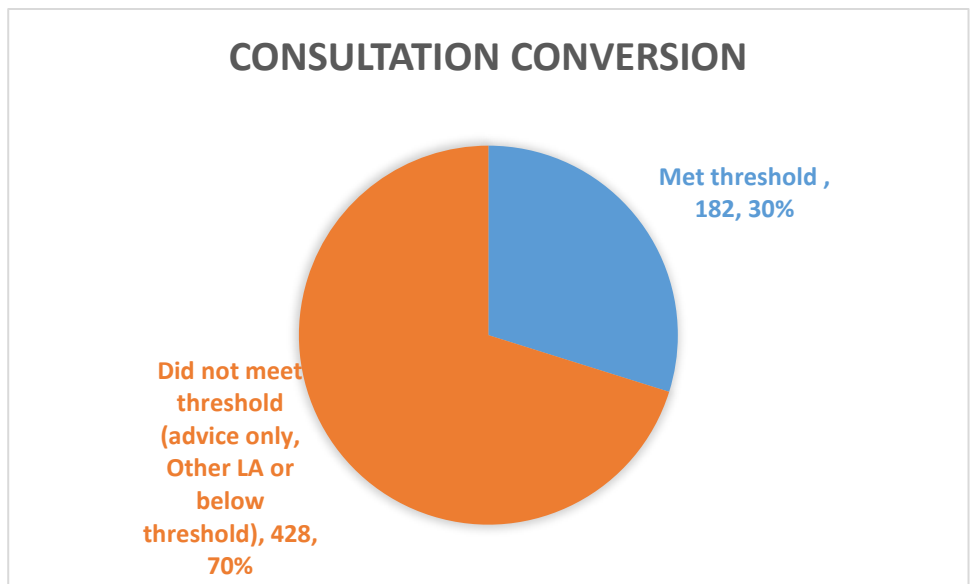
The number of contacts with LADO has remained stable in this reporting period showing that between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, there were **610 contacts** for consultation with 611 contacts in 2023/2024 and 424 contacts in 2022/2023 after a period of 3 years consistent increases from 2021 to 2024 of 97%.

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 **70.2%** of the contacts being screened as a consultation for advice only, below LADO threshold or incorrectly referred to LADO as compared to 74.3% in 2023/2024; threshold application has remained stable. **29.8% of contacts met threshold** requiring a full allegation management process as compared to **25.7%** 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 2024/2025	
Met threshold	182
Did not meet threshold (advice only, Other LA or below threshold)	428
Total contacts (consultations)	610



This increase in contact conversion could potentially indicate that referring agencies are becoming more familiar with applying the threshold prior to consultation, as a result of the 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. The previous year’s figures showed that the conversion rate was just over 25% of all consultations with this year’s figures showing that the LADO service is converting more of the consultations to active cases.

A threshold document was 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 at first contact with the LADO Service. 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 through effective fact finding. 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 Service.

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 and the Collaborative Partnership; there is a 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 2024/2025

4.1 Number of Referrals

The number of contacts has remained stable at 610 for this reporting year, with **182 cases** progressing past referral point as ***meeting LADO threshold***, as compared to **157 cases** last year.

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 the 2019/2020 reporting period. This shows that there was an increase in the number of cases being carried over from last year.

Starting Year	Number carried over on 31 st March 2025
2019-2020	1
2020-2021	2
2021-2022	10
2022-2023	6
2023-2024	14
2024-2025	78
TOTAL c/f	111

A total of **293 active cases** (cases carried over and new cases meeting threshold) were managed by the LADO Service in the reporting year 2024/2025 as compared to 255 in the previous year, showing that the LADO Service has dealt with and managed 15% more active cases since last year.

These 111 longer term cases are typified by long-term and complex criminal investigations and those taken during the reporting period that are not yet concluded but progressing appropriately. Although this is unsatisfactory, it is acknowledged that for exceptional cases, this is appropriate and necessary.

The Head of Safeguarding Standards and Service Manager for LADO have met with the Police to understand the reasons for the length of some of the investigations. Some of this has related to organisational changes such as staffing with new officers being appointed. Assurances were provided that each case will be reviewed by the officer in charge and an update provided to the LADO service. This is alongside the existing work taking place to chart the progress of each of these longstanding cases through regular review between the police and LADO.

