

**Local Authority Designated Officer  
(LADO)**

**Annual report**

**Allegations against professionals,  
volunteers and foster carers**

**April 2016 to March 2017**

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## **1. Executive summary**

### **What was done?**

Referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service from settings in Kingston have decreased in the last year. Given the steep increase in referrals over the two previous years, this is not necessarily surprising, but will be monitored to ensure that referrals continue to be made by agencies where appropriate.

In the 2016/2017 reporting year, there were a total of 325 notifications of allegations in Kingston and Richmond. This is broken down to 146 in Kingston (a decrease of 45) and 179 referrals in Richmond (an increase of 1).

This is a decrease of 24% in Kingston and an increase of 0.6% in Richmond, giving an average decrease of 12% across the two local authorities.

### **How well was it done?**

All cases were assessed by the LADO, with referrals to police and Children's Social Care where appropriate. Where threshold was not met, advice, support and guidance were provided to the employer.

There has been continuous promotion of the managing allegations procedures to ensure that agencies and organisations are familiar with the local child protection procedures in relation to the reporting of allegations concerning the children's workforce within one working day.

The increase in the LADO establishment in November 2015 to 1.5 FTE has had a positive impact on the quality and consistency of LADO response. Agencies have commented positively on the service received. The increased capacity has limited the number of occasions where the LADO role has needed to be undertaken by others.

### **What difference has been made?**

The LADO process continues to ensure that allegations against those who work or volunteer with children are not seen in isolation and that the welfare needs of children are prioritised and coordinated.

Each referral is allocated to one of the LADOs who will manage the case, giving advice and direction through to its conclusion.

Cases are well recorded, including all consultations and discussions.

The LADO continues to work closely with a variety of multi-agency partners.

## 2. Introduction

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 Kingston and Richmond boroughs, provided by Achieving for Children (AfC), for the period of 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* outlines the requirement that all agencies that provide services for children, provide staff or volunteers to work with, or care for children should have a procedure in place for managing and reporting allegations against staff. The guidance also 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.

The detail of the procedure to manage allegations against people who work with children is contained within the Pan London Child Protection Procedures [www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/alleg\\_staff](http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/alleg_staff)

This report sets out the key findings from LADO activity through data analysis and commentary. Case studies have been used to provide an illustration of the complex and diverse nature of the role.

## 3. The role of the LADO

The LADO's key role is to:

- provide advice and 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 Kingston and Richmond Performance Board meetings on a quarterly basis;
- attend Children's Social Care and Police Strategy meetings where there are concerns regarding the children's workforce

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
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they may pose a risk of harm to children

Referrals may not result in a strategy meeting, but instead advice and support is provided by the LADO in relation to disciplinary matters, health and safety measures or identified training needs.

#### **4. Update regarding service priorities 2015/2016**

**Establishment of new management structure within the Quality Assurance Service. The Standards and Improvement Directorate will undergo a formal consultation process to create a safeguarding standards manager who will be responsible for line management of the LADO, education safeguarding advisor and social work practice consultant.**

This has been achieved.

**To develop materials and documents that can be provided to those who are the subject of allegations.**

This is ongoing. The safeguarding standards manager has consulted with the LADOs in other London boroughs and is devising a portfolio of resources that can be used not only to provide to those who are the subject of allegations, but also to settings and other interested parties.

**To develop a clear policy detailing the protocol to be followed when allegations are received concerning a member of AfC's staff.**

This has been achieved. The LADO has produced a flow chart which is available on TriX and has been shared with the AfC workforce.

**To recruit a high quality school's safeguarding adviser and to develop this part of the service in a way that meets schools needs effectively, working with head teachers, governors and designated safeguarding leads.**

This has been achieved. The education safeguarding adviser is established in post, undertaking regular safeguarding reviews in schools across both local authorities and has received excellent feedback.

## **5. Service structure and staffing, including administrative support**

The LADO service arrangements were reviewed by AfC and a new joint LADO, with responsibility for both Kingston and Richmond boroughs, was appointed in April 2014.

