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Annual Report of The local Authority designated Officer (LADO)

2022/23

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the management of allegations made about people who come in to contact with children in Croydon in their professional capacity and how the role of the LADO supports the management and investigation of such allegations and complaints. The report covers the work of the LADO over the period 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023 and sets out the role and function of the LADO, as well as an analysis of the work completed.

Some case examples are included within the report as illustrations of the work undertaken. These examples are reflective of the work carried out but in order to ensure individuals cannot be identified, some details have been altered or excluded. These changes do not impact on the messages these examples offer.

2. Statutory Requirements

There is a legal requirement under Working together¹

“local authorities should ensure that allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation. Any action necessary to address corresponding welfare concerns in relation to the child or children involved should be taken without delay and in a co-ordinated manner. Local authorities should, in addition, have designated a particular officer, or team of officers (either as part of local multiagency arrangements or otherwise), to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children.Arrangements should be put in place to ensure that any allegations about those who work with children are passed to the designated officer, or team of officers, without delay”.

All agencies that provide services for children, provide staff or volunteers to work with, or care for children, are required to have a procedure in place for managing and reporting allegations against staff, which is consistent with statutory guidance published by HM Government guidance in Working Together.² This guidance outlines the requirement for the LADO to be contacted and to oversee the effectiveness, transparency and record retention of the process, not only in terms of protecting children, but also ensuring that staff who are the subject of an allegation are treated fairly and that the response and subsequent action is consistent, reasonable and proportionate.

Keeping Children Safe in Education updated in September 2021³, sets out the legal duties educational establishments must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It includes guidance around the management of allegations against the children's workforce.

The detail of the procedure followed by Croydon's LADO to manage allegations against people who work with children is contained within the Pan London Child Protection Procedures.⁴ Following an update of the procedures, proposed by the London Regional LADO Group, the role of the LADO was expanded to address wider concerns relating to staff and these are addressed in this report.

¹

² Working Together to Safeguard Children, revised 2020

³ Keeping Children Safe in Education, (KCSIE) Revised Sept 2021

⁴ London Child protection procedures

3. The role of the LADO

The LADO's key role is to provide advice and guidance to employers or voluntary organisations when there has been an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. The LADO will liaise with the police and other agencies, including Ofsted and professional bodies and monitor the progress of referrals to ensure that they are dealt with consistently, fairly and in a timely manner. The LADO ensures organisations operate a thorough and fair process of investigating allegations. The LADO will provide oversight of the investigative process through to its conclusion.

The LADO service will also chair, where appropriate allegations against staff and volunteer (ASV) meetings and establish an agreed format to an investigation, whilst facilitating the resolution of any inter-agency issues. The LADO will also provide liaison with other local authority LADOs where there are cross-boundary issues. The service collects strategic data and maintains a confidential database in relation to allegations.

The LADO service disseminates learning from LADO enquiries throughout the children's workforce and wider groups, including safeguarding forums across the Borough via Briefing sessions, case discussions, and the provision of this annual report. The LADO will also attend children's social care and police strategy meetings held under child protection procedures where there are concerns regarding the children of those working within the children's workforce.

Statutory guidance requires that the LADO is involved where it is suspected that a member of staff has

- behaved in a way that has harmed 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 that they may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children⁵

In addition, the London Child Protection procedures, in support of the latter criteria, also requires that the LADO considers concerns where the allegations or concerns arise in people working with children's private life. Allegations can also relate to the partner of the person who works with children, whose response or attitude suggest that their ability to fulfil their role might be compromised or where the behaviour raises concerns as to their suitability to work with children. Such circumstances have been termed transferable risk and the LADO supports the employer to assess what transferable risks may exist, document them, and reach a decision regarding their suitability to work with children.

4. Staffing, including administrative support

Working Together requires:-

“Any such officer, or team of officers, should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to be able to fulfil this role effectively, for example, qualified social workers. Any new appointments to such a role, other than current or former designated officers moving between local authorities, should be qualified social workers.”

Within Croydon the LADO service consists of a Service Manager, Steve Hall, responsible for the LADO service, and a second LADO, Jane Parr, both of whom are qualified social work professionals. The team also enjoy the support of a full-time

⁵ Updated and included in Working together Jan 2021 and in KCSIE Sept 2020

administrative officer, who is responsible for arranging and minuting meetings, general storing of documents and information and overall support to the Team.

In addition, the team represent the Local Authority at Croydon MAPPA (Multi Agency public Protection Agency) meetings which require around 8 hours involvement per month, providing children's services perspective to the management of potentially dangerous offenders within the community.

5. Information Systems

Over the last 5 years, the service has been developing the increased use of the Children's Recording system (CRS) as a means of retaining records on referrals and work undertaken. Following development work over the year with the CRS Team, a bespoke workspace now exists where records of the progress of investigations can be stored as well as day to day activity. This workspace includes a workflow process which includes Referral, Investigation records, minutes of discussions, meetings, outcomes, and ongoing detailed case notes. All records are held in a secure area of the system with designated access only. However, whilst general users of the system cannot access the detail of concerns they are able to see an "ALG" badge which denotes current LADO involvement, and where cases are closed this remains but greyed out. This allows other practitioners to be aware of current and previous LADO involvement.

Having established the workflow process, thoughts have now turned to performance management data and in drawing information from the CRS system. Currently all records, including consultations with the LADO are recorded on a stand-alone spreadsheet and aggregated data is drawn from this. Using the CRS information more accessible information will improve quality assurance of the LADO service as well as improved data reporting.

6. The Voice of the Child.

The majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. However, it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them or concerns being raised about their suitability to work with children. Allegations may be misplaced or malicious. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned.

The role of the LADO is to ensure that allegations are investigated thoroughly, fairly, and proportionately and that adults working with children are not prejudged and receive a full review of the information available. As a result, the LADO needs to remain impartial and as a result contact with children and young people and indeed the adult is not encouraged.