4.2 Number of Contacts by Referring Agency

Agency: Source of Referral	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Education	132	191	160
Social Care	118	145	157
Police	37	66	75
Fostering (HCC and Agency)	31	47	55

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Residential (HCC and Agency)	23	36	53
Other inc. Anon and Parents	24	56	43
Health	20	23	26
Early Years	15	14	23
Voluntary, Community, Sports, Faith Groups	11	21	8
Independent Living	2	8	8
Ofsted	5	2	3
NSPCC	6	2	0
Total	424	611	610

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 which would be consistent with the on-going high profile of safeguarding focus 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 service.

The LADO is 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, it reduces the need for the professionals to attend a separate LADO allegation meeting to discuss the same information.

Referrals from Humberside Police serving officers and staff continue to increase year on year. It is hoped that as the training of new recruits is embedded that the role of LADO will become more familiar to non-specialist trained officers and result in more consultations and referrals.

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 seen an increase in contact to 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, until this reporting period, 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 years 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 2024/2025. 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.

Contacts from the early years sector has increased after remaining static last year. With guidance going into nurseries by Early Years Quality and Improvement Officers to ensure that Nurseries understand their responsibilities fully, this is anticipated. Referrals from parents about nurseries and child minders has started to become a feature this year, also. Child Minders continue to be a difficult sector of the children's workforce to reach given their self-employed and often, lone-working status.

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.

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Employment Sector of Subject	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Education inc. agency personnel	168	250	212
Fostering inc. agency	53	72	75
Health	44	50	64
Residential inc. agency	25	40	63
Voluntary, Community, Sports, and Faith Groups	28	50	47
Early Years	24	20	30
Transport/Taxi/Home to School	10	15	29
Police	6	23	21
Social Care/Social Work	23	26	19
Independent Living 16-18	5	15	11
Children's Centres	3	0	2
YOT	1	1	0
Other OLA/Adults/Inappropriate/Unknown	34	49	37
Total	424	611	610

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 decrease in referrals about education staff from last 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 being classified as Health.

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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. Despite efforts to engage trustees and governors in allegations training during the past two years, 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 2024 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) 2024, 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 2024 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 brought some employers into conflict

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with local teaching and support staff unions, however a joint approach over the in 2023 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.

Of significance this reporting year is the stable contacts about serving police officers and civilian staff, from the rise last year. This 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 LADO services for Hull, East Riding, North Lincs and North East Lincs meet every other month with key Policing personnel to discuss and dip sample referrals of Police Officer and staff to the respective LADO service, with a good working relationship being evidenced with the Professional Standards Department and Anti-Corruption Unit.

It is noted in this report that referrals for Children's Homes in the Hull area has seen a significant increase, with smaller 1 and 2 bed children's homes opening in the city, sometimes staffed with inexperienced members of staff or staff working alone with a child. Although the LADO Service does not keep and monitor concerns about "settings", should there be a clear and obvious pattern leading to concerns about a Children's Home, these would be reported to Ofsted without delay, as it is Ofsted who continue to have the key responsibility for ensuring settings such as Children's Homes are operating safely.

Another significant increase is seen in the number of Taxi Drivers referred to LADO, with many of these referrals coming in from Home to School Transport Services, followed by both Children's Services and Police as secondary referrers. Hull has led the way in ensuring that all taxi drivers are identified as being a position of trust or authority over children, given that they will often transport children in and outside of the city boundary with no other adult present to safeguard the child. This was recognised with the LADO Service being invited to attend the National Licensing Conference to speak about the work of managing allegations against drivers.

