



INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S
SERVICES SAFEGUARDING,
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS &
QUALITY ASSURANCE

LADO ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

**Managing Allegations Against
Staff Within the Kent Children's
Workforce**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is the annual report of the County LADO Service (CLS) providing detail of allegation and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) activity notified within Kent during the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. It is written to provide statistical data for the KSCMP and partner agencies on the number, nature, investigation processes and outcomes of allegations. It also identifies trends and issues affecting the Kent children's workforce relating to the management of such allegations as well as matters pertinent to inter-agency working arrangements.

1.2 The CLS is underpinned by statutory guidance – Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018. This guidance sets out that Local Authorities should have a Designated Officer (LADO) to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against staff working within the Children's Workforce.

1.3 The definition of 'working with' children is an adult who is working or volunteering with children (anyone under the age of 18 years old) or coming into contact with children through work on a regular basis and would be seen as being in a position of trust over them. In addition, this would also apply to someone under 18 in the same position e.g. a 17-year-old teaching a musical instrument or instructing a group.

1.4 It is a requirement nationally for all employers within the children's workforce to have clear and robust procedures in place when responding to allegations against staff, whether they are paid or voluntary. Working Together, 2015 provided the Harm Threshold applied when an allegation is made against a member of the children's workforce and it is believed the individual has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, 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.

1.5 The CLS within Kent accepts referrals that meet the Harm Threshold and progresses these as allegations. CLS also accepts referrals assessed to sit just outside of this threshold around quality of care, professional conduct and practice – these are recorded as consultations. Both pathways taken following referral involve LADO oversight in equal measure. The CLS recognises consultations can often present staff patterns of behaviours and concerns that are no less important than tracking and addressing allegations. In doing so the CLS offers support and guidance to our stakeholders throughout.

1.6 To date nationally there has been no agreed data set or categories for how to record referrals into the LADO services. This is being addressed by the National LADO Network (NLN) within the proposed NLN Principles and hopefully will be agreed by the 2020-2021 annual reporting period. This makes comparisons with other Local Authorities difficult to undertake. A clear example of the differences can be noted around a member of staff's 'suitability' in the workplace. Kent, as explained above, accept these types of referrals as the concern is usually around professional conduct which may show a pattern of behaviour or private life issues which may indicate a transfer of risk. Some Local Authorities currently do not accept this category. However, the revised 2020 Keeping Children Safe in Education introduced a fourth category to the harm threshold – '*Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children*'. It is expected Working Together will adopt this into the harm threshold in September 2020.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE COUNTY LADO SERVICE

2.1 The CLS is in a stable and robust position. Although a slight change in staffing at the beginning of this reporting period, it resulted in the current team being strongly recruited providing improved consistency in service delivery. The CLS consists of a County LADO Manager, two Contact & Referral Officers and five LADOs.

2.2 The last year has enabled the CLS to address quality assurance both within the work afforded by the LADOs and those stakeholders it supports. There is vast improvement in how LADOs record their advice and guidance both for the referrers and within the electronic recording systems. Practice is in line with the Kent Practice Framework and evidences scoping, triangulation and analysis. There continues to be strong collaborative working practices and appropriate challenge and escalation of concerns. All LADOs are adept at addressing any practice or lessons to be learnt and regularly feedback to stakeholders to encourage development and support for employers.

3. WIDER WORK

3.1 The LADO's role is the management and oversight of individual allegations and concerns. Allegation management should be seen in the wider context of safer employment practices with 3 essential elements:

1. Safer recruitment and selection practices
2. Safer working practices
3. Management of allegations or concerns

3.2 The CLS provides consistent and appropriate scrutiny across diverse workforces and voluntary bodies including affording adjudication of outcomes and escalation of practice learning – both good and requiring improvement. The LADOs continue to play a vital and expanding role in ensuring safeguarding standards across the county in several other areas of work including:

- responding to requests from Ofsted for information towards inspection of residential provision in Kent (22).
- providing an enquiries service (289) to providers, partners, including other Local Authorities, members of the public, Independent Schools Inspections (15) and others on matters related to concerns about staff conduct and related procedure.
- responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) (3) and Subject Access Requests (SAR) (20), Fostering, OLA/IFA and safeguarding checks (as per the fostering and adoption regulations) (395).
- Developing lead roles within the CLS to build on knowledge and experience with our stakeholders.
- Deliver training to partner agencies and ICS:

TRAINING DELIVERED TO:	DATES OF TRAINING
KSCB LADO Need to know sessions	4 June 2019 10 September 2019
INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT LIMITED - delivered jointly with Medway LADO Manager	25 May 2019
KENT FOSTERING Service Meeting	8 January 2020
MILESTONE ACADEMY SLT	9 July 2019
EXCEL 2000 IFA	20 November 2019
POLIT	17 July 2019
IFA KENT & MEDWAY FORUM – delivered jointly with Medway LADO manager	9 May 2019
EARLY YEARS Dover	7 May 2019
Dover ICS	30 May 2019
DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE	17 April 2019 (West) 28 November 2019 (East)
SWALE ICS (Team meeting)	23 June 2020
FAIRLAWNS short break unit	12 February 2020
NQSW training	2 December 2019 16 September 2019 11 March 2020
EDUCATION SAFEGUARDING Conference	30 October 2019 12th June 2019 13th June 2019 19th June 2019 11th July 2019 (evening) 26 February 2020

3.3 These requests are all addressed within the statutory timescales and are dealt with procedurally with the aim of building a safer children's workforce across Kent.