However, as has been shown in numerous serious case reviews concerning people in a position of trust and particularly regarding the international school,⁶ the views of children and young people who interact with a person in a position of trust can be telling and informative. The LADO service, therefore, seeks to ensure the employer obtains these views and that they are used to appropriately inform investigations. It is also required in all meetings and determinations by the LADO that an explicit decision is made as to who feeds back to the child and his/her family and what is fed back.

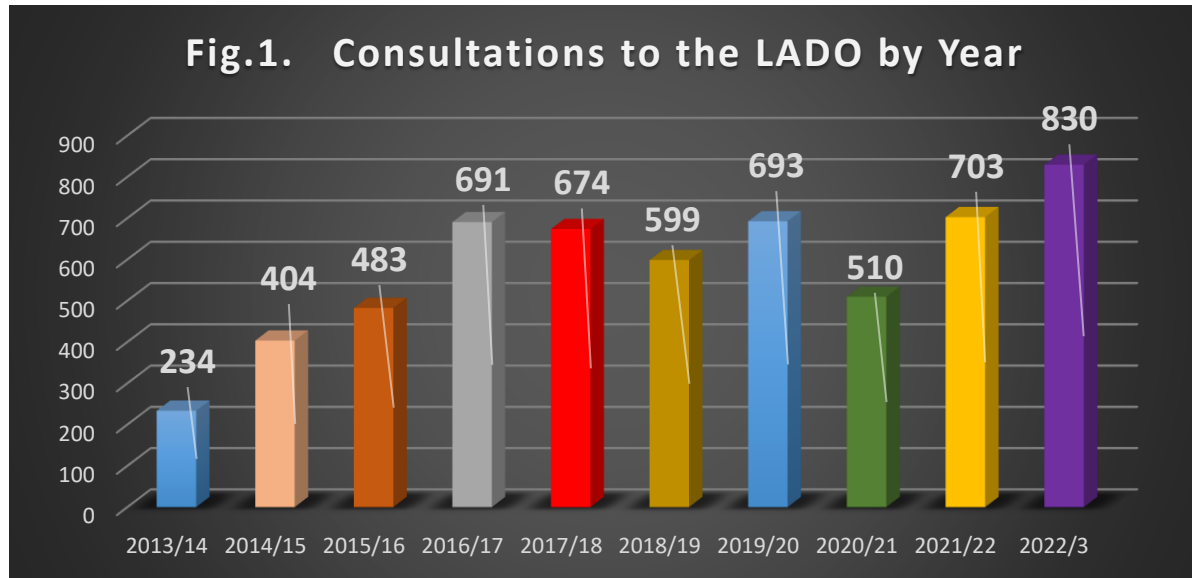
However, as a result of the LADO service publicising its role, there has been an increase in public recognition of the role in allegations management and as a result, there has been a

⁶ Southbank International School LSCB Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster SCR. Published Jan 2016.

noticeable increase in the number of contacts received from members of the public, or parents wishing to raise complaints or concerns directly with the LADO. Such calls are managed sensitively, and parents are invited to raise their concerns directly with the employer, with the LADO checking this has been done. There is however, a need to update Croydon's Safeguarding Partnership's website to greater reflect the need for this impartiality and to provide some advice to parents and carers as to appropriate steps when they are concerned.

7. Analysis of The LADO Service Casework

i. Consultations and Referrals



The LADO service differentiates between consultations where partners and employers may seek guidance and advice in relation to staff conduct, complaints or allegations and referrals where the threshold is met. This allows the service to record all contact with partners in a confidential, stand-alone, and secure database as well as within the Children's Recording System .

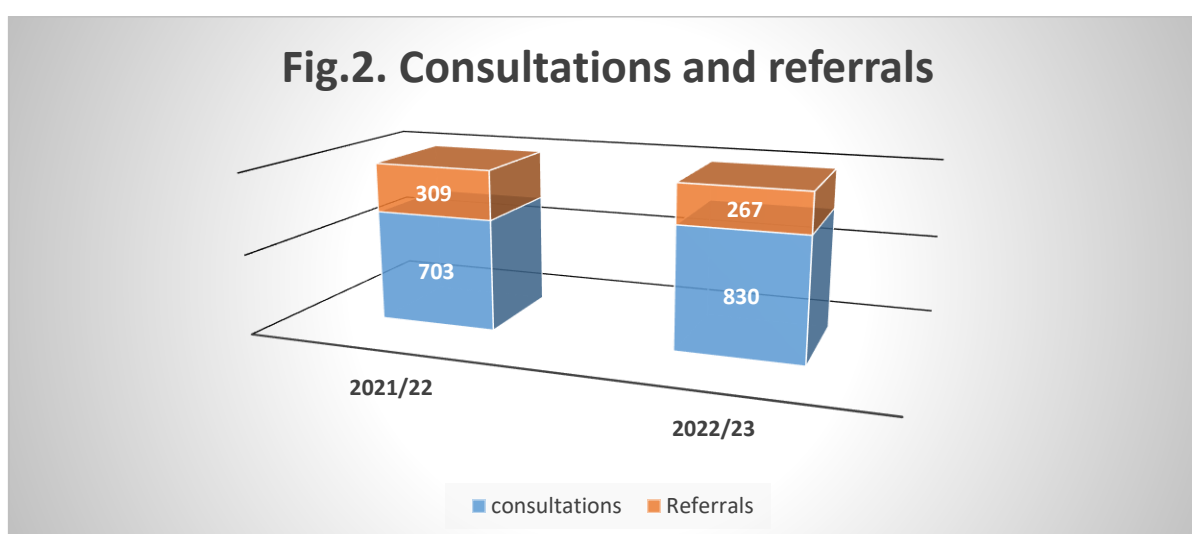
Following a risk audit by the Council's risk management partners, Mazars⁷, it was recommended that the LADO service further define the levels of involvement in consultations and referrals as a means of clarifying the level of support offered. As a result, the service adapted an existing Tier approach developed by the Harringay LADO some years ago. The Service, therefore, uses the following matrix to identify where referrals and consultations are indicated.