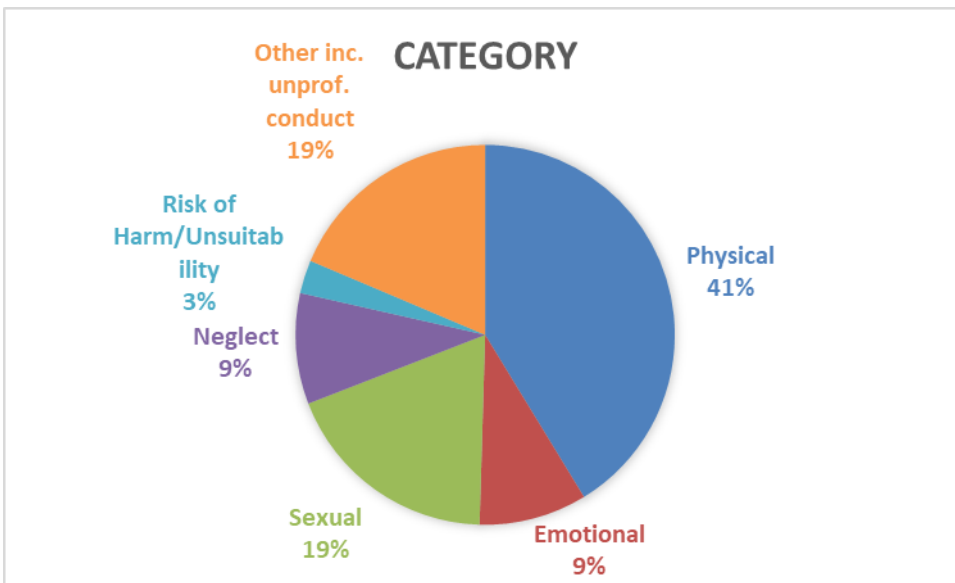
The cases identified as Other/Adults/Inappropriate were identified at contact or shortly afterwards as requiring advice only or referral to adult safeguarding for those individuals working or volunteering with vulnerable adults or in other settings that would not be identified as “*working with children.*” 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 and lack of oversight to ensure improved practice going forward.

4.4 Categories of Referral

Contacts by Nature of concern or allegation

Category	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Threshold met conversion
Physical	175	219	174	50
Emotional	39	76	97	24
Sexual	79	105	97	42
Neglect	40	79	90	25
Risk of Harm/Unsuitability	12	43	67	27
Other inc. unprof. conduct	79	89	85	14
Total	424	611	610	182



The above table and chart section indicates that the most significant category of referral is allegations of **physical harm**. This remains consistently the highest category across several years and as a national and regional picture. This is followed by **sexual harm** which has seen a decrease in the number of referrals in this category. Equal to this is the increased number of referrals for emotional harm in the last reporting year.

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 or adult either within their own family or within their work; this includes allegations of non-recent abuse.

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. Although we have seen a slight decline in numbers of this category in referrals, they continue to be second highest category after physical harm.

<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 has continues again, this year, to stand at 13 months from arrest to the data being returned.

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. This also refers to physical harm of an adult by someone who works 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. Referrals under this category include lower-level physical interactions that are nonetheless unacceptable in the context of the professional guidance, training, or work environment. This year we have seen a reduction in the number of physical incidents being reported. This also includes assaults of another adult by a person working or volunteering with children,

In the same period last year, 43 referrals of physical harm were identified as meeting threshold; This year seeing 50 referrals meeting threshold. This would, therefore indicate, that although the number of contacts with LADO about physical harm has reduced the cases opened for consultation are those that would meet threshold rather than lower-level concerns, which had been a pattern over previous years. This pattern had become obvious when the Department of Education issued guidance to schools to keep information and consult with the LADO on lower-level concerns contrary to accepted practice in schools to that point. Schools are still maintaining records of concerns but are not referring these below LADO cases in for consultation.

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 shows that although there has been an increase in the number of cases for consultation with LADO (contacts), there is a relatively low conversion rate to referral. This category is typified by referrals about professionals who children are suffering or likely to suffer emotional harm or abuse and may be subject of a Child Protection Plan following enquiries or assessment. Domestic abuse in the parental relationship features significantly in this category, therefore, but not exclusively.

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 including transferable 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. It is exceptionally rare for there to be any cases where an approach could not be made to the alleged perpetrator of abuse, at the time of referral, 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. This reporting year has seen no such cases, with all referrals featuring domestic abuse being progressed.

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. 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 refer the matter in. The LADO can request 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 Dedicated Decision Makers that had been in place previously 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 continues to be helpful, even if this simply to submit intelligence on the perpetrator of the crime.

