



LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO)

Annual Report

Allegations against Professionals, Volunteers and Foster Carers

April 2014 to March 2015



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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the management of allegations against the children's workforce and the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, provided by Achieving for Children (AfC), for the period 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015.

1.2 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 (*revised guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 and 2015*). This Guidance outlines the requirement of the LADO 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.

1.3 Revisions to Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015

Following consultation the government has updated and replaced the current statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* revised and published in 2013. The 2015 revisions include changes to the referral of allegations against those who work with children.

1.4 The referral of allegations against those who work with children

The proposal was that allegations against people who work with children should be routed through children's social care, so that they are dealt with alongside child welfare concerns in a coordinated manner. It was proposed that the person(s) dealing with allegations against staff must be qualified social workers.

New guidance no longer refers to 'LADOs' but says 'Local authorities should have designated a particular officer, or team of officers (either as part of multi-agency arrangements or otherwise)'. All new appointees to LADO should be qualified social workers, unless an existing LADO moving between authorities.

Changes to LADO	
March 2013	March 2015
<p>County level and unitary local authorities should have a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases.</p> <p>The LADO should provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, liaising with the police and other agencies and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process;</p> <p>Any allegation should be reported immediately to a senior manager within the organisation. The LADO should also be informed within one working day of all allegations that come to an employer's attention or that are made directly to the police; and</p> <p>If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason.</p>	<p>Local authorities should have designated a particular officer, or team of officers (either as part of multi-agency arrangements or otherwise), to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people that work with children.</p> <p>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.</p>

2. The role of the LADO

2.1 The LADO's key role is to:

- provide advice/guidance to employers or voluntary organisations;
- liaise with the police and other agencies, including Ofsted and professional bodies;
- monitor the progress of referrals to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process;
- to provide oversight of the investigative process through to its conclusion;
- chair LADO meetings and establish an agreed outcome of the LADO investigation;

- facilitate resolution to any inter-agency issues;
- liaison with other local authority LADOs where there are cross-boundary issues;
- collect strategic data and maintain a confidential database in relation to allegations;
- disseminate learning from LADO enquiries throughout the children's workforce;
- attend the Richmond and Kingston Performance Board Meetings on a quarterly basis; and
- attend Children's Social Care and Police Strategy Meetings where there are concerns regarding the children's workforce.

2.2 Statutory Guidance places a clear responsibility on organisations to report to the LADO where it is alleged that a person working with children 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; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she would pose a risk of harm to children;

2.3 Referrals often do not result in a strategy meeting but instead advice and support is offered by the LADO in terms of disciplinary matters, health and safety measures or identified training needs.

3. Service structure and staffing, including administrative support

3.1 The LADO service arrangements were reviewed by AfC and a new joint LADO, with responsibility for both the Royal London Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, was appointed in April 2014. The permanent LADO took responsibility for Richmond's service at the end of April 2014 and Kingston at the end of May 2014.

3.2 The Permanent LADO is an experienced Social Worker, registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and fully meets the requirements of the revisions to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. There are no

plans to move the LADO service outside of the Quality Assurance and Reviewing Service or to rename the role.

- 3.3 The Quality Assurance, Reviewing and LADO service is managed by a permanent, senior social worker within the Standards and Improvement division.
- 3.4 Having one, designated LADO provides consistency and the opportunity to develop good working relationships with partner agencies. Cover arrangements are in place to enable Child Protection Conference Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers to undertake the LADO role, on a rostered basis when required. Training was provided to all staff in preparation for their taking on this role, and continued mentoring and support is provided by the LADO and Service Manager.
- 3.5 In July 2014, a permanent, full time Business Support Officer was appointed for the LADO Service. Their role includes:
- Maintaining an up to date database by recording all LADO contact, including consultations and referrals;
 - Arranging LADO meetings and reviews;
 - Maintaining contact with partner agencies when necessary;
 - Taking accurate minutes of LADO meetings and distributing these securely;
 - Performing checks for child chaperone applications; and
 - Maintaining, collating and updating the high profile case tracker.

