



Safeguarding Children

**ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ADULTS
WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN**

1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019

Report by: Nigel Hatten
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

1- Introduction

This report is offered to the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board and partners together with residents of Gloucestershire as an annual record of Allegations Management within Gloucestershire.

It includes the National, Regional and Local picture, changes and their effect on working practices, trends identified together with future plans for the team moving forward.

This report provides an overview of available data covering the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

1.2 The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) role remains situated within Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Children's Board, Business Unit. There is one Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) supported by One Allegation Management Coordinator (this has recently become a job share post, shared between two members of staff).

1.3 The Current LADO has been in post full time since September 2018 having previously been a part time LADO. The previous LADO was in post for a number of years and had a dual role within Education Safeguarding. Upon the previous LADO's departure from the Council the Education Safeguarding role separated from the LADO position which has allowed the role to concentrate on this area of business.

1.4 The Allegation Management Coordinator role has not been consistently staffed over the past year for a number of reasons including staff performance, sickness and time delay in staff recruitment. As a result of this, extra pressure has been put on the current LADO and staff covering the coordinator position. This, together with the referral numbers, has meant that some of the requirements of the role have not been effectively performed e.g. 28 day reviews and database closure.

1.5 As a result of the above, the quality of current data collection available and the detail around the data, caution is needed with the figures available at this time.

1.6 With the September review findings and staff now in place I am confident that the Allegation Management team can now progress with a clear priority plan for the future.

2- Allegations Management - Process

Working Together 2010, Appendix 5 states that 'LSCBs have a responsibility for ensuring there are effective inter agency procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with children, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of those procedures'. The South West Policy and Procedures has adopted the Working Together 2010 (Appendix 5) framework for Allegations Management as the local arrangement with the agreement of all the South West Local Authorities.

The current LADO has completed a review of the role and processes in place, which has resulted in twelve recommendations being made to improve the process moving forward.

These recommendations include improvements in data recording necessary to reflect the true amount of work undertaken in the county and to provide detailed accurate data.

A copy of the review is available as appendix A.

1. Review of LADO activity within the county

The framework for managing cases under Allegations Management procedures is broader than the remit for criminal investigation or situations where there is reason to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Section 47 Children Act) or Employment Law situations within the workplace. The procedures also look at allegations that may indicate someone working in a paid or voluntary capacity with children may 'pose a risk of harm' to them. Allegations Management meetings consider all aspects from a multi-agency perspective and involve the person's employer or volunteer lead, police, social care and Human Resource Advisor within. Each step of the process is coordinated by the LADO who also coordinates the actions of the involved agencies to ensure a full picture is considered when assessing risk the person subject to allegation may pose in employment.

Through the National LADO Network (NLN) LADO's have provided a clearer definition of harm for the purposes of Allegations Management to the Department for Education (DFE) for consideration and inclusion in the guidance.

Where a criminal investigation ceases due to lack of evidence or a child not wishing to make a criminal complaint, often the Allegations Management meeting is reconvened at this point in order for up to date information to be shared with the employer. This means information on risk from outside of the workplace can be incorporated into risk assessment in relation to the person continuing to work with children.

2. Review of Regional LADO Activity

The regional South West LADO group is now chaired by the principal LADO within Cornwall County Council. Regionally, there are 13 Local Authorities represented on the group which has been running since 2007. The group has a business plan and terms of reference and its primary functions are to ensure South West LADOs are up to date with National guidance, developments within the South West (as neighbouring Local Authorities) and are working in a comparable way (quality assurance). This year, the group has concentrated on quality assurance and on assisting multi-agency learning. As a newly appointed LADO I have used Cornwall

to conduct a peer review to look at the improvement plan for Gloucestershire 2019-2020.

A peer audit tool has been developed and is available to be used across the region. Work from the NLN has contributed to the regional group who regularly discuss and feed back comments on improving the new National LADO Principles and Terms of Reference

3. Review of National LADO Activity

The NLN is made up of 2 representatives from each of the 9 regional groups. All groups are now represented and have been part of the development of work undertaken by the NLN.

