

Children, Schools and Families

Annual report of the Local Authority Designated Officer relating to allegations against Staff and Volunteers who work with children

April 2019 – March 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the management of allegations against the adults who work with children in Surrey County Council and the role of the Local Designated Officer referred to as the LADO for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. The term adult applies to those from the age of 18 years and over working in either a paid or unpaid capacity with children in Surrey County Council.

This report will be presented to members of the SCSP to provide information and relevant data/analysis regarding the LADO activity in respect of all allegations dealt with in 2019/2020. The report will highlight the role and structure of the LADO team as well as the guidance that governs this role. (For more information see Surrey CC LADO procedures, dated April 2019).

The second half of this report will focus on changes within the LADO service between the period September 2019 to March 2020. It will highlight the significant changes and developments that have taken place in the journey of the LADO service and the next steps and further recommendations for the service.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

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, 2015 and 2018).

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.

In respect of Education services, additional guidance is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 which 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.

These sets of guidance are placed alongside additional statutory guidance – Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (2015) that further informs specific circumstances, which would lead to disqualification from work within defined sectors of Early Years and Education services.

2. GENERAL OVERVIEW AND THE ROLE OF THE LADO

Working Together 2018 sets out the responsibility of the Local Authority Designated Officer. The guidance sets out the importance that the co-ordination of any actions to address welfare concerns, in relation to the child or children involved, are taken without delay. It stipulates that Local Authorities should have a Designated Officer (LADO) or team or team of LADO's to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against adult that work with children.

As stated, for the purpose of this report, 'adults who work with children' should be interpreted as meaning all paid or unpaid staff and volunteers, including foster carers and prospective adopters in Surrey County Council. All references to 'employers' should be taken to include any agency or organisation with responsibility for paid or unpaid staff and volunteers, including foster carers and prospective adopters.

The LADO must be contacted within **one working day** in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works 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 they may pose a risk of harm to children.

AND OR

- Behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. This does not have to directly relate to a child.
- Closely associates/resides with another person who is disqualified because they have committed an offence included in the 2009 Regulations.

In all cases that meet the threshold, the LADO will give consideration to:

- Issues of a child protection.
- Any possible criminal investigation that may need to take place
- Any staff disciplinary process that will be undertaken
- Any complaints process that are being undertaken.

Surrey County Council has continued to work in line with the above guidance. At the end of September 2019, Surrey County Council appointed a permanent LADO Manager and Safeguarding Partnership Co-ordinator who has overall responsibility for the LADO team,

the Education Safeguarding team and the Child Employment Team. The full structure and restructure of the LADO Team is shown in the second half of the report.

THE ROLE OF THE LADO:

Whilst it is important to note the LADO deals with allegations and employers deal with concerns and complaints, it is worth noting there may be occasions where the LADO may need to offer support to employers in addressing certain concerns which may or may not be of a safeguarding nature.

There are times when it may not be clear whether an incident constitutes an 'allegation'. It is important to remember that in order to be an allegation the alleged incident has to be sufficiently serious as to suggest that harm has or may have been caused harm to a child/ren or that the alleged behaviour indicates the individual may pose a risk of harm to children (or otherwise meet the criteria above). Issues that do not meet this threshold may constitute conduct or disciplinary issues and should be addressed by employers using the appropriate organisational procedures.

In Surrey County Council, all LADO referrals relating to allegations and concerns of a safeguarding nature should be sent directly to the LADO service for assessment and actions.

It is important to highlight that some agencies and or families who have safeguarding concerns and or allegations about adults who work with children tend to send referrals to the Surrey Complaints Team known as Be Heard rather than directly to the LADO service. Be Heard are the team in Surrey that deal with complaints. Having gone through their own working procedures and processes, Be Heard then send this to the LADO service requesting a response to enable them respond directly to the referrer.

Although the LADO service work with Be Heard to provide such responses, the LADO continues to reflect on the overall impact of this process as well as the impact on the response rate. The LADO has reflected on whether this referral process is due to lack of awareness of the LADO service and the role of the LADO by the referrers or if it is because the word complaint and or concern is used in the referral rather than allegation that causes agencies to contact Be Heard rather than LADO.

The LADO is also mindful that Ofsted also send parental referrals about educational settings through to the complaints team rather than directly to the LADO service.

Whilst the LADO service continues to work alongside the Complaints Team to establish an effective way of addressing these issues when they are directed to the Complaints Team, the LADO service remain concerned that by not sending these cases directly to the LADO, there could be the potential of drift and delay in addressing the safeguarding concerns. It is important for allegations and such safeguarding matters to be referred directly to the LADO service to enable for an effective and efficient response..

The LADO is responsible for:

- Providing advice, information and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations around allegations and concerns regarding paid and unpaid workers.
- Managing and overseeing individual cases from all partner agencies.
- Ensuring the child's voice is heard and that they are safeguarded.
- Ensuring there is a consistent, fair and thorough process for all adults working with children and young people against whom an allegation is made.
- Monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are dealt with as quickly as possible.
- Recommending a referral and chairing the strategy meeting in cases where the allegation requires investigation by police and/or social care.

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, as quickly as possible. 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 chair **Allegations Against Staff and Volunteer (ASV)** meetings and establish an agreed format to an investigation, whilst facilitating resolution to any inter-agency issues. The LADO 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 to external partners. The LADO will attend children's social care and police strategy meetings where there are concerns regarding the personal and professional lives of adults who work with children.

In addition to this, the LADO service support the council and or the police in addressing historical allegations. The LADO continues to assist the police and other agencies in relation to non-recent allegations and enquiries. Many of these investigations take place over a number of years and may not involve those who currently work in Surrey County council and in some cases the adults may no longer work with children. However, the LADO has liaised with internal and external agencies as appropriate to collate and record information.

As part of the LADO role, training and briefing sessions are provided to ensure that local authority staff, as well as partner agencies, understand the role of the LADO and are confident in delivering their safeguarding role and responsibilities.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In the 2019/2020 reporting year, there were a total of 976 referrals and consultations received by the LADO service. This is a decrease in number compared to the 1292 referrals that was received by the LADO service in 2017/2018 and the 1444 received in 2016/17. The variation in referral rates is as a result of the ongoing work and progress within the LADO service in respect of changes to the way data being collected and recorded and as a result of the ongoing increase in the clarity and the understanding of threshold both by the LADO service and by partner agencies as well as the fast-growing awareness of the role of the LADO and the role of employers and partners.