Tier 1	Incident that does not need LADO action but may be a conduct issue or require more general advice.
Tier 2	Incident or concern which might require logging with LADO but will be 'No Further Action'
Tier 3A	Incident or concerns which indicate significant concerns re standards of care provided to an individual child or group of children

⁷ Safeguarding – LADO and Partnerships. Final Internal Audit report. February 2023

Tier 3B	Behaviour in Personal Life which raises concerns regarding the persons Suitability to work with children
Tier 4	Incident which requires consideration of referral to other agency such as police or Ofsted
Tier 5	Incident which requires immediate suspension/ police referral/ arrest/ immediate action to protect child.

Tiers 1 & 2 constitute consultations and Tiers 3-5, Referrals. Fig 3 indicates the percentage of total referrals in relation to consultations received. The figures for this year are recorded alongside last years for comparison. As can be seen, in 2022/3 32% of consultations progressed to a referral where the LADO oversaw an investigation. This compares with 42% of consultations in 2021/2.



This reduction in the proportion of referrals in relation to consultations can be explained in the increased use of the LADO in considering low level concerns within educational settings.

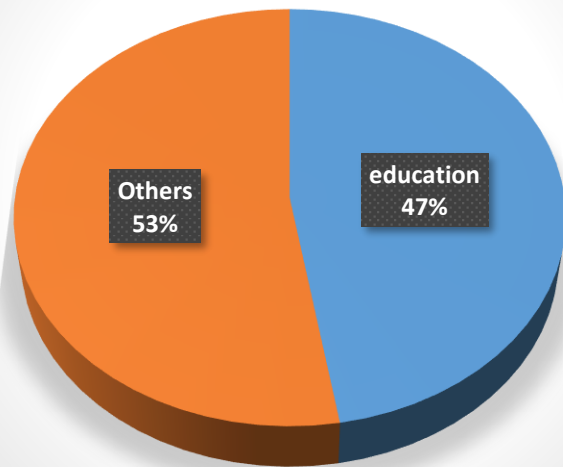
Keeping

Children Safe in Education 2023⁸ now requires schools and colleges to consider concerns regarding staff conduct and behaviour which do not reach the threshold for an allegation, and the London Child Protection Procedures recommends that schools consult with the LADO where such concerns exist. This formalising of conduct concerns within educational settings explains this increase as the proportion of consultations relating to schools and colleges has shown a proportionate increase as

Fig. 3 illustrates.

⁸ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2013

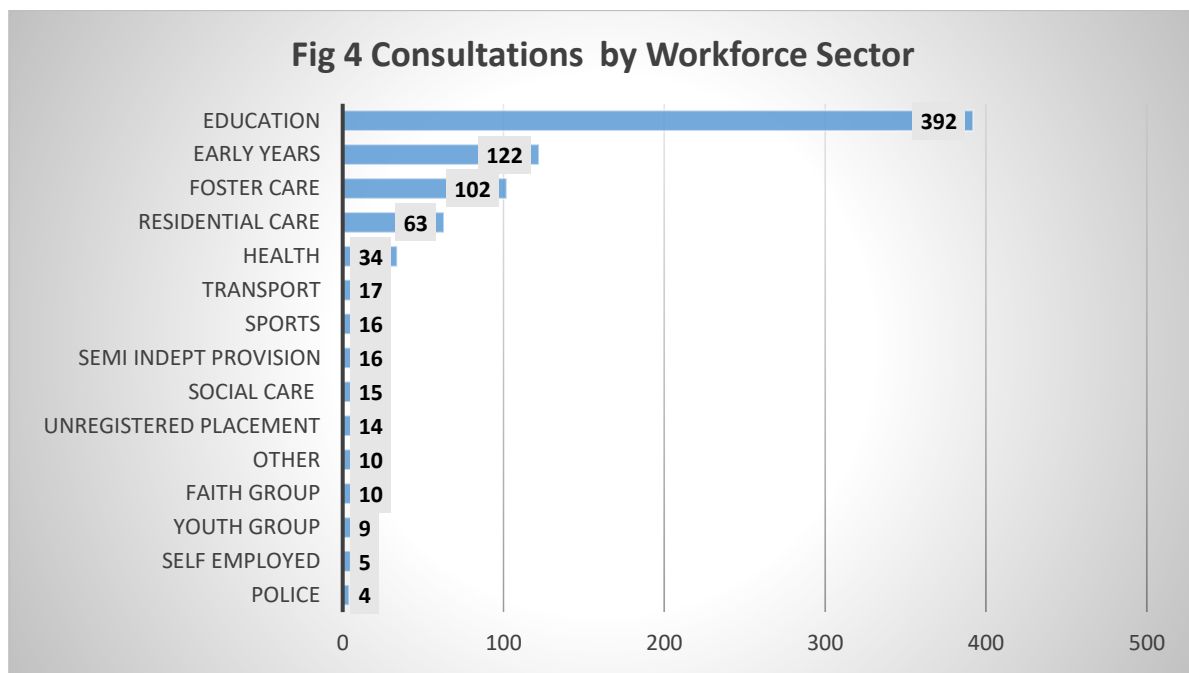
Fig.3. Proportion of Education Consultation



i. Sources of Concerns

Consultations regarding allegations against adults working in the children's workforce do not always originate from the employer and can often be presented from police or children's social care. However, the sector in which the adult works is important in understanding where the greater challenges exist. Fig 4 clearly shows the significance of the Education sector in the work of the LADO mentioned earlier but also indicates from where concerns originate.

Fig 4 Consultations by Workforce Sector



As can be seen, concerns relating to early years settings, both nursery provision and childminding also features in consultations. Such concerns can often be challenging given the potential vulnerability of the younger age groups as well as their communication levels and understanding. This can be further compounded by parents who, wishing to get to the bottom of a potential concern, can raise suspicions regarding staff by inadvertently priming their children.

Case Example 1 – Unexplained Injuries

A parent reported, that on the previous Friday, she observed two small 2 bruises on her 2 year old daughter's lower arm, which she believed had been caused at nursery. Mother asked the child if someone had hurt her, and the child stated that "Mrs Weasel did it". On her next session at the nursery, the parent pointed to the photo board where pictures of staff were displayed in the nursery reception area and the child picked out the assistant manager. The nursery suspended the assistant manager and reported the concerns to the LADO.