The National LADO Conference took place on the 11th May 2018, during which the Gloucestershire LADO spoke about the National LADO Principles. This year's National Conference is due to take place on the 10th May 2019 in London.

4. Allegations management information April 2018 to March 2019

During the past financial year there have been 639 referrals made to the LADO with 153 resulting in a multi-agency meeting; 24% of these referrals proceeded to a Multi-Agency meeting. Last year's figures show 391 referrals with 146 resulting in a multi-agency meeting being held; 37% of the referrals.

This is a significant increase of 63% in the number of referrals requiring a review and decision by the one LADO covering the county and the one coordinator.

As can be seen by the data available, there are 144 records that do not show a definitive outcome with some awaiting details to make a final decision and others initially recorded but not updated when cases have progressed.

4.1 Themes

There have been a number of cases that have involved a concern about a professional working with adults. This increase shows a growing need to consider creating an adult LADO role.

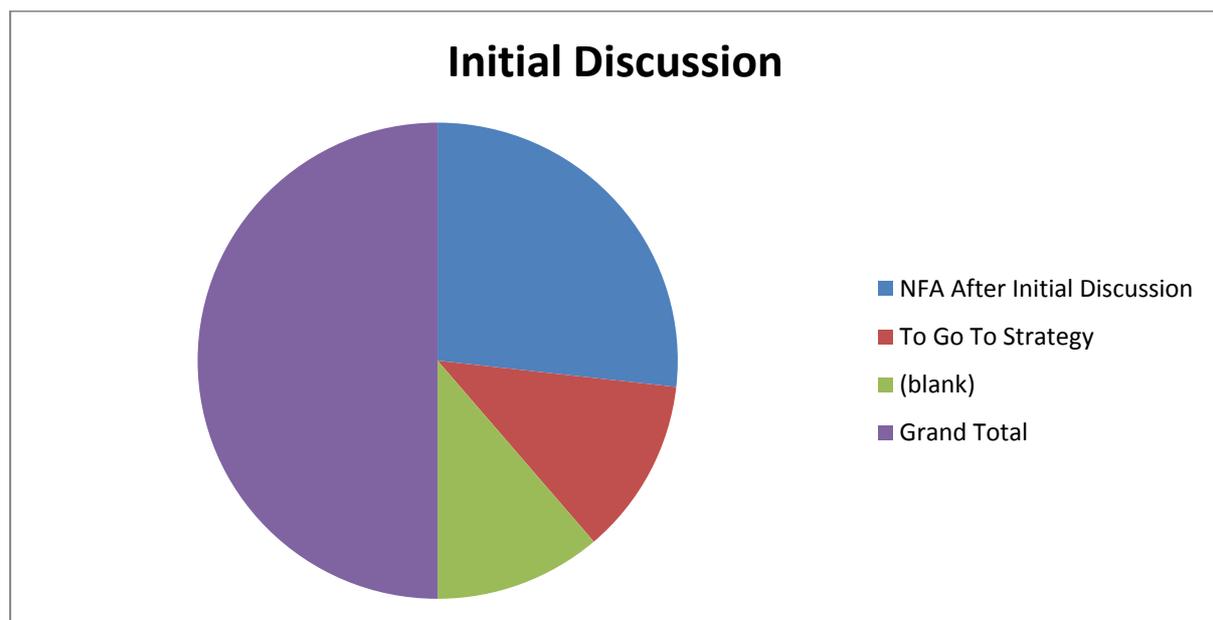
Manager-less organisations, for example individuals who are self employed, continue to increase the workload of the LADO. Where there is no governing body to oversee good practice, the LADO then takes a lead investigative role.

Transferrable risk cases, where professionals' personal circumstances potentially impact their professional role have increased over the past year. This has resulted in

more Allegation Management meetings being held and actions put in place to ensure safeguarding of the children whom they come into contact with.