Previously, all contact with the LADO service was automatically recorded as a referral, more recently, only matters reaching the threshold for a referral are recorded as a referral whilst other forms of contacts such as advice, and support are recorded as a consultation.

The ongoing work with partners means there is considerable improvement in employers recognising what they are responsible for dealing with and what they need to refer to the LADO service. This means that majority of referrals sent to the LADO service are referrals that meet the threshold and in turn the LADO service beginning to see a reduction in the number of referrals.

Of the 976 referrals/consultations received in 2019/2020, 677 were actual referrals whilst 299 were consultations. 677 of those cases met the threshold for a LADO involvement whilst 199 were closed with No Further Action as an outcome and 93 of those cases met threshold for an Allegation Against Staff and Volunteers Meeting (ASV). 47 of all the cases to LADO were in relation to allegations of a safeguarding nature in the personal life of staff.

For clarity, the term consultation is used to refer to all cases that may not meet the threshold but may require considerable follow-up from the LADO beyond the initial contact.

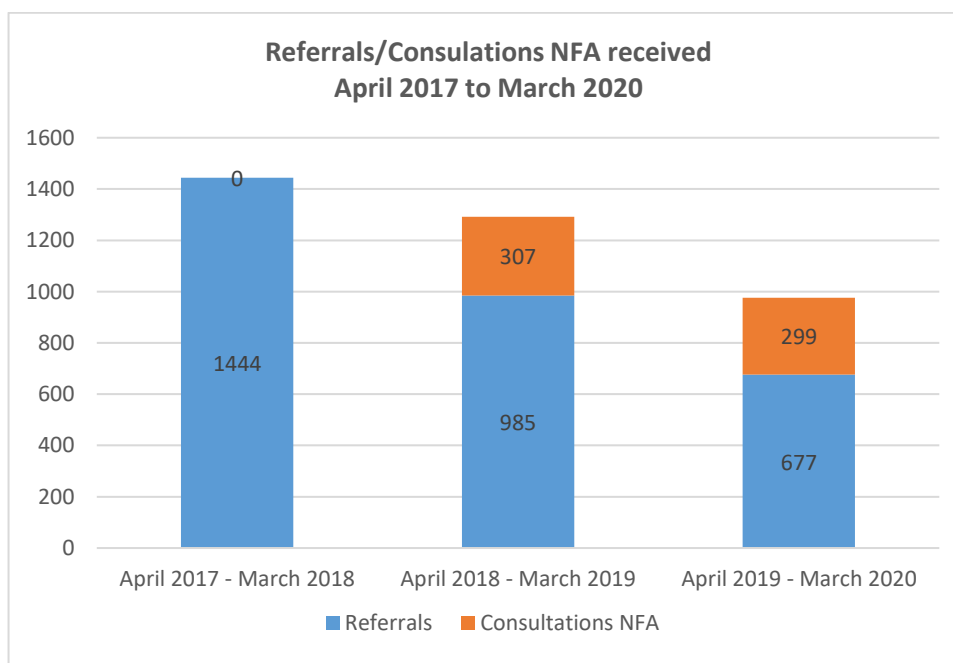
Examples of consultation which do not reach threshold however require follow up and robust responses are referrals like those from Ofsted about concerns within schools and how they have addressed certain issues, referrals for children where extreme bullying has been experienced, health and safety incidents in regulated provisions, as well as advice being sought by organisations not involved in regulated activities with children. Consultations may also include instances where agencies are not clear if an issue relates to a concern or an actual allegation against a staff member. The LADO will in such cases advice and support the agencies to ensure all safeguarding issues are dealt with in a timely and safe manner.

DATA AND INFORMATION ON REFERRALS AND NOTIFICATIONS

REFERRALS & CONSULTATION OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS.

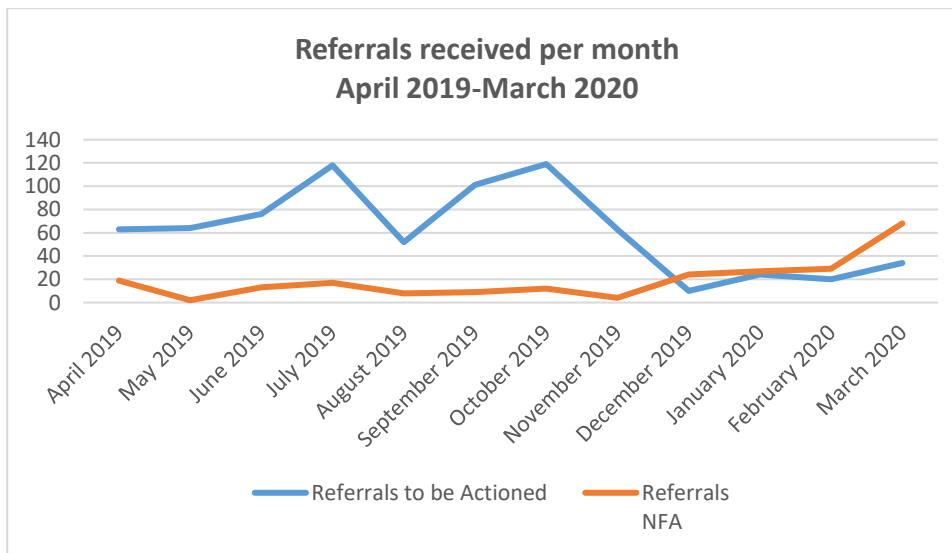
| Referrals & Consultations received | April 2017 - March 2018 | April 2018 - March 2019 | April 2019 - March 2020 |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Referrals | 1444 | 985 | 677 |
| Consultations NFA | No data | 307 | 299 |
| TOTAL | 1444 | 1292 | 976 |

Please note that due to the recording system in place in 2017/2018, there are no records of consultations or NFA available. This is because at the time, LADO's received all telephone calls directly and as such dealt with NFA without a recording system in place. This will be further explained in areas of improvement.