4. Supervision, training and appraisal

- 4.1 The LADO has undertaken a range of training during this recording period, including:
- Specialist LADO training session with an external consultant LADO and trainer. The consultant undertook a sample of casework audits which supported the implementation of new forms and records;
 - A three day 'Train the Trainer' course to support the LADO develop skills in delivering training;

- Regular attendance at the London LADO networking and support sessions;
 - Attendance at the National LADO Annual Conference;
 - Quality Assurance, Review and LADO Service monthly team meetings; and
 - Fortnightly update meetings with the LADO Service Manager and Business Support Officer.
- 4.2 The LADO receives regular, four weekly supervision from her line manager during which there is an opportunity to reflect on and discuss individual cases, themes, and set short term goals regarding training and development.
- 4.3 In line with AfC policy, the LADO has a mid-year review and annual appraisal where performance, individual and service goals are agreed.
- 4.4 The Service Manager has regular and consistent oversight of cases. There is management sign off of cases that have concluded and require no further action. Management oversight is recorded on each individual case file.

5. Overview of the service function and key areas of work

- 5.1 All agencies have a duty to contact the LADO where there are safeguarding allegations in respect to employees or volunteers who work with children. Behaviours are considered in the context of the four categories of abuse: Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect. Behaviours associated with inappropriate relationships or abuse of trust also comes under this remit.
- 5.2 LADO procedures may also apply to an individual who works with children, but the allegations or concerns arise in his/her private life. Allegations can also relate to the partner of the person who works with children, whose response or attitude suggest that his/her ability to fulfil their role might be compromised.
- 5.3 In addition to standard allegations management, there have been a number of other key areas of work undertaken by the LADO in this reporting year, these include:

5.4 Disqualification by Association

In October 2014, the government issued supplementary guidance to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2014). Further Statutory Guidance was issued in February 2015 entitled Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006

The regulations prohibit anyone who is disqualified themselves under the regulations, or who lives in the same household as a disqualified person, from working in relevant settings. Relevant settings may include some schools.

The LADO has taken responsibility for providing briefings to schools, governors and other settings, including the early year's teams in regards to these regulations.

The LADO has provided guidance and support to settings in relation to specific staffing issues in relation to these regulations. During summer 2015 further briefings will be provided by the LADO to settings across AfC.

5.5 Oversight of Historical Allegations

There are a number of high profile police operations which the LADO has maintained oversight and liaised with internal and external agencies.

In December 2014 the Service Manager presented a briefing to the Richmond LSCB Serious Case Review Subgroup. Recognising the strategic complexity of these operations, Richmond LSCB requested the formation of a Strategic Management Group (SMG) to coordinate and oversee these Operations and report to the LSCB. This follows LSCB Procedure Organised and Complex Abuse Investigations and builds on Working Together 2013, the London Child Protection Procedures 2014. The SMG and LADO will remain in existence at least until the Courts or Crown Prosecution Service has made a decision regarding the alleged perpetrators.

5.6 Training and Briefing Sessions

An important part of the LADO role is to help ensure that Local Authority and AfC staff, as well as partner agencies understand the role of the LADO and

feel confident in their safeguarding role and responsibilities. To this end, the LADO has provided:

- Monthly briefings for multi agency staff in both Richmond and Kingston over a three month period;
- Independent School's Safeguarding Training;
- Safeguarding training for School Governors;
- LADO briefings, for Chairs of Governors, School Business Officers and Clerks;
- LADO briefings for faith groups; and
- LADO training for the Early Years Service.