In November 2015, the LADO establishment increased to 1.5 FTE following a successful growth bid. This provides a robust response to the growing levels of referrals and consultations to the service.

The LADOs are experienced social workers, registered with the Health and Care Professions Council and fully meet 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.

In July 2016, the Standards and Improvement Directorate created the post of safeguarding standards manager who is responsible for line management of the LADO, education safeguarding advisor and social work practice consultant. The safeguarding standards manager continues to undertake LADO duties on a daily basis.

Having designated LADOs provides consistency and the opportunity to develop good working relationships with partner agencies. Cover arrangements remain in place to enable Child Protection Conference chairs and independent reviewing officers to undertake the LADO role, on a rostered basis when required. The safeguarding standards manager continues to offer support and mentoring to colleagues undertaking the LADO role in her absence.

The LADO service is supported by an experienced business support officer. 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
- maintaining, collating and updating the high profile case tracker
- providing the LADO dataset for the monthly Joint Performance Board

## **6. Supervision, training and appraisal**

The LADOs have undertaken a range of training during this recording period, including:

- leadership
- recruitment and selection
- restorative practice
- cultural awareness
- negotiation skills
- managing complaints
- regular attendance at the London LADO networking and support sessions
- attendance at the National LADO Annual Conference
- quality assurance, review and LADO service monthly training days

All staff receive regular, four weekly supervision from their 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.

In line with AfC policy, the LADOs have a mid-year review and annual appraisal where performance, individual and service goals are agreed.

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.

## **7. Overview of the service function and key areas of work**

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.

LADO procedures may also apply to an individual who works with children, but the allegations or concerns arise in their 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.

The Childcare Act 2006 prohibits 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 years teams, in regards to these regulations.

### **Case example: Referral in relation to concerns in an employee's private life**

Advice was sought from the LADO due to a S47 and police investigation concerning a father accused of assaulting his daughter.

Case was proceeding to ICPC and there were bail conditions for the father not to reside in the family home or to be within 500 metres of the child's school.

Concerns raised by police and Children's Social Care that father may be undertaking youth work in his local church.

LADO undertook to contact the church authorities to establish if the father was engaged in youth work in any capacity.

LADO was able to establish that the father was not involved in any work with children and that the church, following the father's disclosure had taken sensible safeguarding precautions.

## **8. Oversight of non-recent allegations**

The LADO continues to assist the police and other agencies in relation to non-recent allegations and enquiries.

There continues to be some high profile police operations and historical enquiries such as The Goddard Enquiry which may have an impact on local services, either from a national or regional perspective. The LADO has maintained oversight and liaised with internal and external agencies as appropriate. Some high profile cases have concluded, such as Operation Winthorpe.

## **9. Training and briefing sessions**

An important part of the LADO role continues to be working with all those who employ those who work or volunteer with children.

To this end, the LADO has attended provided a number of training or briefing sessions for internal staff as well as external agencies.

This has included offering training to the RFU Safeguarding Panel and uniformed Police sergeants.

A specific Level 4 training session for schools and other agencies is planned for September 2017.

## 10. LSCB

The LADO continues to support the work of the Kingston and Richmond LSCBs, sitting on the Safeguarding Children Online subgroup. Attendance at the Learning and Development subgroup is now delegated to the education safeguarding adviser.

The LADO data set, performance and key findings are fed into both the Kingston and Richmond Quality Assurance LSCB Sub-Group.