Following liaison with the LADO, Police visited the home and spoke to mother and the child. Mother indicated that she had previously been very happy with the care provide by the nursery. Police reported that the bruises were no longer visible, and that the child declined to discuss the bruises or how they had occurred. Officers did speak further to mother and clarified exactly what the child had told her, they were concerned that mother may have inadvertently led her daughter.

At an evaluation meeting, organised and chaired by the LADO and attended by Police, Ofsted, Children's social care, and the Nursery owner, the Nursery outlined that the assistant manager identified by the child from her photo, did not work in the room in which the child was placed and had been on holiday for a week prior to the "disclosure". During the meeting the LADO provided direction and guidance to the discussion and to members of the professional group in understanding the thresholds and in evaluating the information. The nursery also had CCTV and the tapes were reviewed and they showed the assistant manager had not been in contact with the child during the period in question.

At a further evaluation meeting it was agreed that the allegation against the member of staff was not substantiated.

Throughout the process the LADO provided direction and guidance to the discussions and to members of the professional group in understanding the thresholds and in evaluating the information obtained.

Indeed, as seen above, 47% of all consultations originate from the Education sector. In many ways it is not surprising given that children and young people spend significant periods of time in school and are under the oversight of educational staff managing behaviour, and discipline.

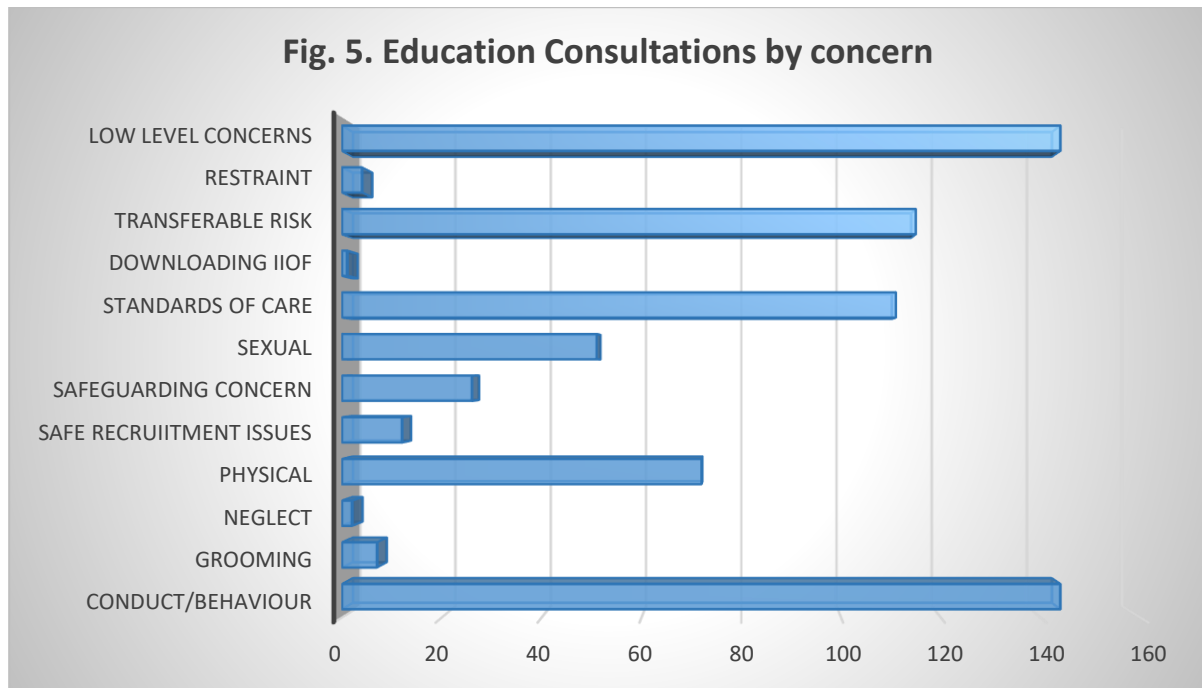


Fig 5 shows that in relation to schools and colleges, 45% relate to consultations on low level concerns.

Case Example 2 – The Unfortunate Photograph

A Year 7 Teacher had recently returned from maternity leave and during break time in the classroom was speaking to three pupils in her class about her new baby.

The teacher took out her personal mobile phone and began showing photographs of her baby. As she scrolled through the photographs she showed the pupils a topless picture of her whilst on holiday. One of the pupils went home and told his father that he had seen his teacher topless.

The parents contacted the school and made a formal complaint. In the meantime, the teacher had self-disclosed the incident to her head teacher who had contacted the LADO service. It was recognised that the exposure of the photographs had been unintended and the teacher was embarrassed regarding the incident. She had however, breached the school code of conduct by using her mobile phone in the classroom allowing the pupils to see personal photographs. However, there was no intent to harm or influence the pupils inappropriately. As a result, the school gave words of advice to the teacher and provided her with a mentor to support her professional conduct.

The matter was therefore treated as a Low Level concern as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education⁹

As outlined within the London child protection procedures, consulting the LADO in relation to this incident afforded the school external oversight of its thresholds, and an opportunity to think through the level of concern regarding the teacher's behaviour. The LADO was also able

⁹ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.

to outline issues for the school regarding its policy and processes in the use of personal mobiles at work

Croydon, has always been a net importer of looked after children, with a significant number of residential children's home and independent fostering placements used by other Local Authorities. This is partly due to the types of housing stock, as well good transport links. As a result, the LADO service has always dealt with a significant number of allegations against staff employed in such placements raised by children and young people placed by other local authorities. Indeed

over the last few years, there has been a developing shortage of placements for children and young people looked after by Local Authorities. The Ofsted website lists 18 residential children's homes placed within Croydon and 20% of referrals to the LADO relate to children and young people placed in such circumstances. This requires the LADO to liaise with a significant number of other Local Authorities who might respond to allegations in differing ways.