3.4 Benchmarking with statistical neighbours - The manager attends the South East Regional Network Meetings and the National LADO Network (NLN) Group in order to continue with ensuring Kent holds the common definition of threshold, roles and responsibilities across borders. In addition, the manager is a member of an NLN task and finish group reviewing LADO principles and standards. There also continues to be frequent communication with other LADO services amongst the LADOs and this helps to understand bench marking and progression within LADO services. National discussions are around the proposed fourth harm threshold which Kent already implements, critiquing outcomes and future risk analysis. Kent will continue to engage in these forums and adapt processes where necessary to reflect current practice and national guidance.

3.5 LADO oversight and Timescales - This continues to be a fundamental part of the LADO role. The CLS works to the national guidance around length of times cases should be open and challenge stakeholders on length of investigations. The guides are that 80% of cases should be resolved within one month, 90% within three months and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within 12 months.

3.6 For this reporting year the LADOs closed 998, compared to 943 cases last year, having completed 42% (419) within a month and 73% (733) within 3 months. The LADO oversight and timings are addressed within supervision and auditing. It is hoped the service will receive an electronic reporting system soon to assist with improving this process.

3.7 Feedback - The CLS introduced a feedback form and was recently updated. The feedback form is available for all settings online via KSCMP and KELSI, is sent out by the Contact & Referral officer at the start of the process and requested by the LADO at the end of the process. The CLS values the feedback and uses any comments for learning and development both of individuals and for the service as a whole. The return of these forms since its implementation during this reporting year was low 4% (47). A high majority of the feedback was positive often rating the service 9 or 10/10 on guidance and support.

4. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

	RECOMMENDATIONS	PURPOSE	UPDATE
1.	Development of quarterly management meetings with colleagues in the Disabled Childrens Service and promoting the role of the lead LADO in this field.	To review referrals, analyse data and highlight themes and or practice matters to be addressed. Lead LADO to support and offer bespoke training when appropriate both to the DCYPS and to the settings commissioned to enhance allegation management and strengthen safer recruitment.	This is now in place, the only change has been the lead LADO, there is a plan for this role to be reintroduced over the 2020 summer/autumn period following recent disruption through the Covid 19 pandemic.
2.	The County LADO Manager to join the National LADO Network (NLN) to represent Kent and the South East	To keep abreast of national objectives.	This is in place and the County LADO Manager is a member of the working group reviewing the draft NLN principles.
3.	The County LADO Manager will, over the next 12 months review links to all faith groups , including development of links to Mosques and Gurdwaras	To ensure LADO information and procedures are accessible to diverse groups (including voluntary services).	This is still in its infancy and requires further development.
4.	A rolling programme of LADO updates to the Integrated Children's Services.	To enhance ongoing knowledge of allegation management and share lessons learnt.	This is in place and ongoing.
5.	The County LADO Manager will over the next 12 months improve relationships with the Health Service.	To develop an understanding of allegation management within the various departments under health. It is hoped management meetings can be established to encourage review and scrutiny of data and themes.	This is in its infancy but is being progressed.
6.	Implementation of Position of Trust Meetings.	To bring Kent in line with similar practice carried out by LADOs nationally.	Launched and currently within a 6 – 9-month pilot phase – due to be reviewed September 2020.
7.	Electronic referrals in place via the Children's Autonomy Portal by 2020.	Online referral process with tracking and auditing ability.	This is delayed for the County LADO Service as the launch of this

8.	<p>Strengthening and review of KCC Foster Carer allegations process and learning. Rolling programme of LADO need to know sessions to Fostering Teams to be agreed for the next 12 months. Establishing management meetings with Fostering service in order to continue with oversight of service allegations by Summer 2019.</p>	<p>Update of process and guidance around referrals and evaluation meetings.</p>	<p>This has been completed and is ongoing.</p>
9.	<p>Contacts into the service will be tracked to be able to report in the next annual report.</p>	<p>To provide date on additional work into the CLS and to provide data on how many contacts did not result in a case being progressed or in the referrer submitting a referral.</p>	<p>Complete and data is provided within this report.</p>
10.	<p>Quality Assurance Auditing Framework will be implemented Summer 2019.</p>	<p>The CLS will be part of the process and undertaking peer to peer audits.</p>	<p>Now in place and due to commence Autumn 2020.</p>

5. STATISTICAL REPORT

5.1 Demand on the Service - The CLS continued to receive a high volume of referrals during this reporting period. The total number of referrals progressed in the CLS from 1st April 2019 - 31st March 2020 was **1185** which is slightly up from the previous reporting year (1169). The CLS managed 582 formal **allegations** against the children's workforce in Kent. This represents an increase from the previous year by 172 (42%). There were 515 **consultations** which represents a decrease of 147 and 88 '**for information only**' cases.