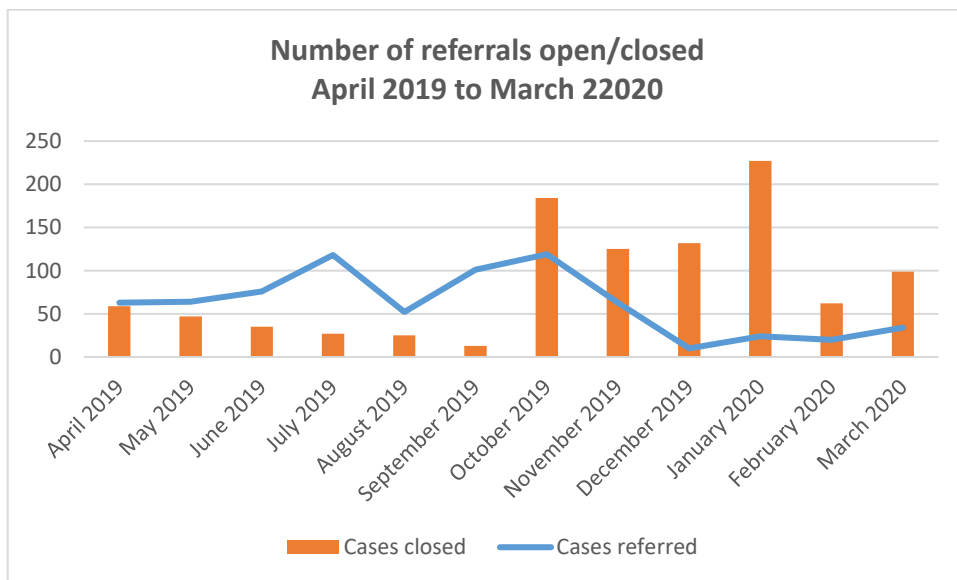
The number of referrals received per month that have been met / have not met thresholds

| Total Referrals Received Per Month | Referrals to be Actioned | Referrals NFA |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| April 2019 | 63 | 19 |
| May 2019 | 64 | 2 |
| June 2019 | 76 | 13 |
| July 2019 | 118 | 17 |
| August 2019 | 52 | 8 |
| September 2019 | 101 | 9 |
| October 2019 | 119 | 12 |
| November 2019 | 63 | 4 |
| December 2019 | 10 | 24 |
| January 2020 | 24 | 27 |
| February 2020 | 20 | 29 |
| March 2020 | 34 | 68 |
| TOTAL REFERRALS | 744 | 232 |



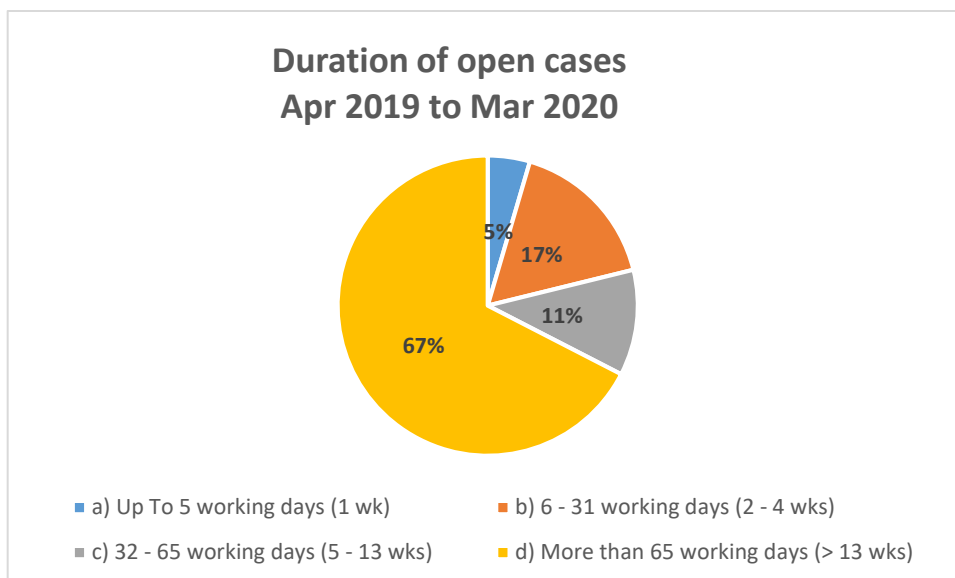
As a result of the increase in the understanding and clarity of the LADO threshold both from the LADO's and partners, you would notice that over the last four months, there has been a steady increase in the number of cases that require No Further Action from LADO. This is because there is now a clear system in place to assess the referrals swiftly and promptly at the point of contact with the LADO service.

Referrals open / Closed per month from April 2019 to March 2020



| Month | Cases referred | Cases closed |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| April 2019 | 63 | 59 |
| May 2019 | 64 | 47 |
| June 2019 | 76 | 35 |
| July 2019 | 118 | 27 |
| August 2019 | 52 | 25 |
| September 2019 | 101 | 13 |
| October 2019 | 119 | 184 |
| November 2019 | 63 | 125 |
| December 2019 | 10 | 132 |
| January 2020 | 24 | 227 |
| February 2020 | 20 | 62 |
| March 2020 | 34 | 99 |
| TOTAL | 744 | 1035 |

As part of the ongoing drive to improve LADO service delivery considerable work has been undertaken to ensure all historical and long-standing cases open to LADO are closed. The above data shows the number of cases closed to LADO. Interim capacity was agreed as a short-term measure to assist with the backlog.



From the chart above, 5% of cases were closed within a week with 67% closed within two months or more. This is a significant area that requires improvement and Surrey County Council LADO is working hard and beginning to put processes and procedures in place to ensure that cases are dealt with in a timely manner.

The statutory guidance requires that all notifications be resolved as quickly as possible and to ensure a fair and thorough investigation. To this end, a key aspect to the role of LADO is to be involved in the management and oversight of cases being dealt with by agencies and organisations to ensure avoidance of unnecessary delays.