Of more concern has been the growth in unregulated placements. In an environment nationally where there is a shortage of residential and fostering placements, Local Authorities nationally have found it increasingly difficult to source placements, particularly for young people with more complex needs and behaviours. As a result "pop up" placements have developed, where accommodation is sourced by a company and it is staffed by care staff from social care or nursing agencies on a zero hour contract basis. In some circumstances the staff are employed by a separate agency from that providing the accommodation. Such placements, whilst ordinarily required to be overseen by Ofsted, are not registered as placements and advertise that they are registered by the Care Quality Commission. However, this registration is ordinarily for home care provision and not residential care. As a result, these placements, commissioned by Local Authorities from outside Croydon, are unregulated and not inspected. Over the course of the last 12 months, the LADO service has seen a concerning increase in the number of allegations being made regarding staff in such placements. The LADO service is currently aware of some 7 such placements within Croydon which have resulted in allegations being made by the young people placed. Such allegations are investigated under LADO procedures the organisations responses passed to commissioners and, where appropriate Ofsted. In addition, the LADO service has met with three providers of such services and provided their management teams with advice and briefings on the role of the LADO and their responsibilities in managing allegations against their staff.

Case Example 3 – The Pop Up Placement

"T" is a 14 year old young person in the care of a County Council Local Authority and is placed in an unregulated placement in Croydon. The placement, located in a 3 bedroomed house in the north of the Borough, and is staffed by three staff at any one time. "T" is the only young person cared for at this address and has frequent periods of dysregulation when he can become very aggressive to those around him. "T" has a history of running away and placing himself in risky situations. He has periods of self-harm and regularly attempts to swallow items, including batteries and other potentially dangerous items. "T" is subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Order and is restricted in his movements outside the placement. The order allows for him to be restrained for his own safety.

On one occasion, whilst attempting to swallow a large screw two member of staff restrained him and the third member of staff "Peter" attempted to remove the screw from his mouth with his finger. During the struggle, "T" bit the member of staff's finger. Despite the staff's best efforts, "T" managed to swallow the screw and as a result was taken to hospital. In accident

and emergency, “T” alleged that “Peter” had slapped her face after she had bitten him. Nursing staff observed bruising to the side of “T”’s face.

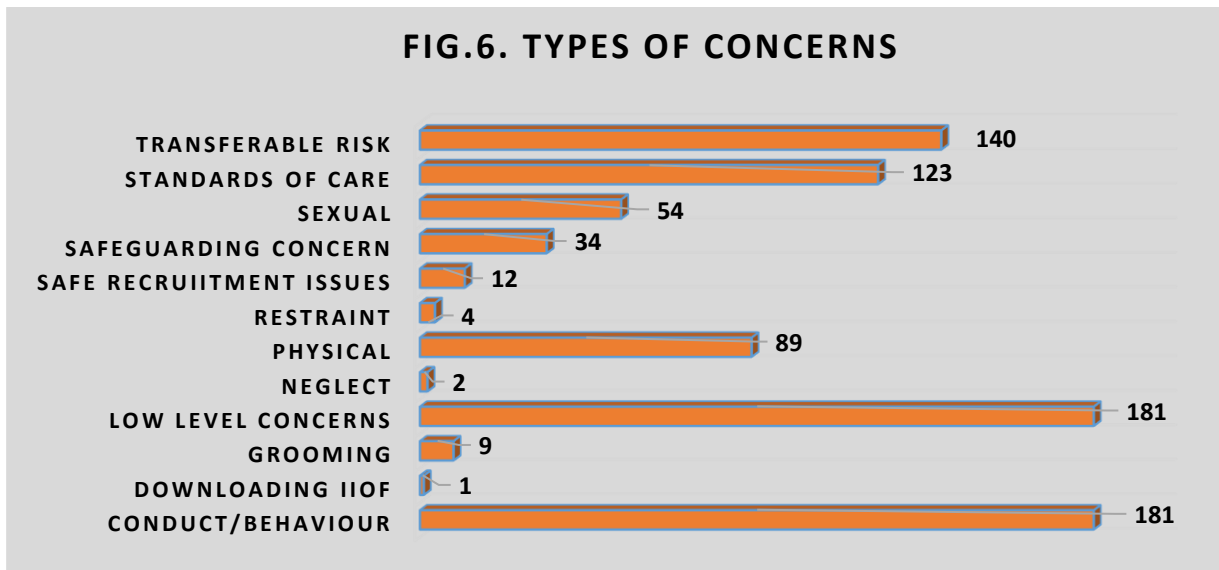
A referral was made to the LADO and police alerted to the allegation. An initial Evaluation Meeting was convened and the three staff members suspended. A police investigation followed and as a result “Peter” has been referred to the Crown Prosecution for assault.

In the management of this allegation, it has emerged that the providers have little understanding of the allegations management process, have inadequate safeguarding policies and processes and maintained poor record keeping, particularly in recording significant events. Indeed, whilst their staff were trained in restraint techniques, there were no behaviour management policies, or oversight of incidents. In addition, staff were expected to care for “T” over lengthy shifts and there were little activities in which to engage “T”. Moreover, whilst there was in place a placement agreement, the Local Authority had only visited the placement on one occasion in the 9 weeks that “T” had been in placement.

As can be seen from the example above, such unregulated placements raise significant concerns regarding their oversight and management and require additional involvement from the LADO service. Indeed, in the example above, the LADO service met with the provider, who had three other such placements within Croydon, to support them in developing appropriate processes and mechanisms for improving the safety of their placements and in ensuring staff and young people were supported.

In addition, as other LADOs have raised similar concerns, on a national Level, the National LADO Network has raised concerns regarding such placements with Ofsted and are seeking a conversation with the regulator as to how best to refer, manage, and oversee such provision.

ii. Reasons for Consultation



In considering the wider children’s workforce Fig 6 shows the types of concerns raised in consultations with the LADO. The area of transferable risk, records concerns which relate to adult’s personal life where concerns outside of their role in the children’s workforce are raised. This is an area which has grown since 2021 where the criteria for LADO involvement was extended to include

“behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children¹⁰”

Such concerns require an evaluation of the potential for the risk identified in the adult’s personal life may transfer to their role working with children. This requires the LADO to consider an assessment as to whether the safeguarding concerns outweigh the Article 8¹¹ rights of the individual and whether their privacy can be breached to enable the employer to risk assess the concerns. Should it be concluded that the employer should be alerted to the potential risk, the LADO supports the employer to assess the risk and take appropriate mitigating action to reduce any identified risk.