5.2 The CLS during this reporting period recorded 2521 **contacts** resulting in LADOs requesting 869 referrals. Of those it is believed 23% (572) of requested referrals were received. However, there needs to be some caution around the numbers as contacts do not have identifying details of members of staff and cross referencing with referrals is not consistently accurate.

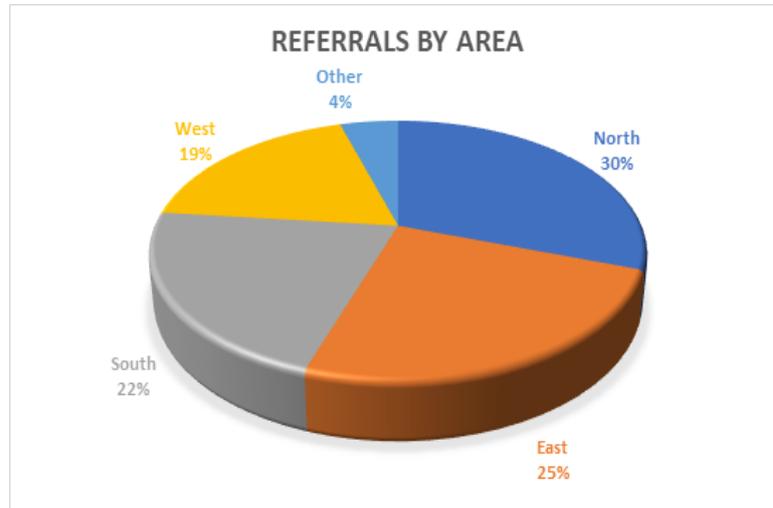
5.3 Statistically, based on these figures, the CLS is currently managing an average of 23 new referrals per week. This on average breaks down to 11 allegations, 10 consultations and 2 for information only cases per week.

5.4 Kent records allegations against staff who have met the Harm Threshold. In addition, the CLS records consultations which mainly relate to staff conduct issues which overall tend to be passed back to employers to manage as practice or competence issues rather than formal allegations. Some of these consultations will have an internal investigation or disciplinary process. They are no less important than allegations and can often take as much time as allegation investigations.

5.5 It can be misleading to focus only on the number of new allegations referred to the LADOs each year. This does not provide a full and accurate picture of LADO **caseloads** as there are always cases remaining open from the previous year(s) which the LADO monitors and continues to work on. This is more often due to lengthy / complex criminal investigations (especially POLIT cases) and waiting for court slots. At the beginning of this reporting period the individual caseloads were incredibly high reaching in excess of 250 cases. Some of this was a result of staffing changes and throughput of work. The caseloads now are much healthier, and it would be expected that the highest caseload would be around 85, this does fluctuate but should be reduced within suitable timeframes. The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic at the very end of this reporting period enabled LADOs to reduce their workload initially and they are now beginning to see a steady increase in work as would be expected.

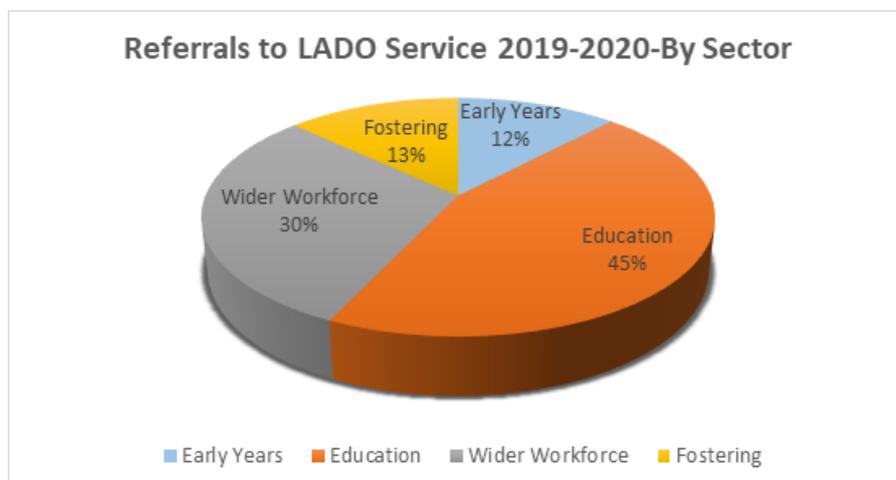
6. ALLEGATIONS DEMOGRAPHICS

6.1 Referrals by Area



6.2 Historically, most of the referrals received into the CLS derived from the East where there is a high concentration of both residential children’s homes and independent fostering agencies (IFA’s). This year’s data shows a slight shift to the north of the county which reflects the restructure in ICS whereby Swale is now aligned with North. A proportionate balance between the West (includes the North) (581) and the East (includes the South) (557) suggests multiagency are applying consistent thresholds to make enquiries with the service.