5.7 LSCB

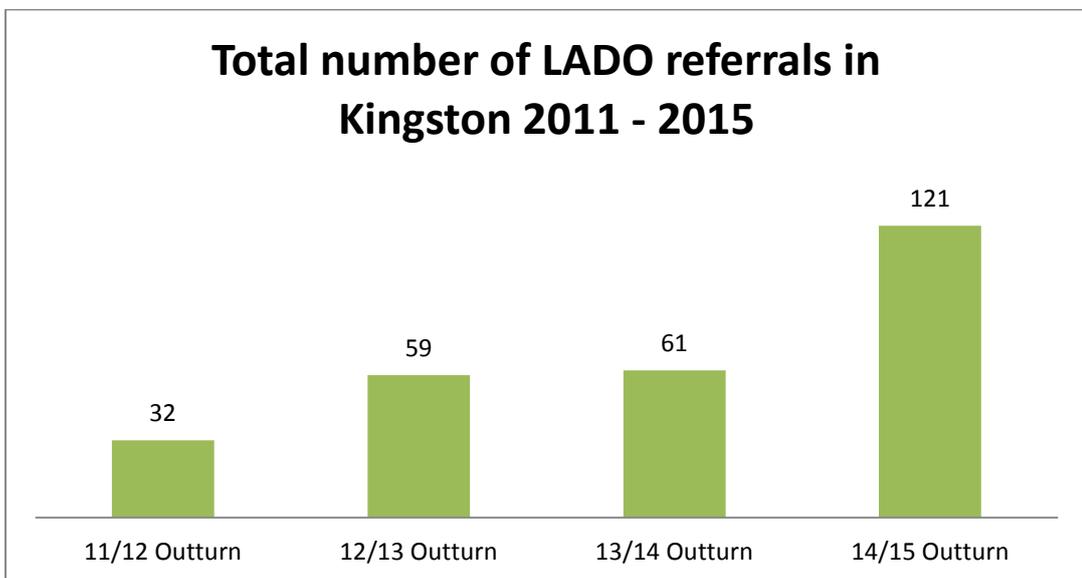
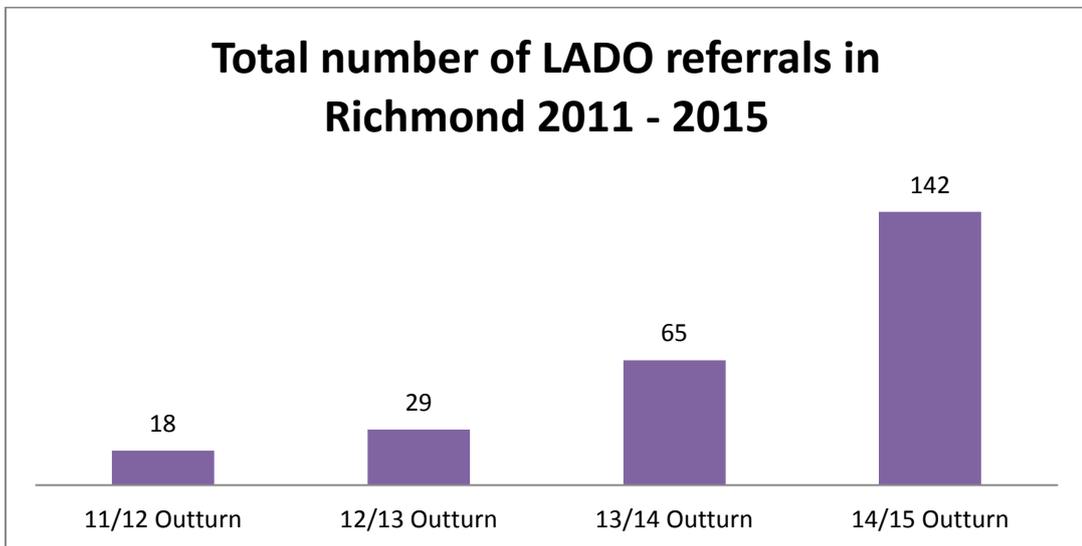
The LADO is now involved appropriately with the Kingston and Richmond LSCBs, sitting on two integrated subgroups; Learning and Development and Safeguarding Children on-line.

5.8 Relationship Building with in-house and partnership agencies

There has been some very positive multi agency feedback from agencies regarding consistency, threshold application, advice given and timeliness of response.

6. Contextual Information

6.1 There have been 263 referrals in Richmond and Kingston between April 2014 and the end of March 2015. This is broken down to 142 in Richmond and 121 in Kingston. This is a significant rise from the previous recording year where there were 65 referrals in Richmond and 61 in Kingston. This significant increase is largely as a result of the excellent partnership working with our schools and the wider children's workforce, which has resulted in increased awareness raising and confidence across the partnership. Schools and Early Years settings in Richmond and Kingston now have an increased understanding of Safeguarding and child protection through regular briefings and Head Teacher Partnership meetings.



6.2 Recording is robust for all cases, whether or not they meet the LADO threshold for involvement and files are kept for reference. It is important that cases where the LADO has only provided advice and information are detailed as some allegations, whilst on their own may not require a LADO response may, in the future demonstrate concerns with the practice of individuals or settings.

6.3 Of the 142 referrals in Richmond 23 did not meet LADO threshold; In Kingston of the 121 referrals threshold was not met in 30 cases, however the LADO provided support, and signposted the agencies to other services, where appropriate.