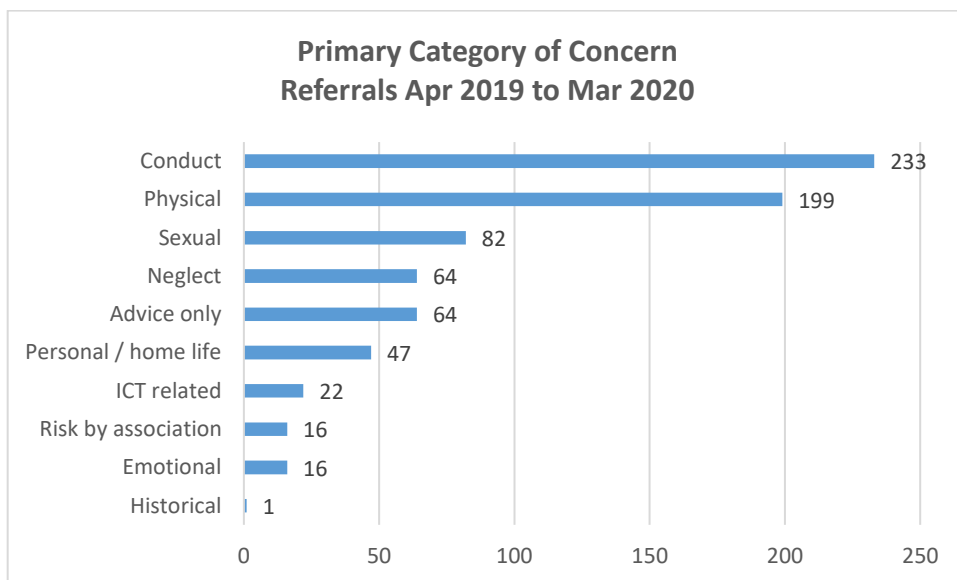
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015 and 2017 (and post the reporting period in 2018) sets out the expectations that 80% of LADO cases should be resolved within one month of referral, 90% within three months, and all but the most exceptional cases completed within one year. The graph above illustrates the timescales in which referrals have been concluded by the LADO.

Whilst the LADO service acknowledges and is working hard to ensure that cases are closed in a timely manner, it is still important to note there are times when there are external impacts to these timescales. These exceptions are due to the LADO being unable to conclude the investigation and or involvement due to the following challenges:

- Joint investigations with the police generally take a longer time to reach an outcome as a result of the length of time a case may take to work through the criminal justice process to conclusion.
- Employers awaiting the outcome of a criminal investigation before being able to formally investigate under its disciplinary procedures.
- Practical considerations such as the unavailability of people including witnesses to an incident due to shift patterns; holidays; sickness.

- Delay in response from the subject of the allegation or where the subject is requesting more time to enable them to have a representation from their union and or a registered body.

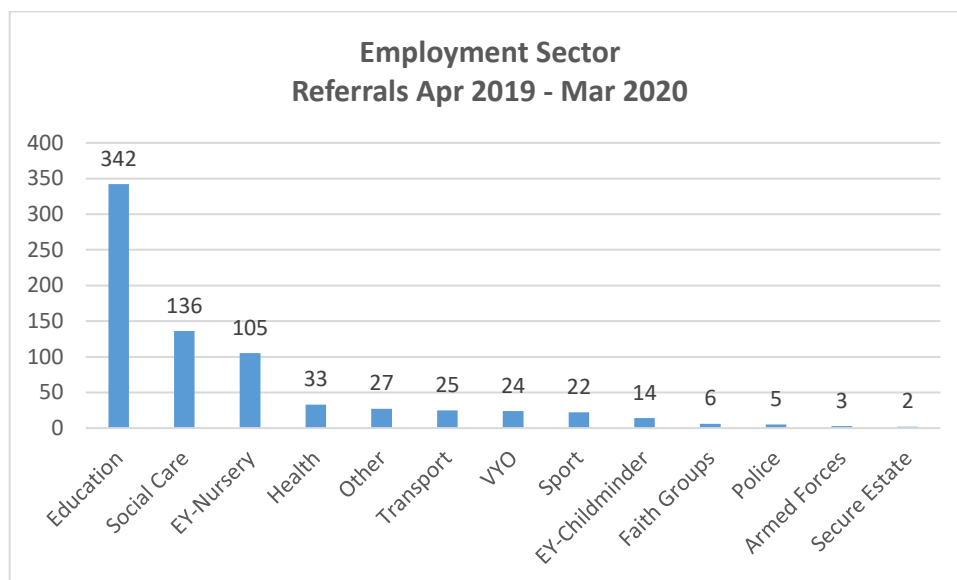
Primary category of concern - referrals received April 2019 to March 2020



| Category of concern | % |
|----------------------|-------|
| Conduct | 31.3% |
| Physical | 26.7% |
| Sexual | 11.2% |
| Neglect | 8.6% |
| Advice only | 8.6% |
| Personal / home life | 6.3% |
| ICT related | 2.9% |
| Risk by association | 2.2% |
| Emotional | 2.2% |
| Historical | 0.1% |

Conduct and Physical harm continue to show as the two top categories mainly arising from Education Sectors who remain the top referring agencies as noted in the graph below. This is due to the fact that adults who work in education continue to be the adults who have the most and highest level of contact with children.

Employment sector of referrals received April 2019 to March 2020



| Employment sector | % |
|-------------------|-------|
| Education | 45.9% |
| Social Care | 18.3% |
| EY-Nursery | 14.1% |
| Health | 4.4% |
| Other | 3.6% |
| Transport | 3.4% |
| VYO | 3.2% |
| Sport | 3.0% |
| EY-Childminder | 1.9% |
| Faith Groups | 0.8% |
| Police | 0.7% |
| Armed Forces | 0.4% |
| Secure Estate | 0.3% |

As stated above, the highest number of referrals continue to come from education where children have the most contact with adults who work with children. Generally reporting from schools is higher as a result of the schools' statutory guidance which has existed for some years. Over time this has enabled more staff to be familiar with the managing allegations procedure and the expectations to report any concerns about inappropriate behaviour of colleagues.

As a result of all the changes in legislation - Education Acts (2002 & 2006); Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) introduced changes to the way in which staff are recruited. This includes the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks and training such as a national Safer Recruitment courses for Head teachers and

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) to improve their confidence in understanding the threshold to send notifications/referrals to the LADO.