There have been a higher number of non-current (historical) allegations made either through sport or institutional abuse. This may be a result of victims feeling more confident to report or media interest in non-recent allegations through the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and links to Operation Hydrant.

	number
NFA After Initial Discussion	342
To Go To Strategy (blank)	153
Grand Total	639

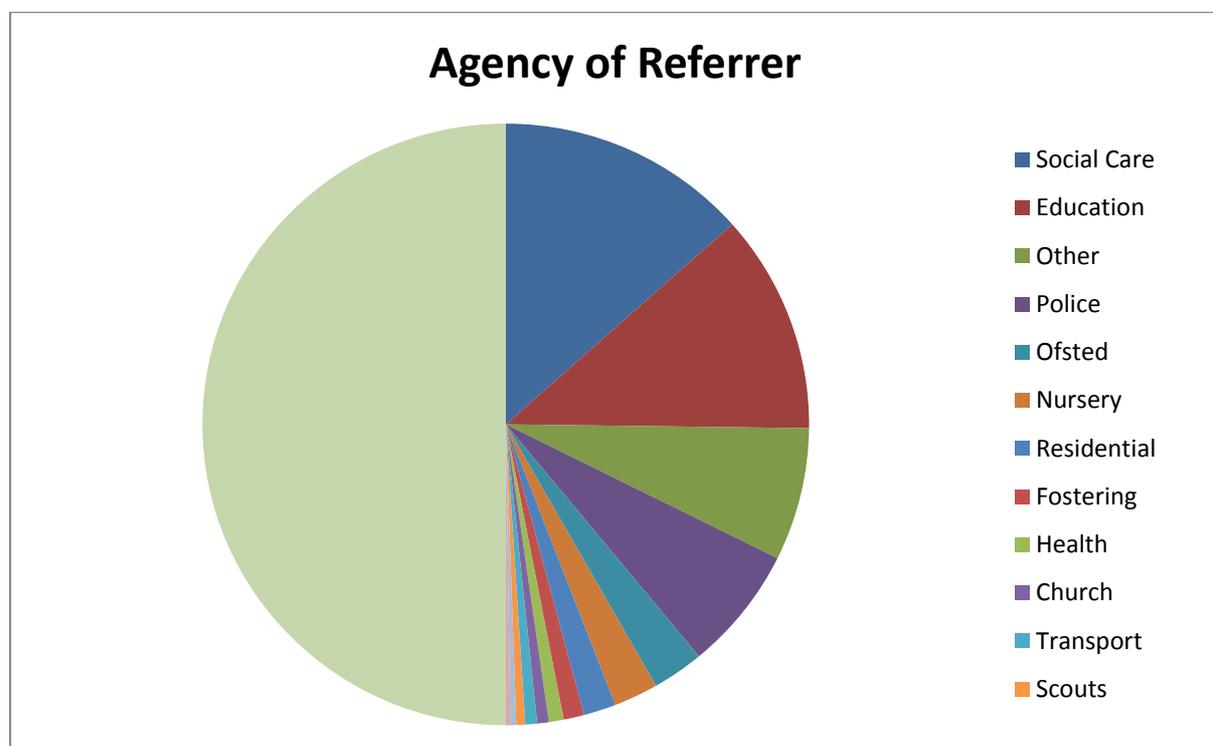


5. Agencies referring into allegations management (Agency of referrer)

The available data shows that the majority of referrals originate from Social Care, followed by Educational establishments. In previous years the majority of referrals originated from Educational establishments. The data collection methods currently in place do not allow identification of all potential organisations but moving forward, this data will be available to be report on.

An increased number of referrals from sports clubs, as well as the NSPCC, employment agencies and the public themselves are contained within the 'Other' category.