The LADO/Humberside Police bi-monthly meetings continue 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. These meetings allow for cases held in Professional Standards Department or Anti-Corruption Unit to be discussed with the LADOs from Hull, East Riding, North Lincs and North East Lincs and is building confidence in the referral pathway between Police and LADO, in respect of their own staff or officers.

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.

LADO Meetings are held online using Microsoft Teams, which saw 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.

OFFICIAL

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 or 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 less well established. An approach has been made to upskill new officers on the role of the LADO, as part of the safeguarding element of their training. The Hull LADO service now delivers this training to new recruits as they move through their training before going out into deployment, regardless of where they are stationed.

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, General Medical Council, 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.

Of significant benefit to the LADO Service is the provision of support staff to convene meetings. It cannot be underestimated how time consuming this is as a task. This year has seen this move to a polling system for availability monitored and managed by dedicated admin support staff in the Independent Reviewing Service. It is interesting that of the four local authorities in the local sub-region, only one local authority does not have dedicated admin support and the lack of which has been identified as a risk to effectiveness of the service.

5.5 Action Plans following Allegations Management Meetings

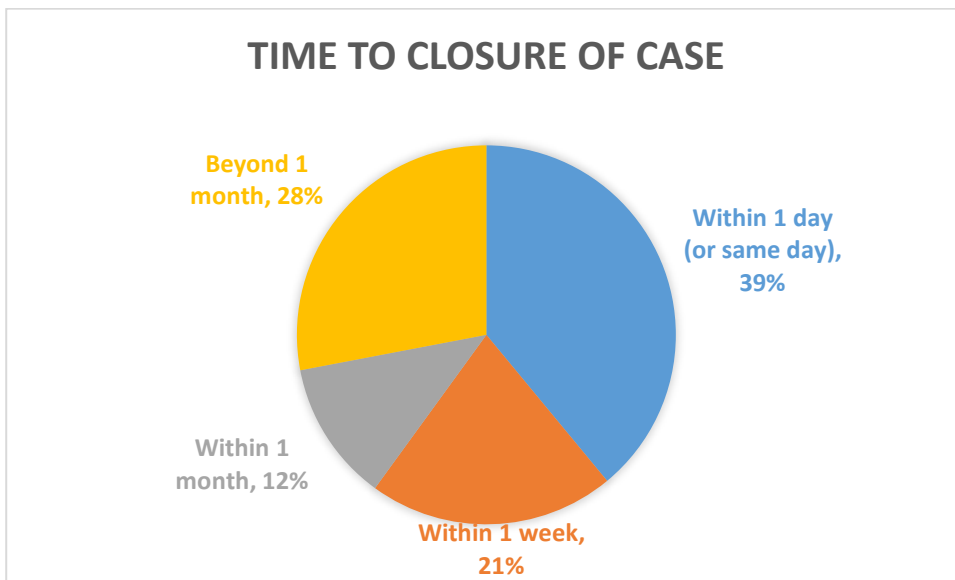
A meeting record, including actions agreed at the conclusion of allegations management meetings are distributed within one working day to all those who attended or sent apologies. This has been made possible by the provision of the dedicated business support above, who works with the LADO alongside their review or child protection 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:	2023/2024	2024/2025
Time for contact to determination		
Within 1 day (or same day)	45%	39%
Within 1 week	31%	21%
Within 1 month	14%	12%
Beyond 1 month	9%	28%



The data above corresponds to all contacts not just those that were determined as meeting threshold. And shows that there is a sizeable number of contacts with the LADO that can be closed as completed and threshold determination made within 1 week, depending on the quality of the fact finding undertaken by the referrer or employer. Again another 12% can be closed within one month but leaving a significant number 28% of all consultations with LADO as open and active LADO cases beyond a month. This is a significant number and scrutiny of the data would suggest that this is influenced by two significant factors. Firstly, where there is insufficient evidence at the point of referral to determine threshold. An example of this would be when a referral is made by Children's Services who are undertaking an assessment of children in a family where one or both parents are professionals working with children. There will be some concern about the children's needs being met appropriately but until the assessment has progressed there may not be a decision made as to whether the children are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm as a result of their parents' actions or inactions. Families supported through consent-based Child in Need Plans are not always and should not always be considered as meeting the threshold for LADO allegation management; whereas children supported and protected through a Child Protection Plan, would see the perpetrators of that harm or abuse subject to allegation management procedures. And secondly, the increase in the percentage of cases taking longer than 1 month to conclude is influenced not only by the increasing number of cases meeting threshold and the length of time it is taking for the more complex forensic digital examination of devices by Humberside Police. This is understood and accepted to be a feature of many criminal investigations, with the delay taking over 13 months to return forensic data, currently.