6.3 Referrals by Sector

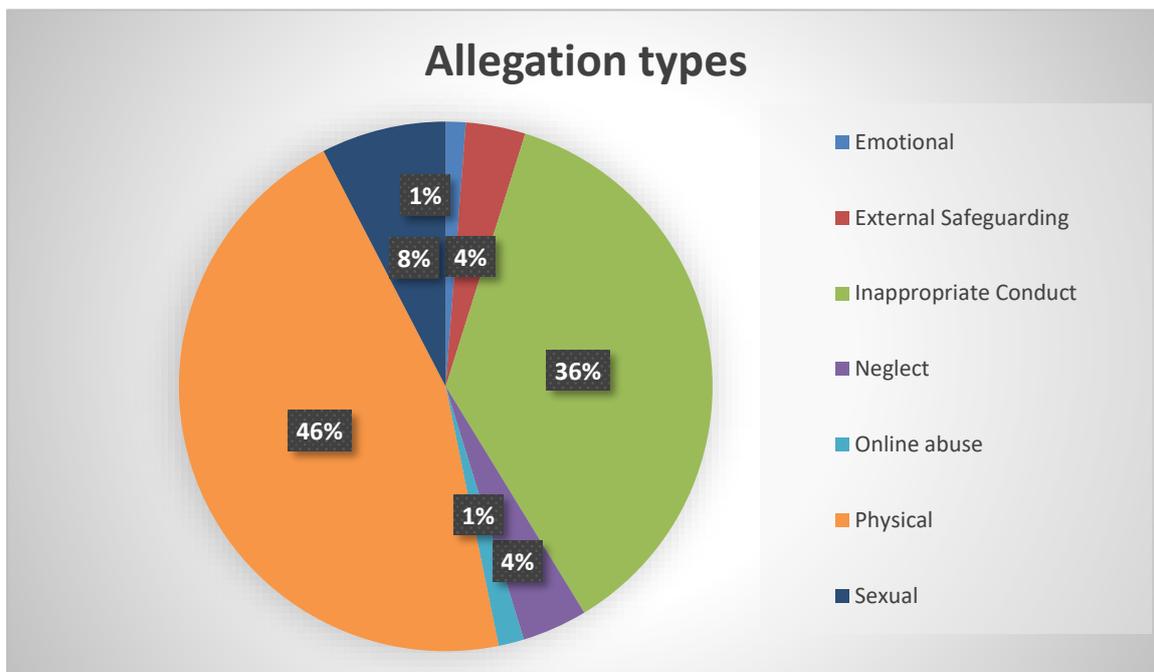


6.4 Recording the wider source of referrals to the CLS comes under four broad headings – Education, Early Years, Wider Workforce and Fostering. The statistical distribution of these allegations indicates education services account for 531 of the 1185 which is the same representation from the previous year’s data. 143 came from the early years sector, 360 from the Wider Workforce and the remaining 151 from Fostering. This distribution indicates a broad parity with the previous three year’s figures (with another small increase from the Early Years sector of 3%). Health referrals increased again this year from 26 to 57.

6.5 Children and Young People Whilst the CLS primarily records information about the member of staff it also records key data about the child and young person (if known) involved in the allegation. As seen from the figures below data currently relating to CP/CIN/EH categories are not recorded.

Reason	Number	Percentage
Child in Care Kent	143	13
Child in Care OLA	185	16
Historical/no longer CIC	23	2
SEN/disabled children	343	29

6.6 Allegation Types



6.7 The data demonstrates inappropriate conduct and physical abuse, which includes physical intervention, are the highest types of abuse across the allegations received into the CLS for all the sectors. This mirrors last year’s data. The staff most likely to have allegations made against them will be those working with children directly and often for significant periods of the day. For these staff, the need to understand and work within the basic rules of professional safe working practice is crucial to protect both children and staff. Staff understanding and responses to challenges presented by children suffering trauma needs to be reinforced by positive behaviour management techniques and organisational cultures. The LADOs continue to remain vigilant and use professional curiosity to explore this with providers.