6.4 LADO meetings are held where allegations are such that they may require a multi agency response and involve both Children's Services and the Police (generally the Child Abuse Investigation Team) alongside the employer (named Designated Safeguarding Officer) and often Human Resources Advisor or voluntary organisation.

6.5 Managing allegations Strategy/Evaluation meetings are held under the guidance for managing allegations against adult who work with children as outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013 and 2015 and Department of Education Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2015.

The meetings draws together three possible strands of enquiries; the police in relation to possible criminal matters; Social Care in relation to the needs of any child or young person and the employer in relation to disciplinary and employment matters, including support to the adult about whom the allegations pertain.

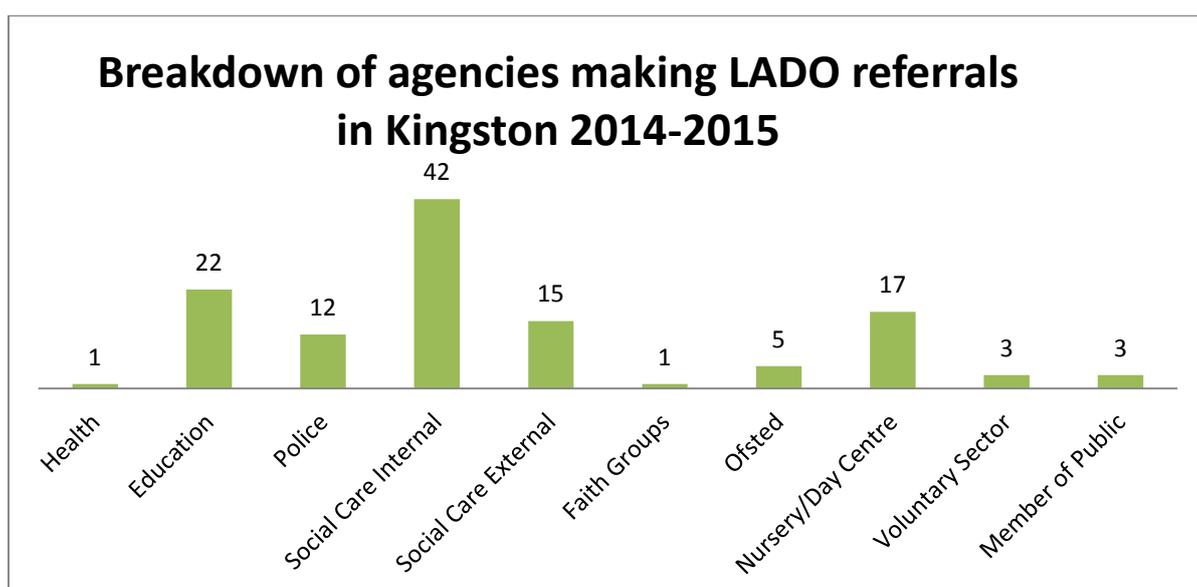
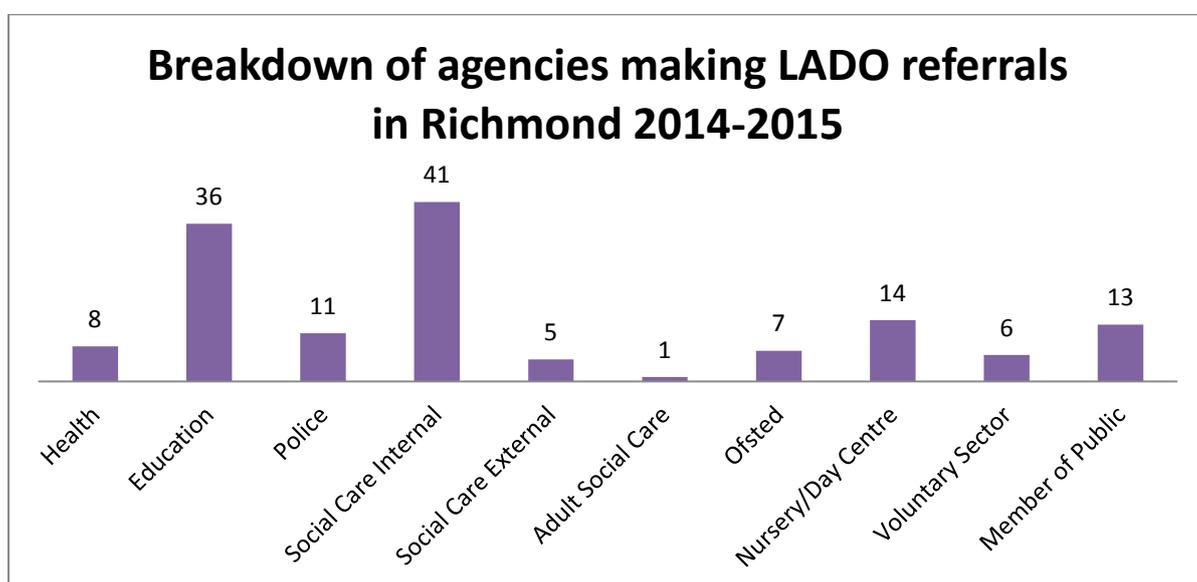
6.6 If an allegation does not require Police or Children's Social Care involvement the LADO will support the organisation to investigate, following their own internal procedures and can advise regarding disciplinary, training and policy matters. All referrals and consultations are checked on the LADO database for any previous involvement and if there is a specific child identified the Single Point of Access will check the child's electronic file to ascertain if they are known to Children's Social Care. There are a high number of requests for support and advice which the LADO will scrutinise even if they do not meet the formal thresholds for intervention. In these cases the employer is responsible for acting upon advice, implementing local conduct or performance processes and making recommended changes to their local practice or policy. It is these borderline or complex situations that require careful attention.