Case Example 4 – Physical Discipline

The LADO was contacted by officers from the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team regarding a mother who had been arrested for a serious assault on her 13 year old daughter. The daughter and her younger sister had previously been subject to concerns regarding physical chastisement. Mother was employed as a classroom assistant at a Croydon school. Following a LADO discussion with the police and social worker, it was recognised that the concerns centred around mother’s ability to manage her temper, and her stated belief that the use of physical chastisement was acceptable. Given there was a discernible potential transferable risk, to pupils at the school in which she worked, the decision was made for the LADO to contact the head teacher.

The head teacher met with mother and explored what was happening at home. Mother had not disclosed police and social care involvement in her family’s life to the school (a breach of the school code of conduct) and did not feel what was happening at home related to her work in school. Her role within the school was to provide one to one support with two pupils with special needs, on a zero-based contract. Both pupils could demonstrate challenging behaviour and whilst there had been no incidents of concern, the class teacher had observed mother/teaching assistant’s impatience with the pupils on occasions.

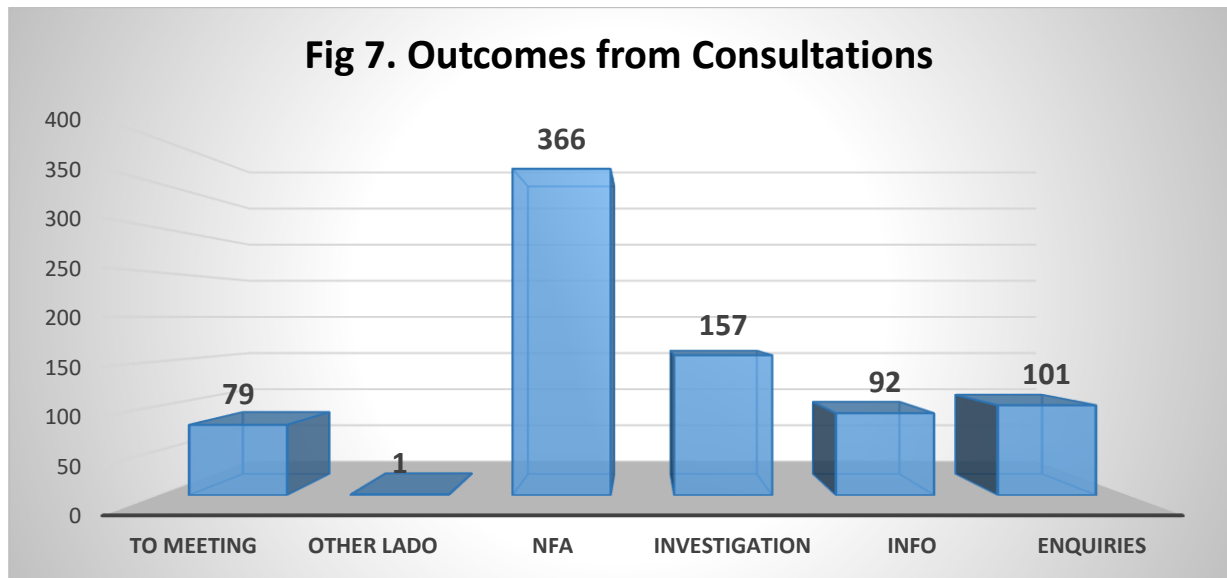
Given mother’s response to the risk assessment, her use of physical punishments in her care of her children, the behaviour observed at school, and mother declining to be honest with the school, the head teacher decided to cease her employment at the school.

iv. Outcomes from Consultations

Many consultations to the LADO with the LADO by employers can be managed immediately and employers can be supported in managing such concerns in a proportionate manner. As a result, concerns can often be addressed and resolved quickly with the LADO providing advice, perspective, and suggested actions to address the concerns without them becoming allegations. This space, provided by the LADO service allows employers a sounding board for managing staff behaviour as well as a sense check on concerns. Indeed, feedback from employers suggests that such consultations can prevent concerns from developing and can address complaints early. Fig 7 indicates that 44% of all consultations can be resolved in this way.

¹⁰ Updated and included in Working together Jan 2021 and in KCSIE Sept 2020

¹¹ Human Rights Act 1998.



Of those some 28% reach the threshold for an investigation overseen by the LADO and will either generate an Evaluation meeting at the start of the investigation or at the end or both.

v. Investigations overseen by the LADO

Where an allegation has been made, the police and LADO will determine if there are grounds to believe that a criminal offence may have been committed and therefore, if the allegation meets the threshold for police involvement. In such cases the LADO will support the police investigation by liaising with the employer, and where appropriate, children's social care and any other partners involved. Where it is felt that the allegation does not warrant police involvement, the LADO will oversee and support the employer's investigations into the concerns. Of the 239 investigations during this year, around 48% have involved police. Indeed, whilst those allegations that meet the threshold for police investigations, not all will result in criminal prosecution as they need to meet the criminal threshold that the allegation is likely to have occurred beyond a reasonable doubt. Safeguarding and employment concerns are judged on the lower threshold of the balance of probability and as such many allegations overseen by the LADO may not meet the threshold for police prosecution. These that do not are therefore explored by employers either following the conclusion of police inquiries or in lieu of them.

Figure 8 shows the gradual increase in the number of investigations year on year, and this is reflective of the increase in referrals and consultations observed earlier in this report.



vi. Timeliness of Investigations

Whilst there is no longer a requirement to provide performance information to the Department of Education on the duration of investigations, timeliness remains a key role of the LADO service, and is therefore one which we continue to monitor. Of the investigations overseen by the LADO 34% were resolved and a conclusion reached within 7 days and 61% within 1 month. Indeed, 84% of all investigations are completed with 3 months. Moreover, whilst 93% are resolved within 6 months there remains a relatively small number which are delayed significantly. Given the complexity of some investigations, particularly where police investigations are required. Indeed, between 2.5 and 5% of allegations can take over 12 months to resolve and one such matter took over two years to conclude. This is, however, an improvement on previous years where this figure has been within 5 and 10%.