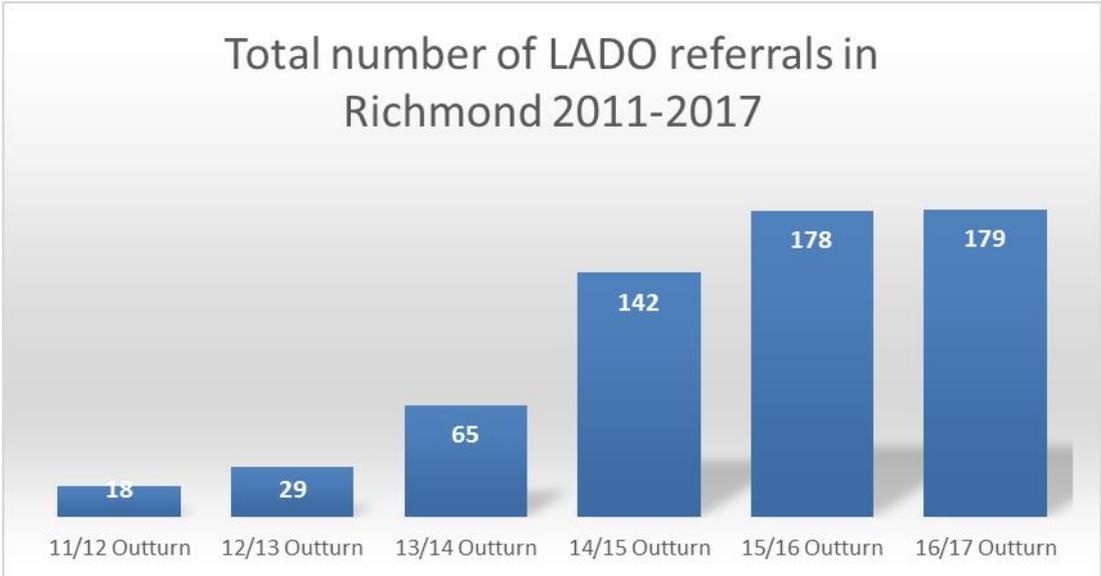
## 11. Contextual Information

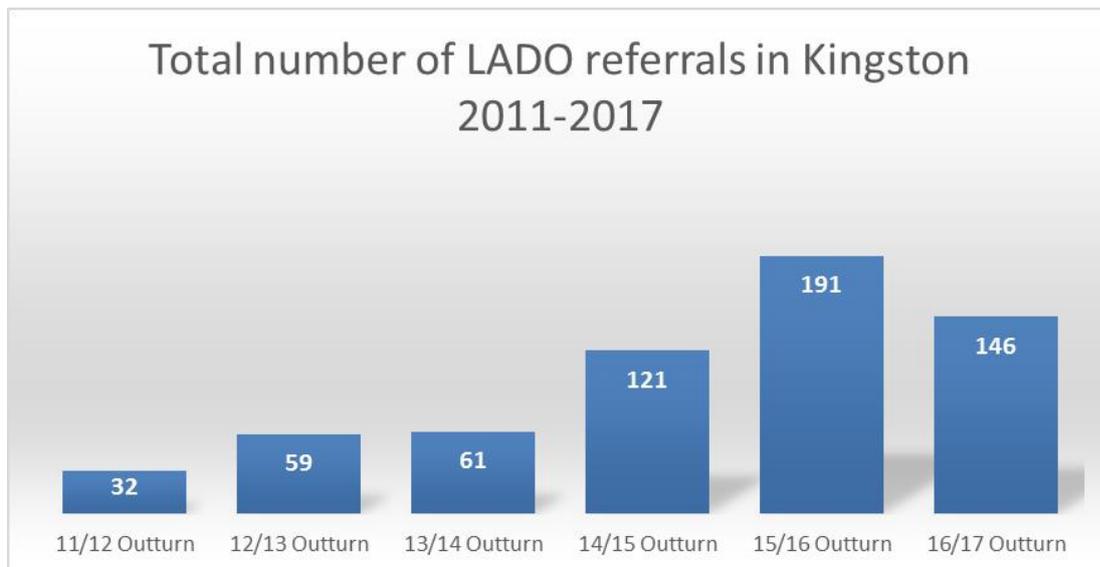
There have been 325 referrals in Kingston and Richmond between 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. This is broken down to 146 in Kingston and 179 in Richmond.

In Kingston there was a 58% increase from 2014/15 to 2015/16. Last year the number of referrals fell by 24%.

There is a continued, albeit small upward trend in referrals in Richmond, where there were 178 referrals last year.

Overall there has been a 12% decrease in referrals over the two local authorities.