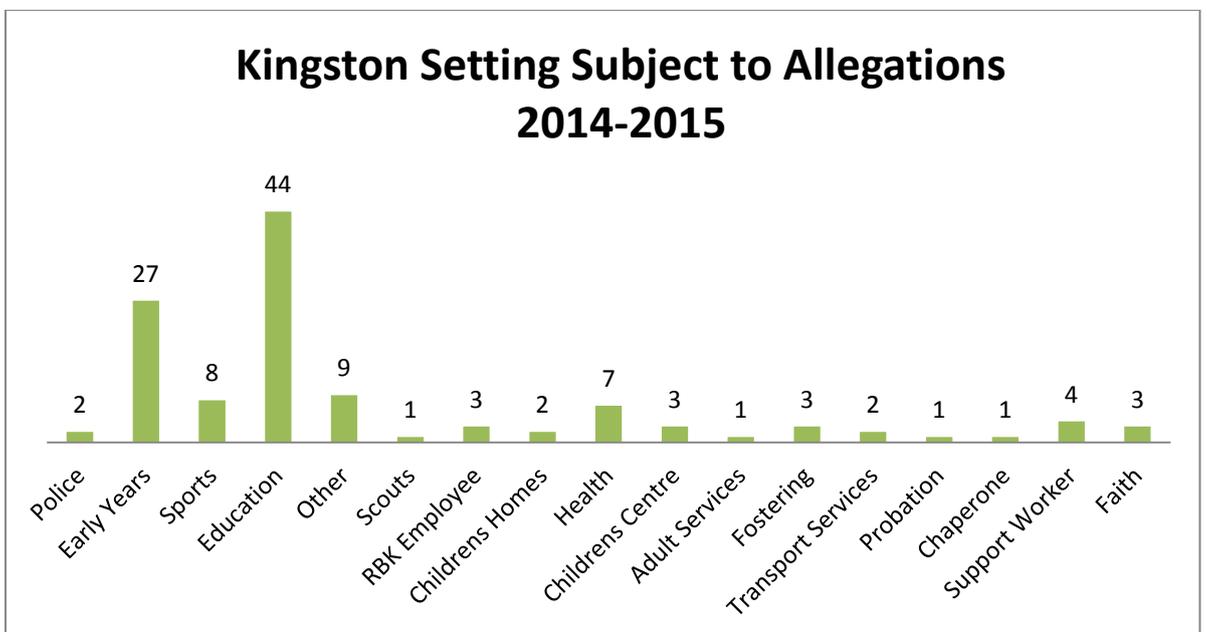
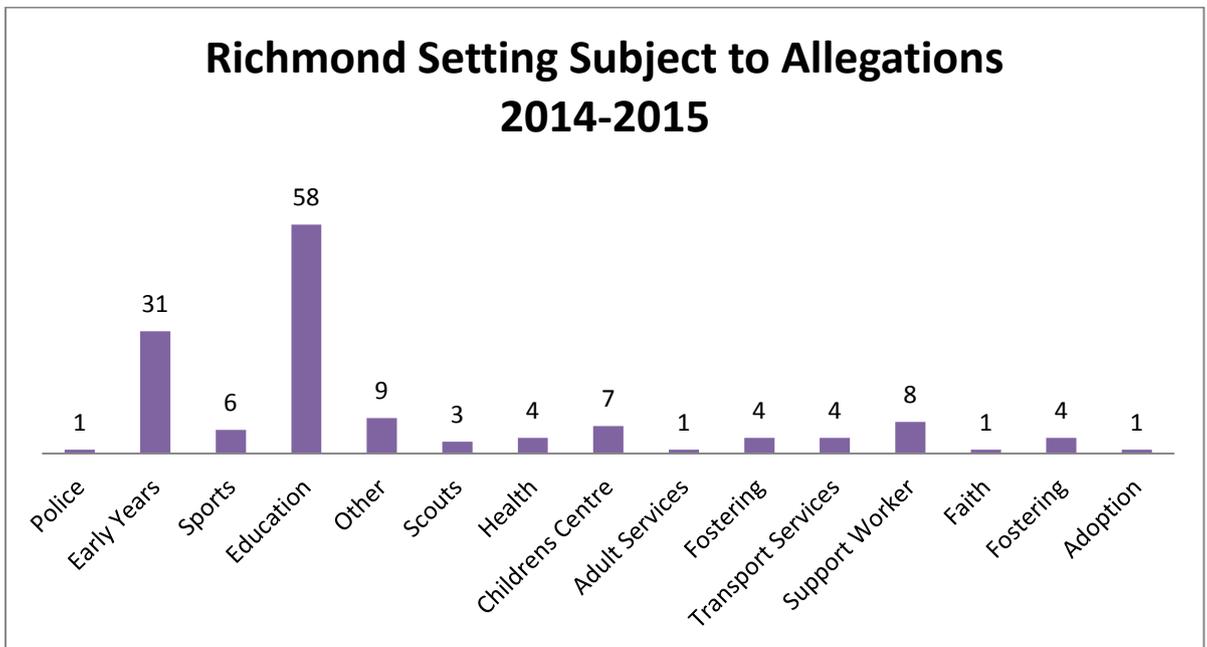
A new database, which is held by the AfC Quality Assurance and Review Service was implemented in April 2014. All historical files for Kingston and Richmond are now contained within this database. Data is colour coded to reflect the status of each case, including hyperlinks to strategy and LADO