Agency of referrer	number
Social Care	171
Education	150
Other	91
Police	85
Ofsted	35
Nursery	30
Residential	22
Fostering	14
Health	10
Church	8
Transport	8
Scouts	6
LADO	4
Youth Support	3
Total	637

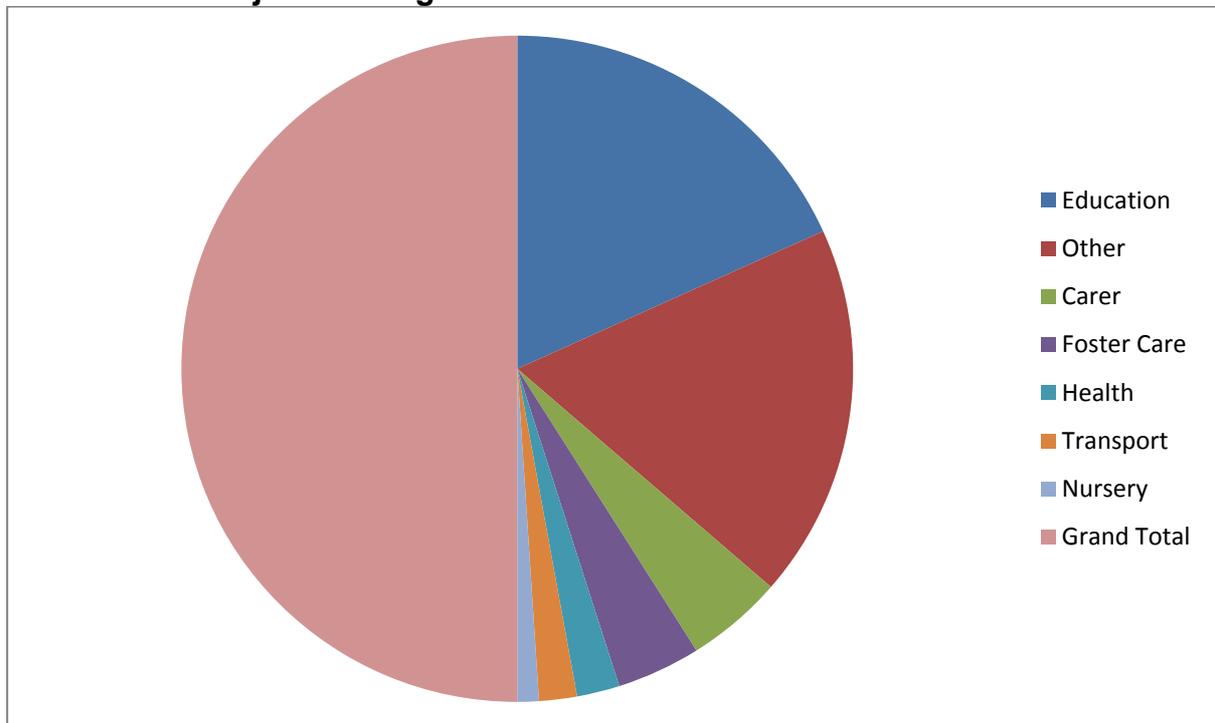


6. The Employing Agency

The majority of allegations remain against educational staff (230); this compares with 144 last year. The 'Other' category needs to be populated but would include early years establishments, the Police Service, Children's Services, Youth clubs and sporting establishments. The data collected shows 8 reports where this category was not recorded.

The Person Subject of Allegations	number
Education	230
Other	229
Carer	59
Foster Care	51
Health	26
Transport	23
Nursery	13
Total	631

The Person Subject of Allegations



7. Categories of Abuse identified

The current data shows physical abuse as the primary category. Neglect is the second highest category, though a limitation of the database has allowed 190 entries to be recorded as unconfirmed or to be left blank.