7. OUTCOMES

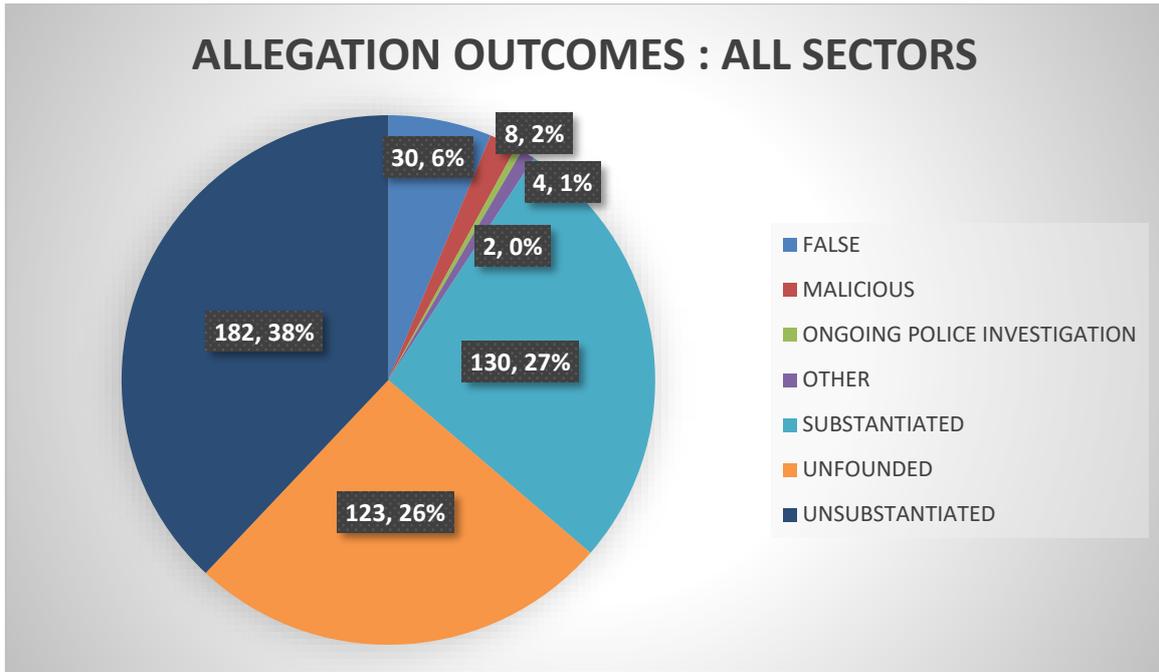
7.1 There are a variety of routes that an allegation might take after it is referred to the CLS. There may be a Section 47 enquiry if there is a risk the child involved might have suffered or be at risk of suffering serious harm, and/or police investigation if the alleged perpetrator may have committed a criminal offence, internal investigation and/or disciplinary procedures instigated by the organisation for which the alleged perpetrator works.

7.2 It is a requirement the LADO involved in a case is informed of the final outcome of the allegation (by the police and/or employer) and an agreement reached on how this will be recorded. Final outcomes are recorded as:

- **Substantiated** – there is sufficient identifiable information to prove the allegation – this did happen. Employer to refer to DBS
- **False** – there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Malicious** – there is clear evidence to prove there was a deliberate act to deceive and the allegation was entirely false
- **Unfounded** – there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It might indicate the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw, alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances
- **Unsubstantiated** - An unsubstantiated allegation is not the same as a false allegation. It means there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

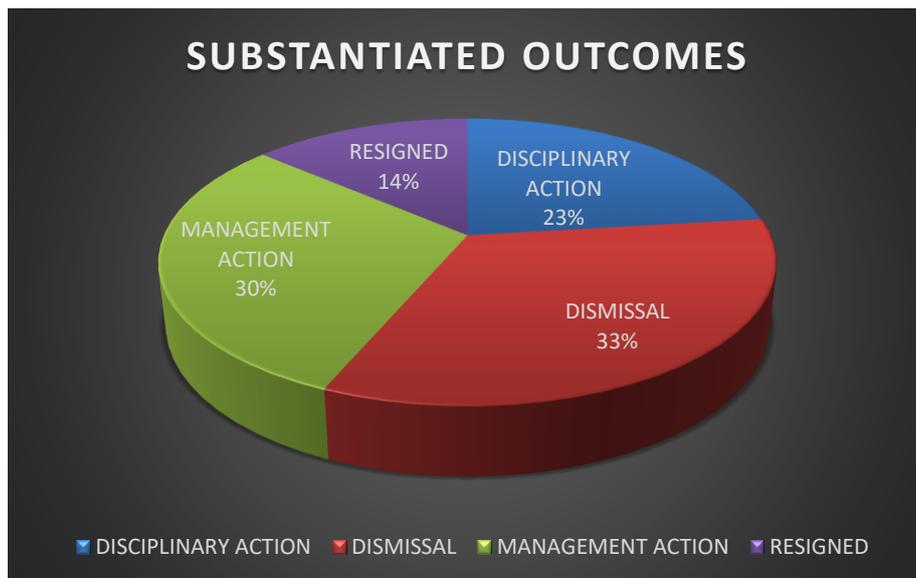
7.3 There were 473 allegation outcomes in this reporting period of which 128 were substantiated seeing an increase of 55 from the previous year's data. The highest category is 182 unsubstantiated (allegations) (an increase of 69). Unsubstantiated outcomes tend to present a dilemma for both the LADO and the employer as it does not imply guilt or innocence. This leaves unanswered questions and possibly an on-going risk to be monitored over time. The CLS helped stakeholders when a member of staff was subject to several allegations which concluded as unsubstantiated in identifying patterns of concern, particularly if staff moved between settings. In such situations, the LADO ensures relevant sharing of information within appropriate safeguarding and data-sharing procedures with the DBS.