minutes. This data is provided by the LADO to both Richmond and Kingston Children’s Social Care Performance Boards on a monthly basis and forms part of the monthly data set.

6.7 The Integrated Children’s System (ICS) now has a LADO hazard indicator which clearly shows if there is LADO involvement with a particular child. The hazard tab does not provide specific information regarding investigation, but asks that practitioners contact the LADO for further information.

6.8 Referrals come from a variety of sources; it is not always the setting that makes the referral themselves, as demonstrated in the following graphs.





6.9 A significant proportion of the allegations came from education and early years settings with 63% of referrals from these settings in Richmond and 58% in Kingston. It is for this reason that the LADO continues to work closely with Schools and Early Years Providers to assist in training and policy development. The LADO provides ongoing support to these settings, in the form of written advice and guidance, regardless of whether a particular allegation requires a multi agency investigation.

6.10 Referrals are made to the LADO where there are concerns raised in relation to someone's private life, rather than allegations as a direct result of their position within the children's workforce. In Richmond there were 43 such referrals and in Kingston there were 41. Referrals regarding private lives often come from social workers within Children's Social Care who become aware that an adult, within a family that they are working with children.

6.11 The LADO will discuss these cases with social workers to determine if there is a need to inform an employer about safeguarding concerns. Ordinarily, the LADO may suggest that the threshold is met to consider disclosure to employers if children are made the subject of a Child Protection Plan. There are circumstances where this would be considered earlier if there were grave safeguarding concerns in someone's private life that we felt impacted on their ability to keep children safe in their professional role.

The LADO would always wish to give parents the opportunity to make their own disclosure if possible, with support from the allocated social worker to ensure that information shared is honest and transparent.

If a parent refuses to make a disclosure, the LADO and social worker will need to risk assess and evidence why a breach in confidentiality is appropriate.