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 recorded as such as whilst on their own may not require a LADO response, they may in the future demonstrate concerns with the practice of individuals or settings. Careful attention is paid to the requirements of the Data Protection Act and, if settings call for advice regarding a particular staff member, they are advised to share this with them.

The referral data above includes all contacts with the LADO, regardless of whether they have met the threshold for a formal response.

#### **Case Example: Concerns raised by voluntary agency regarding conduct**

Advice sought by a voluntary organisation regarding a self-employed individual who had delivered some training to parents; the content of some of this training was worrying.

Matter was referred to the LADO who undertook some basic checks.

Although this particular session was held in Richmond, the individual operated on a self-employed bases from another Local Authority.

LADO liaised with and then formally referred the matter to the other borough for further investigation.

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.

In addition to holding meetings where there is a need for a multi-agency response, the LADO will also convene a meeting if settings would find this useful, perhaps because of complex situations, or multiple concerns regarding a particular staff member or an employer or voluntary agency requiring additional support.

Managing allegations strategy and 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.

#### **Case Example: Concerns regarding conduct of a teacher**

Referral received from the Police regarding concerns that a teacher had been exchanging inappropriate sexual text messages with a pupil from the school where they were employed.

LADO worked closely with the School, Police and Children's Social Care. It was also discovered that there had been face to face contact that had been inappropriate, including the pupil attending the teacher's home.

Member of staff was suspended whilst investigation concluded.

Police outcome was a Caution for, in a position of trust, inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.

School outcome was dismissal and referrals made to Disclosure and Barring Service and National College for Teaching and Leadership.

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.

### Case Example: Allegations of non-recent abuse

Referral by a children's organisation following police notification of a historic allegation of sexual abuse against a child by a current volunteer.

In addition to working for the referring organisation, the LADO worked with Police and identified he was also working as a sports coach.

All parties worked together to share information and attend strategy meetings. Individual suspended from all activities with children.

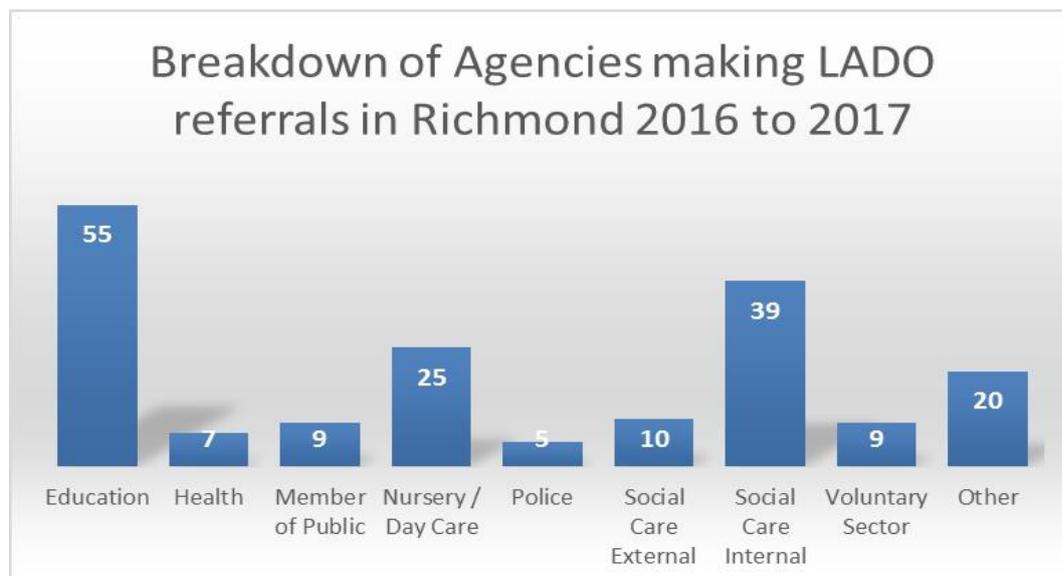
Police outcome was a successful prosecution and conviction. Individual is barred from working with children, is subject to a Sexual Harm Prevention Order and will remain on the Sex Offender's Register for 10 years.

The 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 contained within this database.