6.2 Allegations by Outcome

2024/2025 outcome		
	Number	Percentage
Substantiated	73	25%
Unsubstantiated	54	18.5%
Unfounded/False	54	18.5%
Malicious	1	0.5%
Remained open at 31-Mar-2024	111	37.5%
Total	293	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 during and following an allegation management process.

Suspension

In all LADO cases where threshold is identified, the LADO advises safeguarding measures 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. 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. The most vulnerable professionals are those that work through an employment agency. Once they are withdrawn from a setting during an allegation, the employment agency will not seek to place them again until the allegation is resolved. Therefore, in most cases, leaving the person without employment.

Police investigation

In most cases (*please note the earlier comment 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*; the civil evidential threshold.

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 supported by the active link to the DBS regional adviser, 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 LADO can act upon information shared by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Removal from role

Of the **182 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. 48 individuals were **removed from working with children** either through dismissal, resignation, retirement, or cessation of use. Resignation or retirement does not prevent the investigation concluding and, in 28 cases, referral for barring was undertaken. The outcome of the Disclosure and Barring Service considerations is not routinely shared with the LADO, unless LADO can evidence a legitimate interest in the outcome. It is interesting that it was only in 2023, that the LADO was recognised as an individual who could act to safeguard children if the Disclosure and Barring Service shared their information with the service when minded to bar.

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. This can be a dissatisfactory but legitimate employment law procedure that allows the employer to end someone's employment without completing the investigation into the allegation. In all cases, the LADO Service in Hull has been able to ensure that the employer remains engaged in the process until the completion of all enquiries, and that they are able to offer a right of reply to the ex-employee on the evidence available, upon which they advise the Allegation Management process of the likely course of action had the employee remained in employment.

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, an employer sometimes takes the decision 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 has been 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. All LADO cases are reviewed 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). 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.

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 North East 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 an alternative response to this is noted in the plan for 2025/2026 as the service continues to advance and seek to implement promote stronger 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, Education or City Safe 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 format as and when there is a key development.

7.3 Governance

Hull Collaborative 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.

Also, see the improvements made in establishing a reporting mechanism into the Partnership below in section 8.3.

8. LADO Impact- Service development from year 2024/25

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

5 (90-minute training) sessions are routinely scheduled and delivered each year as part of the LADO service commitment to the SCP 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 specific training delivery, Hull University Teaching Hospitals Trust, and attending safeguarding meeting for the Voluntary and Independent sector via North Bank Forum.

In total 133 people have received the Managing Allegations Training over this reporting year either through the scheduled Learning and Development diary or through specific agency requests. This figure does not include two full intakes of Police Officers at Courtland Road Training Section who have received the LADO allegation management training as part of their pre-deployment training.

The LADO Service has recognised that this is a significantly smaller number of people than the 416 trained in the previous reporting period and has had to take the operational decision to reduce the amount of training offered and focus on the core responsibilities to manage allegations.

8.2 Working with Humberside Police.

The sub-regional LADO group continue to meet with Inspectors from Humberside Police to work through operational changes and implementation and maintain an effective channel of communication with Officers. In the reporting period, the LADO Service has seen a renewed and beneficial relationship with the Common Law Police Disclosures team, ensuring that there is a safety net to capture potential referrals to LADO that may not have been made in the initial stages of an investigation.