6.12 Across both Richmond and Kingston there have been 23 cases where there have been cross-boundary implications and other Local Authorities have been involved in LADO work affecting individuals or settings in our area. Generally, the LADO takes responsibility wherever the organisational risk is greatest or where the substantive post of the person about whom the allegations pertain is situated. On an operational level, LADOs communicate to share information about perpetrators who move between areas or where there are other cross boundary factors such as multiple employments or where the person's work and residence are in different areas.

7. Achievements in the year 2014/15

- The establishment of a full time, dedicated post to carry out the duties of the LADO across AfC;

- The development of a sophisticated and robust monitoring system which included an extensive database;
- LADO referral forms and recording templates have been updated;
- Monthly data sets are provided by the LADO to both Richmond and Kingston Children's Social Care Performance Boards;
- Staff development and information workshops across AfC for Children's Social Care, related staff groups and key partner agencies;
- There is an increased awareness across the children's workforce of the LADO role which has resulted in a significant increase in referral numbers;
- Training and information sessions for School and Early Years partners;
- Specialist training for LADO to support her delivery of training sessions;
- Cover arrangements are in place to enable Child Protection Conference Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers to undertake the LADO role, on a rota basis when required;
- A consistent system of verbal and written feedback given to referrers, highlighting concerns, thresholds and recommendations; and
- In addition to 4 weekly reflective supervision, fortnightly update meetings are held with the Service Manager, LADO and Business Support Officer.

8. Service Priorities 2015/16

- 8.1 LADO to continue to raise awareness of the LADO role by delivering training/briefing sessions to the wider workforce including health, faith groups and sports clubs.
- 8.2 LADO briefings, identifying key and emerging themes from LADO referrals, to be presented to the Richmond and Kingston LSCB Quality Assurance Subgroup.

- 8.3 Continue to review and update the LADO database, as appropriate to reflect changing reporting needs.
- 8.4 Review the materials and guidance on the LSCB website regarding handling allegations, to ensure that information is in line with current national guidance and develop best practice, including the use of a children's leaflet, updated LADO protocol and posters.
- 8.5 To monitor whether the current media coverage of high profile historical abuse cases leads to a further increase in referrals to the LADO and if it does, consider how this is best managed.

9. Conclusion and emerging themes

- 9.1 There has been a substantial increase in referrals in the last year from a variety of organisations. Approximately two thirds of referrals, in Richmond and Kingston came from the Education and Early Years Settings; this proportion of referrals is similar to previous years albeit a larger number. The timeliness of referrals from these settings has improved significantly, with the majority being received within 24 hours, and prior to any investigation being initiated. This has enabled schools and early years providers to be supported by the LADO to ensure that allegations are responded to appropriately.

Given that it can be expected that the number of education and early years referrals will always be a significant part of the LADO workload, ongoing training, briefings, and information sharing sessions have been planned over the next six months.

- 9.2 Investigations involving allegations of historical abuse continue to be reported to the LADO. A significant number of these cases involve independent schools and the LADO is making attempts to forge stronger working relationships with the independent sector. A LADO briefing has been provided to the Independent Schools Safeguarding Group, and there are plans for attendance and ongoing support for this group in the future.

A LADO briefing to the LSCB regarding high-profile and complex cases has resulted in the formation of a Strategic Management Group to maintain

oversight and consider future lessons to be learnt. It is not possible to predict the outcome of police investigations, nor to know if further allegations will come to light in the future, but the process for LADO oversight that have been implemented in the last year will ensure that all parties are advised and supported appropriately.

- 9.3 There have been 7 cases in each local authority in the last reporting year of allegations that are technology related, in the main these have involved the downloading of indecent images of children. There have been four successful prosecutions, 2 cases have resulted in no further police action, and 8 are the subject of an ongoing police investigation. These cases are often complex and can take many months to conclude. The LADO continues to provide support to schools and settings effected; once court and any disciplinary matters are concluded, a 'lessons learnt' meeting is held.

The LADO is also part on the LSCB Safeguarding Children On-Line sub group and has worked closely with AfC's ICT and E-Safety Advisor where targeted advice and information sharing has been necessary.

- 9.4 There has been a great effort made by the LADO over the last reporting year to ensure that the role and function of the LADO is well understood across AfC and partner agencies in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. The willingness of organisations to engage with the LADO, even when cases fall below the threshold for formal intervention would suggest that the support provided is valued. Anecdotal feedback received from settings supports this view.