The following table shows the breakdown of the referrals in relation to SEND.

SEND DATA APRIL 2019 to MARCH 2020

| Referrals April 2019 to March 2020 | No of children |
|---|-----------------------|
| Number of children/young people recorded | 585 |
| Number now Adults (Historical referrals) | 22 |
| Total children/young people | 563 |

| Referrals April 2019 to March 2020 | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| Number of children identified as | No of children | |
| SEN only | 5 | 0.8% |
| SEN + Disability/communication difficulties | 11 | 2.0% |
| Disability/Communication difficulties only | 144 | 25.6% |
| Total SEN/Disability/Communication difficulties | 160 | 28.4% |

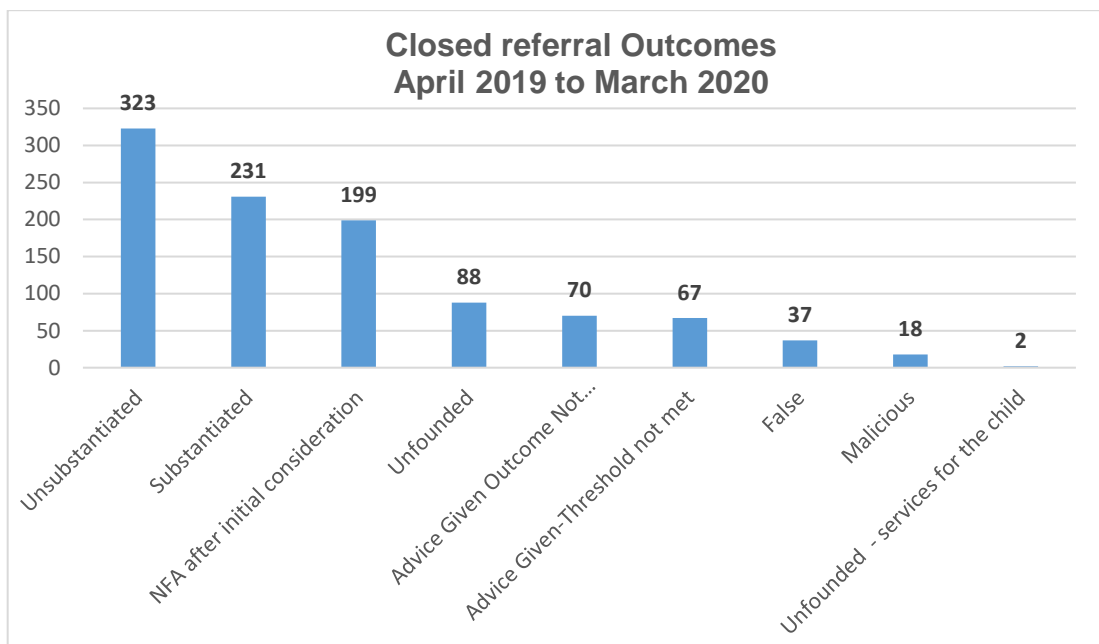
| Referrals April 2019 to March 2020 | No of children | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| Surrey LAC children | 46 | 8.2% |
| OLA/LAC children | 47 | 8.3% |
| Total LAC children | 93 | 16.5% |

NB Allegation may name more than one child

NB One child may be victim of more than one allegation

Above is a breakdown of SEND for children and young people in Surrey County Council. Although the child/young person details have not routinely been captured previously within the service, this is now changed.

Outcomes of closed referrals April 2019 to March 2020



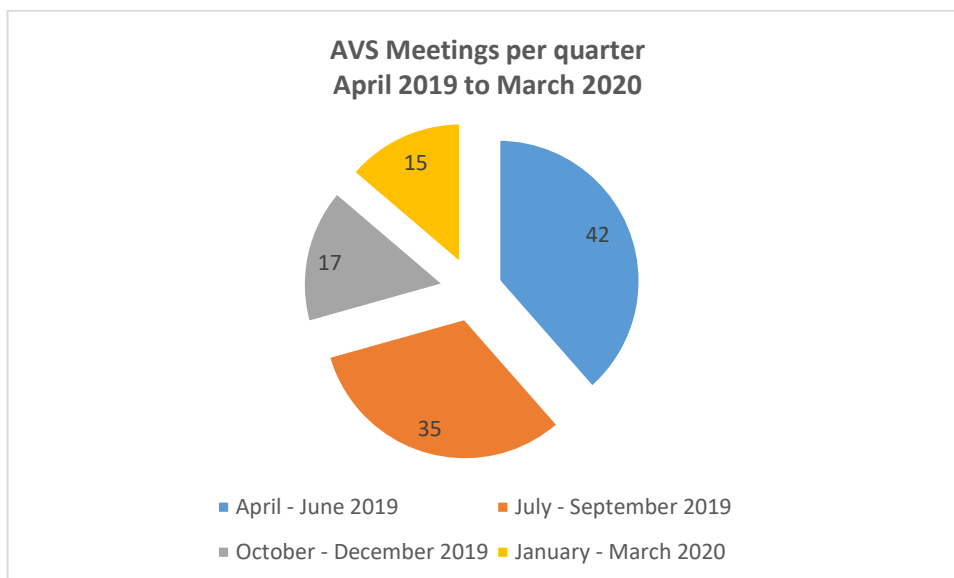
| Outcomes | % |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Unsubstantiated | 31.2% |
| Substantiated | 22.3% |
| NFA after initial consideration | 19.2% |
| Unfounded | 8.5% |
| Advice Given Outcome Not Received | 6.8% |
| Advice Given-Threshold not met | 6.5% |
| False | 3.6% |
| Malicious | 1.7% |
| Unfounded - services for the child | 0.2% |

As shown in the graph, with 31.2% an unsubstantiated outcome remains the highest outcome with most cases. This means there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence. This is not the same as a false allegation. False however means there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation whilst malicious suggests that there is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation is entirely false.

Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) Meetings April 2019 to March 2020

| AVS Meetings Held | Meetings held | Police attendance | | | Info not available |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | | Attended | Did not attend | Not involved | |
| April - June 2019 | 42 | 16 | 3 | 18 | 5 |
| July - September 2019 | 35 | 24 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| October - December 2019 | 17 | 14 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| January - March 2020 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Total AVS meetings held | 109 | 65 | 10 | 23 | 11 |

Of the 109 AVS meeting held 69% were joint investigations. 51 of the referrals were made directly by the Police.



GENERAL OUTCOMES FOR CASES INCLUDING BODIES REFERRED TO



It is important to note that following the investigations and conclusions on cases, there may be the need to refer to other regulatory bodies such as Disclosure and Barring Service, OFSTED and the Teaching Regulatory Agency.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKING

Surrey County Council LADO is part of both the national and regional LADO groups, and hosts the regional LADO group which meets quarterly. The regional group's prime focus is to ensure that practice and processes between London LADOs are consistent in complying with statutory guidance and Procedures.

CHANGES TO THE LADO SERVICE:

As stated in the introduction, Surrey County Council LADO service embarked on a journey to make significant changes to the LADO service as part of the restructure.

Part of that change was the appointment of a permanent manager to this role in September 2019 to ensure stability, efficiency and improvement to the LADO service. Prior to the permanent appointment the service had been managed by an interim manager whilst the transformation programme was ongoing.

Throughout September and October 2019, the incoming LADO manager and Safeguarding Co-ordinator undertook a diagnostic assessment which involved reviewing and updating existing processes, procedures and structure. The diagnostic assessment identified several areas requiring improvement both in the short and long term.

The review found the following areas of improvement:

- Lack of clarity and consistency in the understanding and application of threshold within the LADO service.
- A high number of caseloads and backlogs as a result of the LADO service accepting and undertaking non-LADO related roles/cases over a significant period of time.
- The duty and allocation system impacting on the way work is undertaken and allocated, which in turn lead to drift and lack of ownership/oversight of cases. For example, LADO's were on duty for three consecutive days with no time to follow through initial contact and progress newly allocated cases which meant that initial referrals had no follow ups and or closure in a timely way.
- The need to raise awareness and understanding of the role of the LADO and LADO threshold/process within partner agencies especially Education. The existing understanding of the LADO role prior to these changes now implemented led to a high level of referrals mainly pertaining to concerns which should have been addressed internally by agencies rather than referring them as actual allegations.
- Expectations of LADO by partner agencies to address non-LADO related matters in a very tight timescale which in turn increases the amount of complaints made about LADO's and causes anxiety plus a reactive service from the LADO's.
- The duplication in the referral and recording process by business support and LADO. This includes phone calls prior to referrals, the lack of tracking and allocation of cases which meant minimal oversight of cases and follow up on cases in general.

In order to address the above identified concerns, several changes and updates have been made to the LADO service since the end of September 2019 to date. These changes include the referral process, the referral form, general awareness raising, recording and tracking of referred cases as well as the staffing within the LADO service. One of the biggest changes was the introduction of the Duty LADO Triage System.

THE REFERRAL PROCESS:

On the 4th October 2019, a new referral form was introduced and established for referring allegations against adults who work with children. Partners were asked to discard the original thirteen- page referral form and were introduced and provided with a much shorter and user friendly four- page form was introduced capturing what was required to enable the LADO to make an informed assessment and decision.

In addition to the previous form, as part of the historical referral process, partners were advised to telephone the LADO Service and speak to a LADO prior to making any referral at which point LADO's then decided if a referral was required.

Although this may have been assessed at the time as a way to support partners to discuss with the LADO to decide if a LADO threshold was met prior to completing a referral form, with the high number of partners calling through, this unfortunately added to a very high call volume, heavy call backlog and some levels of anxiety amongst partners.

Historically partners had presented as heavily reliant on the LADO service in making basic assessment around allegations and or concerns leading to some levels of delay. While partners struggled with the delay in the response from the LADO service, the LADO's struggled with the fact that they could not effectively meet the demands placed on them.

However, with the introduction of the new referral form and process, it contains a section which enables the LADO's to provide immediate advice, guidance, support and the required LADO action for partners without the need for an initial telephone consultation.

The introduction of the triage system which will be expanded later also played a phenomenal part in the new referral process. A lot of partners have given positive feedback on the benefit of the changes to the referral process.

The new referral process has had a significant impact on the number of referrals made to the LADO service as well as the response time. The LADO service currently aims to respond within 24 hours of a referral and a system has now being put in place to capture data around the response time. This will be reported in the next annual report.

It is important to note that whilst it is no longer a requirement for partners to telephone the LADO service prior to making a referral, the LADO's continue to offer telephone advice and support when and where required as not all LADO related enquires will need a referral form completed.