ALLEGATION OUTCOMES : ALL SECTORS



7.4 Education and the Wider Workforce resulted in the most members of staff (E24) (WW20) either being dismissed or resigning following a substantiated outcome, about 12% of all allegations within these sectors. Early Years resulted in 23% (11) and Fostering 6% (4). In this reporting year there were 61 staff referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration of on-going professional suitability. This process is mandatory and the responsibility of the employer with a duty to refer where staff were either dismissed or resigned because of allegations which concluded risk to children. The disparity between figures of actual referral and staff who either resigned or were dismissed is best explained by the fact some members of staff who resigned would not have been dismissed had disciplinary hearings completed. Allegations may not have been so significant as to conclude dismissal for gross misconduct, even though elements of allegations were proven. Out of these there were 4 criminally prosecuted.

SUBSTANTIATED OUTCOMES



7.5 The CLS has the option to hold an Evaluation Meeting where an unsubstantiated allegation or a complex case can be further debated with a decision being reached on the balance of probability rather than beyond all reasonable doubt. These offer an additional quality and assurance role offered by the CLS often highlighting lessons learnt for all involved. Within this reporting period the CLS convened 15 Evaluation meetings and 12 professional's meetings which is slightly up on the previous year.

7.6 The CLS introduced a pilot for **Position of Trust (POT)** Meetings commencing January 2020 and held 4 in the 3 months of reporting. The CLS identified in the June 2017 Annual LADO report the plan to introduce LADO led strategy discussions or 'Position of Trust' (POTs) meetings over the coming year. The proposal was approved and signed off and during two Ofsted inspections/visits the proposal was discussed and approved of by inspectors who recognised the benefits these would bring to the smooth running of allegation management. There was a delay in the implementation until this reporting year.

7.7 As raised in the 2017 Annual report, this report identifies there are many referrals requiring a level of negotiation with the police and CSWS around threshold to maintain a proportionate and balanced response. Difficulties arise across the county due to its size around variations in responses to allegations by the CSWS which resulted in some cases going through for a section 47 process prior to engagement with the CLS and without full knowledge or understanding of the LADO function or threshold negotiation.

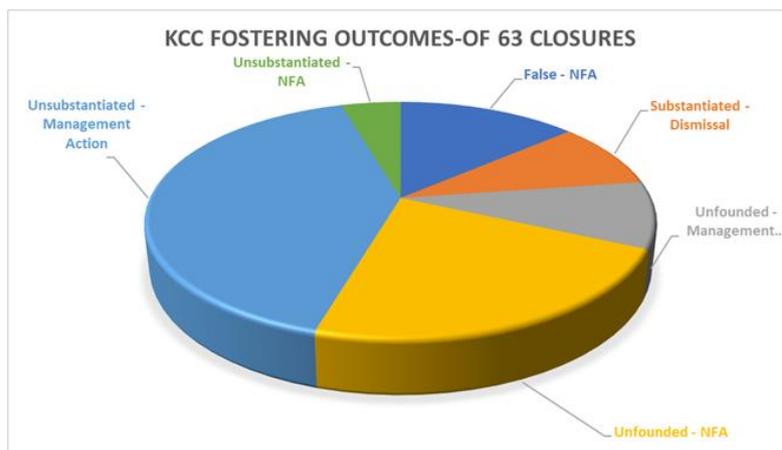
7.8 The pilot is primarily around holding POT meetings when there is an allegation made against a member of staff and when a referral was directly received into the CLS. It is in place to give the LADOs a period to embed the meetings and build on them. This process is due to be reviewed this autumn and will look at realigning them with the evaluation meetings, hopefully removing the need for professionals' meetings and reviewing the strategy discussion route.