Case Example 5 – The wheels of justice turn slowly but grind exceedingly fine!

“PD” was a sports teacher and house master employed in the 1980s by a Croydon secondary school. He left the school in the early 1990s and took up a position at a private school abroad in 1989. However, in 2019, an ex-pupil reported to a number of allegations regarding PD relating to sexual grooming and touching during his employment at the school. It then emerged that there had been previous concerns raised regarding other pupils in the late 1980s and the matter was “addressed privately” by the school. Indeed, it emerged that these concerns indicated a pattern of behaviour where PD acted inappropriately in changing rooms with isolated pupils. His move abroad had been linked to these concerns.

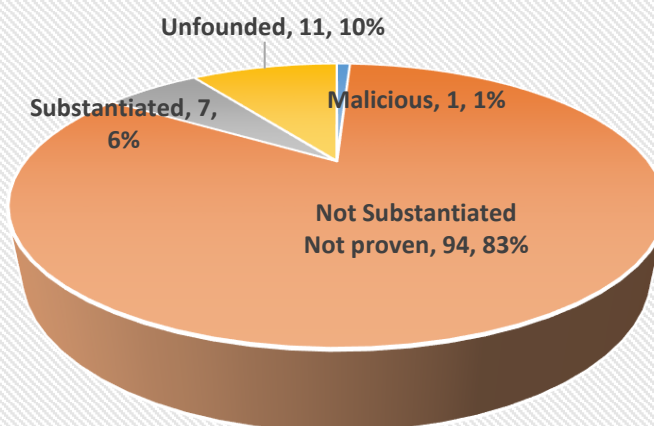
Police initiated an investigation and the LADO gathered information from the school regarding the previous concerns. The survivor who had raised the complaint, disclosed the identity of other ex-pupils who had been subjected to the same abuse and police contacted these pupils. In turn these new survivors identified others who also gave statements. From these enquiries, it emerged that PD had returned to the UK following concerns raised at the school where he worked abroad and that he had narrowly avoided prosecution.

In July 2022, PD finally appeared in court on counts of indecent assault and one of neglect of a minor and entered a plea of not guilty. It was not until May 2023 that PD was found guilty of all matters, and we await sentencing. The case has now been closed by the LADO following a referral to the Disqualification and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulatory Agency. In addition, the LADO provided support to the school in managing the national press coverage of the matter.

vii. Outcomes of Investigations

Many consultations with the LADO from employers can be resolved immediately following an initial discussion, and employers can be supported in managing such concerns in a proportionate manner. As a result, concerns can often be addressed and resolved quickly with the LADO providing advice, perspective, and suggested actions to address the concerns without them becoming allegations. This space, provided by the LADO service allows employers a sounding board for managing staff behaviour as well as a sense check on concerns. Indeed, feedback from employers suggests that such consultations can prevent concerns from developing and can address complaints early. Fig 7 indicates that 44% of all consultations can be resolved in this way.

Fig 9. Outcomes where Harm Threshold is identified



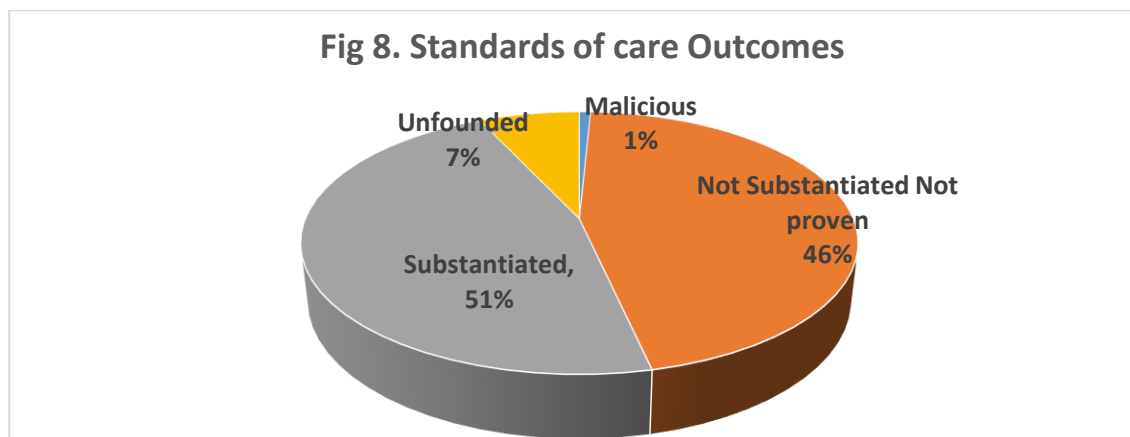
Case Example 6 – The Teacher and the Hotel

One Friday night, police were alerted to an incident where an adult male was attempting to book a double room with what looked like an underage girl. They invited the couple to wait whilst the room was prepared and called police. Police attended and whilst they were able to establish that the girl was over 16 years they also established that the adult was her maths teacher at the school she attended in Croydon. The teacher explained that they were merely going to watch videos in the room. As a result, the police arrested the teacher and a referral was made to the LADO.

The teacher was immediately suspended from his post at the school and a police investigation ensued. Messages were identified on the teacher's mobile phone which included sexual content and expressions of affection. In a video recorded interview was conducted by police the pupil disclosed that they had kissed and cuddled in his car on two previous occasions. A LADO evaluation meeting substantiated the allegations.

As a result, police charged the teacher with misuse of his position of trust and an application was made for a Sexual Prohibition Order. A trial is awaited but the teacher was dismissed from his position and has been referred to the DBS and Teaching Regulatory Agency.

Where the threshold for harm is not considered to have been reached, but there remains a view that services have failed to meet the standard expected, a threshold of standards of care can be considered and the LADO will assist the employer in addressing such concerns. Such concerns may result in the need for closer supervision, mentoring or additional training for staff and or in some circumstances dismissal. At this level of concern, around 50% of cases were felt meet the threshold.