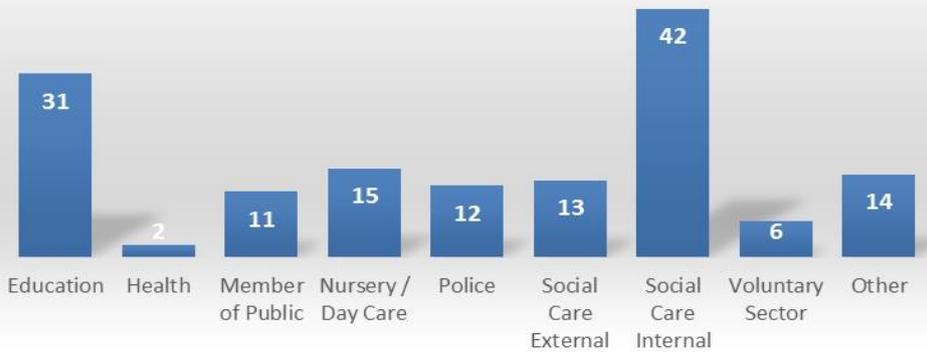
Data is colour coded to reflect the status of each case, including hyperlinks to strategy and LADO minutes. This data is provided by the LADO to both Kingston and Richmond Children's Social Care Performance Boards on a monthly basis and forms part of the monthly data set.

The Integrated Children's System (ICS) 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.

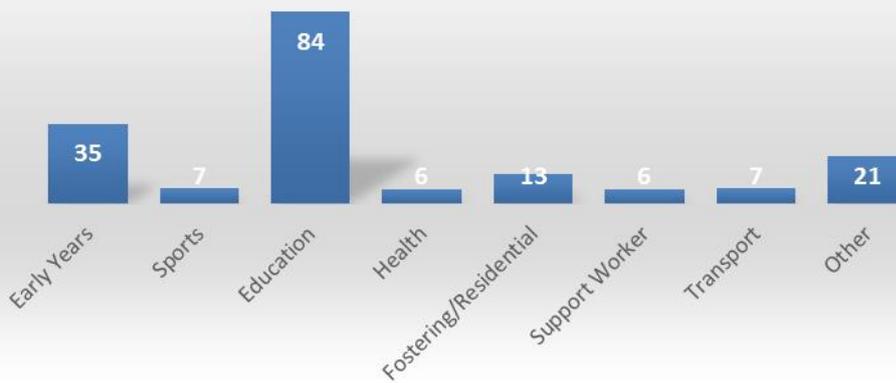
Referrals come from a variety of sources; it is not always the setting that makes the referral themselves, as demonstrated in the following graphs.



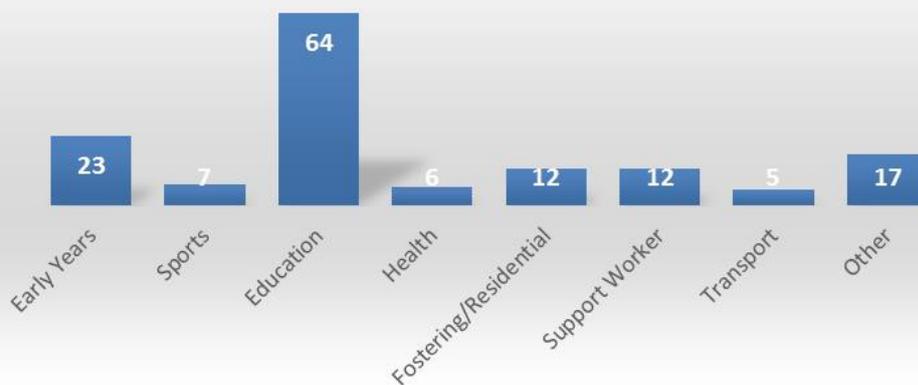
### Breakdown of Agencies making LADO referrals in Kingston 2016 to 2017