Category of abuse	number
Emotional	73
Neglect	101
Physical	184
Sexual	91
Unconfirmed	175
(blank)	15
Total	639

8. Outcomes of the Allegation Management process

Outcomes from Allegations Management cases

The Allegations Management process allows for a number of possible outcomes: Unfounded, Unsubstantiated, Malicious, False, Substantiated. (as per KCSIE) There are also a number of subsequent disposal actions to the outcomes which include Resignation, Disciplinary, Suspension, Cessation of Use, Dismissal, Referral to regulatory body, Referral to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Criminal Investigation, Caution or Conviction and Section 47 (Child believed to be at risk of significant harm) . This means that for most cases, more than one recording will be made to show progress through the process.

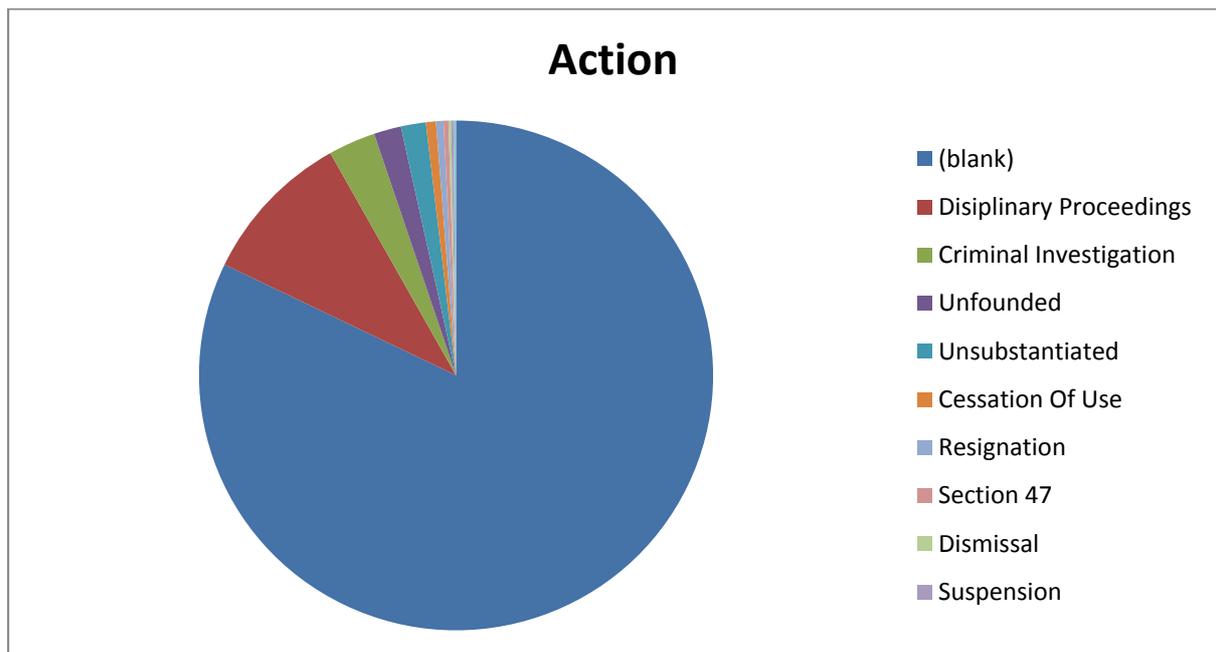
High Profile Cases

There has been one high profile case in Gloucestershire this year and this is currently ongoing. It involves a professional within an educational setting allegedly involved with perverting the course of justice and possession of indecent images of children. This has been reported in the local and national media and a trial is planned in May this year. There has been very good coordination between LADO, Police, two educational settings and Health governing bodies within the county who have worked well with agencies during this investigation. The LADO assisted the managers to draft letters for parents once the allegations were in the public domain. Links between the LADO and the Police and Gloucestershire County Council press offices have continued to be good this year.

Outcomes

A significant proportion of allegations managed within the service do not yet have a recorded outcome. Most of the 'blank' entries are associated with cases that require a review and, once updated, these cases can be closed with the appropriate outcome.