8. SECTORS

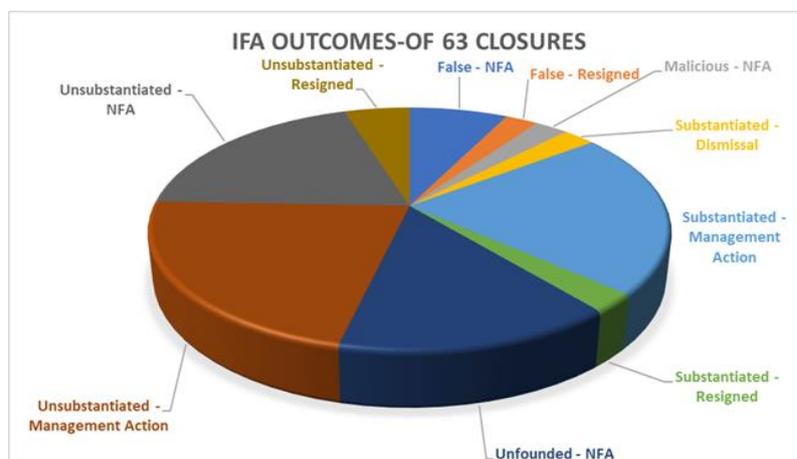
8.1 Fostering Allegations - Kent continues to experience high volumes of children placed in the county from other Local Authorities. This is largely due to the high numbers of independent fostering agencies within the county. As identified in previous reports, the CLS receives referrals in this category regarding children who are vulnerable and unsettled. This increased contact with children increases the susceptibility of allegations against professionals who are there to care for them. It is also known staff experience difficulties with managing challenging behaviours within increased escalation when occurring within the homes. De-escalation and positive handling of children is often identified as a skills vulnerability within the staffing group.

8.2 The CLS received 151 referrals in this category with the IFAs holding the biggest proportion at 63% (96). Of these 58% (88) related to allegations: 33% (29) are KCC fostering and 67% (59) IFA. Whilst allegations relating to physical harm or intervention remain high as in previous reporting years, we have seen in this reporting period inappropriate conduct being the highest category 34% (30), this has broken down to 6 KCC fostering and 24 IFA.

8.3 The CLS continues to work closely with KCC Fostering and maintained joint oversight to the allegations and processes to ensure foster carers are providing consistent standards of care and work within clear safeguarding expectations. Out of the allegations made against Kent Foster Carers, only 2 were substantiated resulting in the carers being deregistered.



8.4 It is a very similar picture with the IFA data as shown below. IFAs had 11 cases substantiated of which resulted in 1 resignation and 1 deregistration.



9. Education

9.1 There have been 531 referrals (increase of 10) of which 47% (252) were allegations reported against education staff including staff covering transport services on behalf of the Education Department, school volunteers, ICT Technicians and site staff. Education continues to provide 45% of the referrals into the CLS which is expected as Kent has 586 schools, 457 of which are primary, 99 secondary, 23 Special and 6 Pupil Referral Units. There is also one mainstream through school. Of these, 261 are academies and 325 are maintained by the LA. In addition, there are 57 Independent Schools.

9.2 As with last year's data the primary school age sector remains the highest referrer at 37%. The CLS received 123 referrals about special schools of which there was a slight increase and 55 referrals from Independent schools. However, there does need to be a warning around these figures as some schools would meet more than one category i.e. secondary and independent.

9.3 There is a continuation of allegations mainly falling under physical/physical intervention (120) and inappropriate conduct (98) as being the highest categories. Allegations regarding a physical nature are at 48% which is on a par with last year's data. The CLS closed 201 of the 252 allegations within the education sector which equates to 80% (up by 20% on last year). The outcomes were mainly within the unsubstantiated category equalling 41% (82) followed by substantiated of which there were 26% (52) with 17 members of staff being referred to the DBS.

9.4 The CLS continues to manage allegations mainly against classroom/teaching staff 36% (194) and 33% (176) are linked to Teaching Assistants & Support Staff within education. 4% are made against education-linked transport staff which is a similar figure to last year, 3% against site staff (caretakers etc) which is a slight increase and 6% against midday supervisors.

9.5 Allegation referrals within Education continue to feature both Head Teachers, 7% (38) and school Governors – less than 1% (3). The CLS continues to work closely with our colleagues in education ensuring safer recruitment practices, role modelling and allegation management is consistently on the agenda and modelled throughout the education provisions from the top down. This year we have seen 7 referrals relating to trainee staff/student placements albeit not all in education.

10. Early Years

10.1 It is encouraging to see another slight increase of referrals from this sector from 9% to 12% as the CLS worked hard over this reporting period with its colleagues in this sector to raise awareness of allegation management. Across Kent there are 770 Early Years and Childcare Settings and c 1,200 childminders.