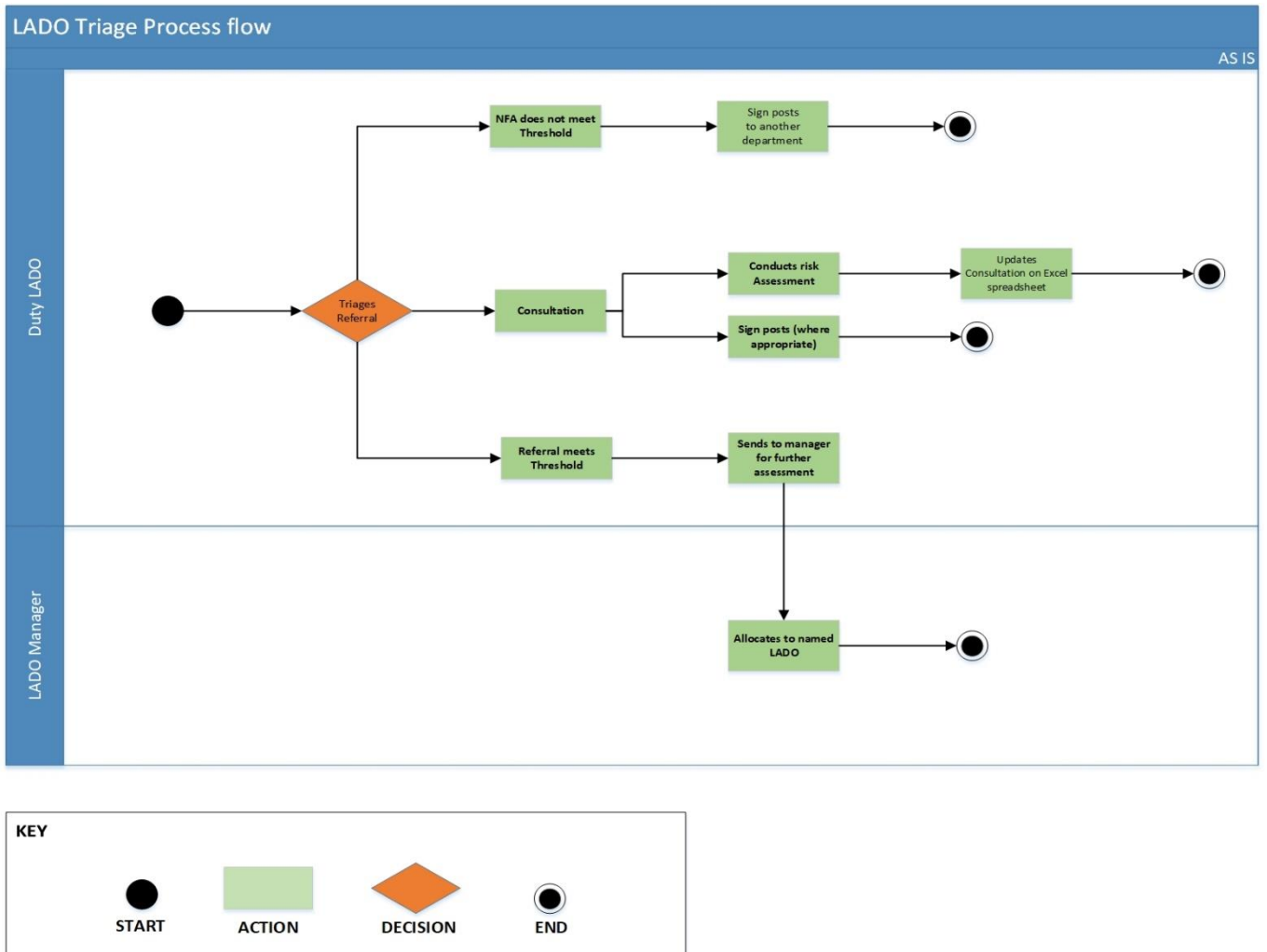
DUTY, TRIAGE AND ALLOCATION/CASELOAD:

Since September 2019, the LADO service has had an increase in staffing which has enabled the introduction of a duty LADO post as well as changes to the referral response and allocation of cases. These changes have meant that cases are screened, and threshold considered prior to allocation which in turn has meant that workloads are manageable and response times have shown considerable improvement.

Through the provision of additional staff capacity, the LADO service now has a dedicated duty LADO solely responsible for triaging all cases that come through the front door. The Duty LADO assesses each case not only to determine if it meets the LADO threshold at which point the case is passed to the manager for further assessment and allocation to one of the other LADO's, but also the duty LADO is responsible for addressing all matters needing immediate advice and or guidance under the category of consultation.

These cases are addressed and closed immediately where appropriate and where required, could be allocated to a LADO for monitoring and additional work.

The implementation of Triage Duty LADO has resulted in the number of referrals that are being dealt with as Consultation closed with no further action.



From September 2019 to date, there has been targeted work and focus on closing historical cases which have been opened to the service and agreement was given for additional staff for a 3 month period to support with this work. This work has also included undertaking audits on the cases that have recently been closed to the LADO service. This enabled a large number of cases to be closed from January to March and ongoing.

The focus of the audit was to ensure that the cases closed to LADO have the right outcomes and are not to achieve reduction in workload. The audit is also picking up on any significant trends and themes that will need to be further explored where required.

RECORDING AND TRACKING:

The LADO service currently operates a database used to record and store referrals in respect of allegations made against staff and volunteers. This is only accessible by the LADO's and administrative support. The historical method of recording meant that both cases meeting the LADO threshold and non-threshold cases were opened on the database and allocated to LADO's and uploaded on the LADO database.

From September 2019, non-threshold cases not recorded on the database. Consultations are captured and recorded separately to ensure that people's data and information are not kept unnecessarily in line with GDPR.

Further practice improvements have seen that the duty LADO is responsible for recording all contacts, consultations and referrals as well as allocations made within the service in a tracking tool that has been devised to ensure oversight of all open cases. This is captured and recorded daily and has helped to ensure that information and tracking is more effective.

Further measures to ensure effective tracking and capturing of LADO work will be implemented in the redesign of the planned LADO database, Liquid Logic. The Liquid Logic system which will enable a better functioning and effective recording system will also have a built-in timer which will be used to ensure that LADO's are prompted and reminded to follow up cases in a timely way to avoid drift. These updates to the LADO database within LCS will provide a robust and up to date tracking and recording function for the service.

AWARENESS RAISING/ TRAINING:

There has been an identified need to focus on work within the LADO service in regard to a programme of work around awareness training and knowledge of thresholds across partner agencies.

Surrey County council LADO service delivers five sets of three-monthly LADO training through the course of the year and this has been helpful in ensuring that people are aware of the LADO role and the need for referral to the LADO service.

The Programme consists of:

- Five sets of three-monthly LADO training through the course of the year and this has been helpful in ensuring that people are aware of the LADO role and the need for referral to the LADO service.
- In addition to the regular 5 annual LADO training sessions and as a result of the gap identified in the need for further understanding of the LADO threshold, the LADO Manager/Safeguarding Partnership Coordinator has delivered LADO training to over 200 Surrey staff and agencies since October 2019 to February 2020 but has also led on raising further awareness by exploring additional means of communication with both internal and external staff members.
- This has taken place by attending several team meetings and briefings within the Local Authority as well as with partner agencies including colleagues from Human Resources, Commissioning, council safeguarding meetings and forums. This has helped to provide, updates, support and clarity around the LADO threshold and role.
- Visits to some agencies identified as making a high level of contact and referrals to the LADO service have also taken place and will continue to take place to provide a shared understanding and support around thresholds and individual agency needs and structure.
- In addition to the above, the LADO made links with organisations such as Young Epilepsy and Jigsaw throughout November 2019, the purpose to assess/ review the reason behind the high number of referrals but also to establish a process of working and provision of support when cases don't meet the LADO threshold.