Outcome	number
Complete	332
Blank	202
In Progress	104
Awaiting Information	Other 1
Grand Total	639



9. Timeliness of Investigations

When looking at timeliness of investigations the following data was examined;

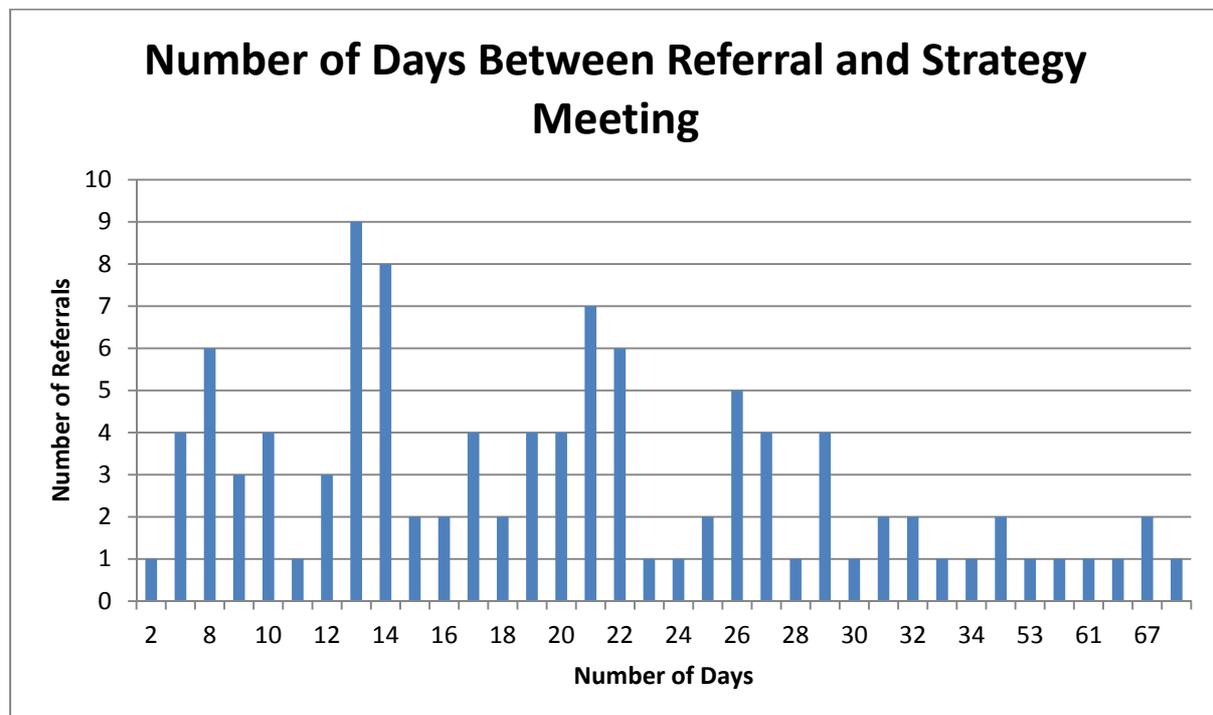
- a) Number of days between the multi-agency meeting and final outcome
- b) Number of days between the referral and multi-agency meeting .

The current database does not record the end date for completing cases, however the average number of days between the matter being referred in and 'awaiting further information' or 'in progress' can be calculated.

Some of the delays are down to the initial referral coming in with insufficient detail to respond and therefore it has to remain pending, awaiting information sufficient for the LADO to make a decision on whether the threshold for allegations management is met. This field is not mandatory on the current database, and this allows for a number of entries to remain blank.

		Average number of Days
Awaiting Information	Other	300
In Progress		156
Blank		235
Total		209

The number of days between the referral being made, a decision to take the case to allegations management meeting and holding the meeting cannot be conclusively calculated. In one case, it took 2 days to convene a meeting, in 9 cases it took 13 days to convene a meeting and in one case it took 105 days to convene a meeting. The data does not allow for 'working' days to be calculated, and does not reflect how the decision to take a case to an Allegations Management meeting can be dependant upon additional information provided throughout the process.