In all of cases that resulted in an investigation around 33% of investigations reached a level of concern that was substantiated at either level. This constitutes over 100 cases. This resulted in 36 members of staff resigning or being dismissed from their role.

8. Safer recruitment issues

One of the key foundations of safe organisations is ensuring that staff are recruited to positions of trust with children using the concepts of safe recruitment. Following both LADOs in Croydon completing Training in June 2022 in the accredited Safer Recruitment consortium training as trainers, the LADO service has provided training to Early Years managers in Croydon. It is planned to provide this training on an ongoing termly basis. This is in addition to advising employers on issues around recruitment such as appropriate references, recruitment processes and previous criminal record information.

9. Training and briefing sessions

The LADO service has provided training and briefing sessions to a number of partner agencies in relation not the management of allegations and wider issues of safe organisations. These have included Training for:

- Croydon Foster Carers
- Nursery Managers and child Minders
- General practitioners
- Designated Safeguarding leads in Schools and colleges
- Independent Residential Homes based within Croydon.
- Independent Fostering agencies, foster carers and Supervising Social workers
- Staff at individual Nurseries
- Newly appointed Teachers
- Induction of new Head Teachers to Croydon

10. Feedback on the Service

Feedback received from partner agencies has proven positive with managers seeing the LADO service as a positive support in managing complaint and concerns regarding staff conduct and behaviour. Indeed, over the course of the last 12 months no complaints have been received by the service and feedback on a case by case basis continues to be positive.

"Thanks – you are a star!"

Head Teacher Primary School

"This was the first time that most of these settings had attended training on safer recruitment and the feedback was very positive with all settings identifying improvements they planned to make following the session."

Workforce Development Officer Early Years Team

"The feedback we have received has been fantastic and the input provided was hugely valued with some tennis clubs reporting they have already implemented positive changes as a result of the information shared."

Participation Director Lawn Tennis association

"Thank you for your time and passion presenting at our Child Protection in Education conferences last week." I wanted to share our delegate feedback with you on your keynote: London 83.33% speaker satisfaction. Mean score out of 5: 4.17;"

"Very informative and helpful, lots to take away from the session; very clear presentation; very comprehensive guide to LADO, things we didn't know; great to hear this information; interesting and worrying in equal measure."

Conference attendee

"though it is not the position I share, I want to thank you and your team on this handling this matter with respect and professionalism"

Ex pupil

11. External Contacts

The Croydon LADO service has a tradition of reaching out at both regional and national level in allegations management and this has continued.

i. London LADO Group

The Croydon LADO Service Manager is LADO is one of three coordinators of the regional London LADO group which meets on a two monthly basis. The group has been used to support the ongoing management of allegations procedures in the London Child protection Procedures and has been influential in refining these procedures. The group has met with partner agencies in developing good working relationships and address operational challenges and differences. Meetings have been held with regional groups including:-

- Met Police CAIT services
- Met Police Professional Standards Agency
- Disqualification and Barring Service
- Football Association
- British Gymnastics
- Lawn Tennis association
- The Football Association
- Scouting and Guiding Associations
- Ofsted Early Years Inspectors

- Charities Commission
- Teaching Regulatory Authority
- Independent Schools Inspectorate

This has included providing training sessions for these groups as well as rolling out a training package for all Metropolitan police CAIT Officers and sergeants. Planning is also advanced to provide training to all Metropolitan Police Professional Standards Officers, responsible for investigating police behaviour and conduct.

ii. National LADO Group

At national level, the National LADO Network (NLN), continues to be chaired by the Croydon LADO, and meets monthly. The NLN has forged links with the Department of Education in relation to keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together, and with particular teams addressing out of school provision, and radicalisation. Indeed, following the publication of the Reference Group's report into the Hesley Group of schools in Doncaster¹², the Secretary of State for Education announced her intention to develop a National LADO Handbook. The NLN was approached and with support from a representative group of LADOs Croydon has been at the forefront of developing a draft handbook. The draft is currently being consulted upon and will go out for general consultation in the Autumn of 2023, with a view to it being included in the next revision of Working together to safeguard children in 2024.

The National Group has also developed strong links with Disqualification and Barring, Ofsted, Social Work England, the Teaching Regulatory Agency and many other Regulators of the children's workforce and services.

In November 2022. The NLN held its eighth National LADO virtually attended by over 120 LADOs.

In addition, the NLN has maintains a website sharing resources for LADOs and to raise the profile of the regional and National groups and their work. The website was created and is currently managed by the Croydon LADO Service.

iii. Working with Other LADOs

Croydon has a well-established LADO service with a stable staffing position. As a result, newly appointed LADOs within the London area have used the Croydon LADO Service to support their induction, development, and integration. As a result, the LADO service has provided peer audits for neighbouring local authorities and their views on specific cases are often sought by LADOs from other authorities, on both a regional and national basis. In addition, the business support element of the Croydon LADO service has also provided support to other neighbouring local authorities in developing recording and information systems.

Thank you so much! I feel so much better. Now you've been my 'agony aunt'!!¹³

11. Conclusion.

The LADO provides a statutory service to partner agencies within Croydon and seeks to effectively manage allegations against adults who work with children. The LADO service in Croydon is now well established and seeks to provide a supportive and effective and feedback suggests it is well regarded within partner organisations. The service is well publicised and as

¹² Safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings. 26th October 2022

¹³ Email received from London LADO June 2022

a result, consultations continue to rise year on year. The bulk of consultations are received from Education, and early years but this report confirms that the LADO service reaches other services, including health and social care placements.

12. Looking Forward

With the development of a National LADO handbook, the next 12-18 months will present new challenges for LADO services and Croydon's provision will be no exception. Over the next 12 months there are a number of actions to continue to embed the service and progress its effectiveness.

- Update and develop further written procedures in line with LADO Handbook.
- Review and update leaflets for employers, employees and families regarding the role and function of the LADO service.
- Development management information from Children's Recording system.
- Further develop the functionality within the Children's recording system to improve sign off of case outcomes.

13. Recommendations

That the report be accepted by DMT and QIG

Steve Hall
Service Manager
LADO

Jane Parr
LADO