8.3 Hull Collaborative Partnership

Hull LADO Service has sought to strengthen the relationship with Hull Collaborative Partnership with an agreement for more frequent reporting starting with a 6 monthly, briefing report to the Multi Agency Arrangements Sub Group in March and September each year. In between these reporting periods, the LADO Service can present any case specific concerns to Learning from Individual Cases meeting and after the LADO annual report is presented there is anticipated that a shorter, more focussed presentation would be possible to the Executive Board. The Collaborative Partnership procedures for Escalations and Resolutions are already used by the LADO service to resolve any inter-agency difficulties that cannot be resolved at a lower level.

In the reporting period, the LADO Service raised a specific case of non-medical circumcision in which it was identified that there was a potential benefit from understanding the circumcision practices that are for faith or cultural reasons rather than circumcisions required for medical purposes. This was accepted by Health partners who ensured that front line professionals in the city had up to date information and guidance.

8.4 Guidance on safer recruitment with employment agencies and University of Hull

The LADO Service has worked, during this reporting period, with several employment agencies providing Health, Education, and residential Care Officers into setting to improve the pre-employment checks. Advising employers on lessons learnt from previous cases, adapting pre-employment questionnaires and ensuring that employers understand the limitations of the current Disclosure and Barring check and underpinning Quality Assurance Framework has led to employment agencies taking a more robust approach to the information they gather at the start of their employment relationship with a candidate. The LADO Service is now working with the University of Hull to reference and link the Fitness to Practise processes with the Managing Allegations procedures.

8.5 Transferable Risk Template

The LADO Service has developed the Transferable Risk template promoted by the National LADO Network to consider whether there is evidence to suggest that a professional may have a compromised ability to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Evidence provided through the allegation management process and information sharing is considered by the employer in each case, allowing a

clear framework upon which any changes to employment role can be evidenced fairly and openly with the professional. It allows for the employer to consider whether safeguards are required to allow the person to remain in their current role and where this is not possible, what action would need to be taken. This is always recommended to be conducted with the full cooperation of the subject of the allegation.

This approach is particularly useful when considering cases such as those where the professional or subject of the allegation is also the victim of domestic abuse, and their children are subject of Child Protection Plans. In some cases, it is important for the employer to put in extra supervision or check in strategies with a professional to ensure that their threshold for safeguarding is appropriate for their role and the setting. This can also function as a supportive measure for the referred professional.

8.6 Working alongside Adult Safeguarding and Person In Position of Trust Officer.

The LADO Service has seen an increased opportunity for closer working relationships between the Person in Position of Trust officer (PIPOT) sat within Adult Safeguarding services. There has long been a difficulty in resolving the extent and reach of the statutory Guidance issued for those who work with vulnerable adults under the Care Act 2014 and those who work with children under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. The expectations of the role and oversight of the LADO in allegations management exceed that which is laid out for PIPOT in the same circumstances of adult safeguarding. Where this becomes a particular issue is when services and setting have a user group straddling both children's workforce (up to 16 and 17 yr olds) and adults (post 18), an example being adult wards in Hull Royal Infirmary which can accept 16 and 17-year-olds. This has seen the LADO Service leading and managing the allegations against Doctors and Nurses employed in predominantly adult wards, to fully manage or oversee the process of LADO allegations management.

9. Lessons Learnt

In the reporting year 2023/2024, the LADO Service started to capture Lessons Learnt through LCS on individual cases. Below are some of the key Lessons Learnt for this reporting period. 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 Collaborative Partnership.

The LADO service continues to see 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 is a national challenge not specific to the Humberside area. However, the LADO Service will continue to hold discussions about the best way to ensure there are appropriate safeguards during these times.

9.1 Hull University Teaching Hospitals Trust

During an allegation process involving a registered Doctor/Consultant, the Trust identified that there were concerns about the culture in Theatres which could impact on women working alongside some (not all) male Doctors or Consultants. This was taken extremely seriously, implementing a review of the working environment and ensuring all employees were aware of the expectations of professional conduct and how to raise concerns, at a lower level and earlier stage.

9.2 Maintained School Hull

During the investigation of cumulative concerns about a Teaching Assistant in a maintained school, it was identified that the Disciplinary Procedures were outdated and did not reflect current and expected practice. Some of the evidence could not be admitted, being anonymous, therefore the pack of evidence was determined as weak and added to this the process was compromised by the Head of School being the chair of the Disciplinary Panel and involved in some of the investigation process early on. The Hearing was stepped down and it was agreed that the matter would be resolved through other procedures. The learning was acknowledged and procedures amended and updated.