10 Complaints

During this financial year the Allegation Management team has received one complaint. This related to a professional who was subject of an allegation requesting a review of the LADO decision. This complaint was reviewed by a senior manager and the LADO decision upheld.

11 Summary of Key Issues for key safeguarding partners

This past year has been a very busy year due to the volume of referrals. This combined with staffing issues has resulted in a lack of capacity to carry out case reviews. This has also impacted on plans to update the current database data which is not fit for purpose.

The two members of staff who job share the coordinators post are very good additions to the team but it has taken some time to get to this position. I am now confident that staff have the experience to perform the role well.

Upon becoming the full time LADO in September 2018 I prioritised a review of the Allegation Management process within the county. This review included going back to basics with both small and large improvements identified to improve the allegation management processes. The introduction of a referral form has made improvements to the quality of data initially referred into the team.

As can be seen by the quality of data available, the current database needs improvement which will be addressed with the introduction of a new system by QES. (due to commence July 2019) Gloucestershire will be the first Allegation Management team in the country to develop an e-LADO system which should assist greatly with both the quality of data as well as the ability to report accurate timely data to senior managers.

In addition to the ongoing Allegation Management referrals, a structured programme of safeguarding has been agreed with the local Muslim Community. Further consideration of developing a county wide multi faith group will be progressed by the LADO and partner agencies.

12. Priorities for LADO 2019-2020

1. Implement the E-LADO database and produce monthly management reports to show key data appropriate to the allegation management team. (Key data to be agreed by LADO and senior managers)
2. Review outstanding cases and close with appropriate outcome

3. Continue with a programme of awareness training for professional organisations
4. Continue to work with Faith groups in the county to ensure consistent safeguarding

LADO improvement plan 2018 - 2019 Outstanding Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The allegation management database and recording system to be renewed to ensure it is data safe, suitable for management reporting and has the ability to add relevant information safely and securely.

Recommendation 2

Availability of a minute taker for the Allegation Management meetings. I appreciate the coordinator will be required to check the minutes before sending to attending professionals but in my view this will save time. It will allow the Allegation Management coordinator to spend time on reviewing files, administer the database, book future meetings and undertake 28 day follow up contacts with the organisations in a timely manner.

Recommendation 3

Intelligence obtained through the Allegation Management process to be shared with partner agencies and used to proactively safeguard children identified in the county and elsewhere, linked to police county profiling mechanisms, the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) strategy and the county's health and wellbeing (HWB) framework.

Recommendation 4

The local authority designated officer to look at increased, systematic delivery of awareness training regarding the Allegation Management process and statutory role within the county.

Recommendation 5

Establish quarterly management reports to senior managers within the council and partner agencies documenting referral numbers, number of cases that meet the threshold, agency referring, the profession of the subject, outcomes and key themes, and timeliness data.

Recommendation 6

The allegation management process to transfer to a paperless file management system. All relevant paperwork to be scanned onto the nominated database and stored electronically in accordance with information sharing guidance. This may include consideration of a bespoke database update, or a Liquid Logic module for ease of cross referencing with child information.

Recommendation 7

Look to progress allegation management referrals within the suggested time scales and complete within 12 weeks.

Recommendation 8

Formalise the coverage of staff absence during periods of leave/sickness. In my view, and endorsed by the Head of Quality & Safeguarding, the most appropriate team where the work is aligned to allegation management would be the child protection conference team rather than the MASH, due to confirmed transferability of skills set out in the Child Protection Chair role description.

Recommendation 9

Review of the Allegation Management meeting framework to align itself to a restorative practice model as followed in a number of allegations management services.

Appendix 1 – Allegation Management Review Document Sept 2018.