### Richmond Setting Subject to Allegations 2016 to 2017



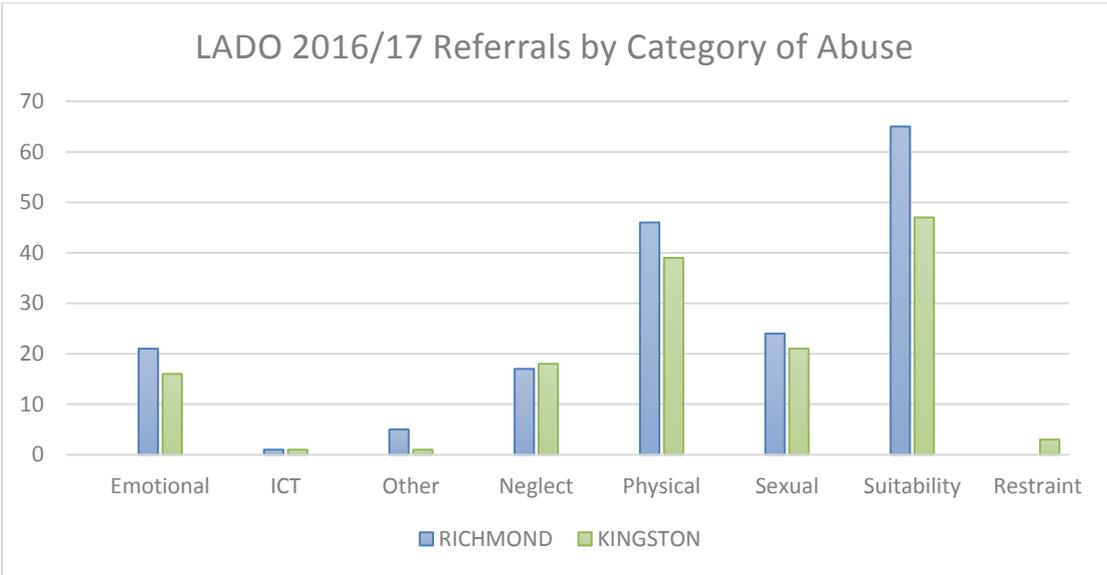
### Kingston Setting Subject to Allegations 2016 to 2017



A significant proportion of allegations continue to come from education and early years settings, with 66% of referrals from these settings in Richmond and 60% in Kingston. Both local authorities have seen an increase in referrals from this sector for this recording year. 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. The continued consistent response, available where there is a named LADO, is reported by these settings in particular as being extremely helpful.

The role of the newly appointed education safeguarding adviser has also served to promote the LADO role with schools through Safeguarding Reviews.

As previously discussed, referrals are considered in the context of the four identified categories of abuse, but often information is shared that sits outside of this remit, but may be still concerning and employers often need support when considering issues associated with suitability.



Suitability is the category most often identified within a referral and has tended to relate to risk by association, inappropriate boundaries, social media use and concerns about conduct outside of work. Most agencies have policies in place to manage conduct issues and have clear acceptable use policies for mobile phones and social media. Where these policies have been lacking, the LADO has provided advice and support to ensure that they have been put in place.

## **Concerns in relation to a member of the children's workforce private life**

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 Kingston there were 78 such referrals and in Richmond there were 65. 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. There has been an increase in referrals being made directly by social workers in AfC in both Kingston and Richmond – this demonstrates how the role of the LADO is increasingly understood by the workforce. Reports from social workers demonstrate that they appreciate being able to seek advice early in their case work, even if ultimately the threshold is not met for disclosure to an employer.

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 individuals 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.

## **12. Service priorities 2017/18**

- To continue to work with the London LADO Managers Group and the London Safeguarding Children's Board to amend and develop Section 7 of the Pan London Child Protection Procedures.
- To work with other local authorities in developing materials that can be provided to those who are the subject of allegations.
- To continue to provide a high quality, consistent response to concerns raised regarding those within the children's workforce.
- The LADO service to continue to contribute to training associated with managing allegations, promoting awareness of responsibilities and procedures where concerns are raised regarding those within the children's workforce.
- The LADO service to work with the LSCB to put together a leaflet for parents, offering advice regarding the employment of private tutors, sports coaches etc.