It is worth noting that sectors such as Jigsaw and Young Epilepsy are large organisations (Young Epilepsy who cater for 180 children from 0 to 25 years) but also work with children with additional needs and as such will have a higher than average percentage of allegations against staff. They have a staff capacity of 650 adults who work with children.

- The LADO is working closely with Surrey's fostering teams to take forward quarterly meetings to ensure effective information sharing and developing positive working relationships and to further support targeted awareness raising, the LADO will be providing additional training sessions for foster carers.

TRAINING WITHIN THE LADO SERVICE:

Improvements within the LADO service have seen the introduction of learning sessions since October 2019, these sessions take place on a monthly basis, the focus of these sessions have included the following:

- The updated referral process and LADO timescales for LADO's and administrative support.
- Understanding and refresher on thresholds to ensure that focus is on appropriate work in a timely and efficient manner.
- Ensuring recording is of a high standard which provides a detailed account for the level of enquiry as well as the actions identified through an Allegation Against Staff and Volunteers meeting.
- Understanding how to provide the most effective response to address cases involving multiple referrals in relation to the same setting.
- How best to respond to requests from information from HMI and SLT as well as the timescales of response. An agreed format to be agreed.
- These learning sets to include the Education Safeguarding Team to strengthen their knowledge around support required in relation to the LADO work and how they support with cases that don't meet the LADO threshold to progress more effectively.
- Review and revise the Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers LADO meeting process, templates and overall presentation to partners.

The impact of these learning sessions has seen a wider consistency in threshold application across the partnership and an increased confidence towards its application within the LADO service. This training and consultation will help to embed further consistency and good practice within the LADO service and will extend to the Education Safeguarding Service who work closely with the LADO service.

EDUCATION SAFEGUARDING TEAM UPDATE:

Further to the restructure, the Education Safeguarding Team is now positioned in the Quality Assurance division and comprises of 5 members of staff. 1 x Team manager, 3 x Education Safeguarding Advisors and 1 x Early Year's Advisor. All staff are permanent and provide support to Educational settings.

The Education Safeguarding Team provide statutory Designated Safeguarding Training (New to Role and Refresher Training (required bi-annually), Early Years Designated Safeguarding Training (New to Role and Refresher Training) for Education and Early Years settings. In addition, to this, they provide Working Together to Safeguard Children for Early Years Settings training, and training to Home Based Carers.

The Education Safeguarding Team also provides support, guidance, advice and challenge to Schools and Early Years settings and services within the Directorate to ensure that children are kept safe and their welfare is promoted, as required by Section 175 of the Education Welfare Act 2002.

The team facilitates and supports all education settings to complete termly audit data and an annual audit of their safeguarding practice to ensure they are being compliant with their statutory duties (s175/157 Audit). The current report is now completed.

The establishment of a duty system within the Education Safeguarding Team has enabled the team to support the LADO triage that will in turn support the overall effectiveness and timely delivery across the LADO and Safeguarding service.

AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR 2020- 2021:

Whilst the above changes and improvement within the LADO service continue to be embedded within the system, the LADO is mindful that ongoing work is required in the following areas:

- Establishing a more effective LADO database to ensure a more efficient recording system. The current proposal is the establishment of Liquid Logic.
Timescale proposed to have this in place is March 2021
- Continued meetings with Children's Services and the Police to explore and establish a more effective pathway to address Section 47 investigations and referrals requiring joint investigation with the police.
Timescale proposed to have this in place: November 2020.
- Ensuring that the Duty system is secure and that all cases continue to be responded to in a timely manner of 24 hours from the time of referral or contact.
Timescale proposed to have this in place: ongoing till March 2021.
- Ongoing monthly delivery of the LADO learning set. **Timescale proposed to have this in place: This is an ongoing piece of work and details of the learning set are shared in the body of this report.**
- Ongoing annual delivery of LADO training and awareness raising to partners as well as attendance of team meetings and available forums.
- The LADO will also work to ensure that at least 80% of the cases referred into the service are closed within a month of referral. This data will be captured and reported for the next annual report. **Timescale proposed to have this in place: ongoing till March 2021.**
- The Education Safeguarding Team will provide ongoing tailored/timely training, safeguarding learning reviews and support to Education sectors. They will continue to act as a link between Education and Safeguarding. **Timescale**

proposed to have this in place: ongoing and on demand through the course of the year.

- The Education Safeguarding Team will provide the required training for the DSL new to role and DSL refresher training for the year. **Dates proposed to have this in place: 7th September to 21st October (Full details and dates have been provided via the portal and academy).**
- The annual DSL network meeting. The plan is to hold the 2020 DSL network meeting on a virtual platform through Microsoft Teams making use of the breakout rooms to provide an interactive networking forum for DSL's and their peers. **Timescale proposed to have this in place: November 2020**

CONCLUSION:

The LADO is positive about the changes so far and the year ahead. The increased/timely level of response to referrals and the impact of the triage system to allegations and enquiries has been acknowledged as a positive system by many professionals both internally and externally.

In addition to increasing awareness within the professionals and organisations in Surrey, the Service continues to expand its link and working relationship within partners and other services within Children Social care to improve the standard of care enjoyed by the children within Surrey.

However, despite the progress and achievement made this year, the LADO acknowledges that there is still more work to be done and more sectors to reach. More collaborative work needs to be done with health, the police and voluntary organisations. This can be achieved by going out directly to meet with key leads of these sectors throughout the course of the year.

It is also envisaged that all the progress that has been made within the service will continue at an increased pace. Our plans are to reduce the caseload of each LADO to no more than 50 open cases in every given month to ensure a thorough and timely response to all referrals. With continuous training of partner agencies, and the improved understanding of the LADO role and Education Safeguarding, the service will continue to ensure the safety of the children of Surrey.

The LADO recommends that the information and details provided within this report is noted and that partners ensure that their respective services are aware of the LADO function and if not, arrange for the LADO to attend key forums within their various departments and organisations.

Mrs Rita Dada
LADO Manager / Safeguarding Partnership Co-ordinator