9.3 Hull Fostering

As part of interim safeguarding measures involving a Fostering Household, a Safety Plan and Written Agreement was put in place limiting and restricting the contact that an adult son of a carer could have with the Fostering household whilst under investigation by Humberside Police. The Written Agreement indicated that this would remain in place, "*until the investigation was concluded*". When the Police investigation concluded in a Caution, requiring the adult son of the carer to accept the crime that he was being investigated for, this did not prompt a review of the Written Agreement or Safety Plan. It is now common practice for all such agreements and safeguards to also include a date on which the safeguarding arrangements will be reviewed.

9.4 Hull Fostering

During an allegation, if a foster carer resigned, this could leave Hull Fostering in the position of having not being able to progress the allegation, given that a Foster Carer resignation comes into force after 28 days. This was considered by the Group Manager for Fostering, who has put in place good practice actions of ensuring that any carer who resigns or retires during an allegation investigation, is advised that the investigation will continue to be looked in to and evidence gathered. This is particularly important for those that have lengthy Police enquiries which can extend well beyond the 28-day timescale. Ex-carers are offered a right of reply to evidence provided and a determination is made, by the Service as to the likely outcome, had the carer remained approved throughout the process; including consideration under the Allegation Management agenda of referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

10. Key Priority areas for 2025/2026

In 2025/2026 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 6-year period with the service itself seeing a 0.6 fte LADO staffing increase since October 2022. 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. Within the Yorkshire and Humber region, it is evident that a number of local authorities, notwithstanding improvements in recording systems and access to appropriately skilled admin support, have supplemented or increased their LADO Service to meet the demand for service.

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. 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 to 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. **It should be noted that at the time of writing the report, the LADO Service has increased in staffing to two full-time equivalent Local Authority Designated Officers on a temporary (six-month) basis.**

The LADO service is also awaiting the latest additions to Working Together, 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 (Hesley Group). 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 LADO service does not have any statutory role to manage and oversee institutional concerns about settings. 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 has been delayed due to the change in Government, during the reporting period, but it is very much still expected that there planned addendum to Working Together should be published within the next 6 months. However, the LADO Service has sought to strengthen the reporting channel into the Safeguarding Children Partnership as mentioned 8.3, above, and continues to, also, escalate concerns to Ofsted where enquiries relating to institutional safeguarding concerns currently sits in Government Guidance.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025/2026	
Practice improvement	What will we do and when?

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<p>To continue to improve the management oversight of the allegation management process and outcomes.</p>	<p>Review effectiveness of management oversight process including audit/quality assurance processes, within 3 months.</p> <p>Adapt functionality on LCS to support management oversight task (by end of September 2025);</p> <p>Formalise process including case frequency (by end of December 2025).</p>
<p>Develop a response to the anticipated update to Working Together 2023 once published.</p>	<p>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 if role of LADO is expanded.</p> <p>Evolve regular feedback and/or escalation to the Safeguarding Partnership.</p>
<p>Improve the advice to parents seeking safe out of school provisions in the VCSE and independent sectors.</p>	<p>Work regionally with NE Lincs, North Lincs, East Riding LADO services to develop a range of leaflets and posters to be distributed through education settings, VCSE and grass roots sports by December 2025.</p>
<p>How will we evidence success/Impact?</p> <p>The LADO annual report 2025/2026 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>	

<p>Strengthening Partnership working</p>	<p>What will we do and when?</p>
<p>Continue to develop and implement the protocol by which allegations against serving officers and civilian staff in Humberside Police will be managed.</p>	<p>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.</p>

<p>Improve the early notification to LADO of criminal investigations relating to people who work or volunteer with children.</p>	<p>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>
<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 2025/2026, 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 of schools have a sound knowledge of allegation management procedures.</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>
<p>How will we evidence success/impact?</p> <p>Reduction in the number of contacts from schools and education settings directly to LADO that do not meet LADO threshold.</p>	

Jacque Edhouse – Local Authority Designated Officer
On behalf of the LADO Service (Hull CC)