10.2 There was an increase of 32 referrals regarding Early Years staff totalling 143. 28 of the referrals related to Child Minders which is an increase on last year to almost 20% of which the majority related to inappropriate conduct. 36% (49) of the referrals were recorded as allegations with a large proportion relating to physical abuse 31% (15) and an increase in allegations of inappropriate conduct 39% (19). This is a similar reflection on the previous year's data.

10.3 The CLS closed 47 of the 49 allegations within the early years sector which equates to 96%. The outcomes were mainly within the substantiated category equalling 40% (19) followed by unsubstantiated of which there were 25% (12) with 11 members of staff being referred to the DBS (double from last year) and 1 facing a criminal prosecution.

11. Wider Workforce

11.1 There have been 360 referrals of which 53% (193) were allegations reported against staff holding positions within the wider children's workforce. This sector ranges from grass root sports clubs through to residential/care sectors, Police, Health and ICS amongst others. The wider workforce continues to provide 30% of the referrals into the CLS which is consistent over the past few years.

11.2 Referrals relating to the residential/care sectors remain the highest within this sector at 45% and breaking down to 114 (59%) of the allegations. This is to be expected within the Kent demographics due to the sheer volume of settings in the county.

11.3 The highest category in the wider workforce was physical abuse 46% (89) followed by inappropriate conduct 34% (65). There is a slight increase with inappropriate conduct otherwise the figures follow the same trajectory as the last annual reporting. The CLS closed 162 of the 193 allegations within the wider workforce sector which equates to 84%. The outcomes mirrored last year's data with mainly outcomes being in the unsubstantiated category equalling 37% (60) followed by Substantiated of which there were 28% (46) with 32 members of staff being referred to the DBS and 3 facing criminal prosecutions.

12. Police

12.1 An area of focus has been on referrals made in relation to serving police officers and those referred from Police in relation to members of staff within the children's workforce. There were 15 referrals regarding serving police officers in the Kent Police Force which is an increase of 9 from the previous reporting year. This is an improved picture which may in part be a result of the CLS ensuring over the last year that allegation referrals are clearly recorded in relation to substantive roles as opposed to additional/volunteer roles. It was noted in the previous reporting year that, although some Police Officers were referred to the CLS, they were identified by their additional roles within the workforce, such as football coach, rather than Police Officer.

12.2 There were a further 15 contacts regarding police officers whereby not all met the LADO threshold and 2 were in relation to the Met Police. This is encouraging as it demonstrates a growing understanding of allegation management and suggests some of the publicity work is making a difference. However, there is still a long way to go but the CLS has an established positive relationship with Kent Police and believes further improvement is likely.

12.3 Police referred 70 members of staff from the children's workforce, 9 of which were made by POLIT. Out of these, 21 were recorded as an allegation. This is slightly down on the previous year's data which logged 91 referrals.

Allegation Types from Police/POLIT referrals:

	External Safeguarding Issue	Inappropriate Conduct	Online safety & abuse	Physical	Risk by Association	Sexual	Total
Police	3	6	3	3	1	3	19
POLIT	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Total	3	6	4	3	1	4	21

12.4 Health - The CLS received 57 referrals across health which includes GPs, Hospitals and Mental Health of which 40% (23) were allegations. Inappropriate conduct was the highest category resulting in 7 concluding as substantiated. 3 members of staff were dismissed and 1 was taken through disciplinary procedures.

13. KEY THEMES AND CONCLUSIONS

13.1 This year's annual data is a testament to the strong and effective multiagency working relationships the LADOs hold and a reflection of the growing scope and importance of the CLS within Kent. There is a consistency in numbers and application of threshold evident in this year's reporting. The increases in allegations across from the multiagency is encouraging and reflects the impact of a stable workforce and hard work undertaken in promoting the CLS and allegation management across the vast children's workforce. The CLS responded in the previous reporting year to verbal requests for stakeholders to be able to 'talk' to a LADO prior to referral by providing the LADO Enquiries Officer and the response to this is borne out in the figures with the use of this service. However, an area to focus on and address over the coming year is accountability on settings to complete referrals once they have been advised to do so by the LADO enquiries officer as the follow up to this by employers is low.

13.2 The development of the CLS is still underway and is always willing to adapt and learn from all areas to formulate a robust and proportionate service. The close working with other LADO services and the link to the NLN is key in this process as well as reviewing Kent's own mechanisms and practice. A drive, as seen across most services, is the importance of gathering user feedback and reflecting on auditing and lessons learnt through evaluation meetings. Kent's practice framework is used and the LADOs scoping, triangulation of information, guidance and adjudication is present in all cases. However, the CLS intends to build on this and provide its stakeholders with clear guidance and support with the ability to challenge LADOs and accept LADOs escalating practice concerns within their own settings.

13.3 Contextual safeguarding is embedded in LADO practice but the ability to share information and collate broader pictures of settings with partner agencies could be developed further. This is not in relation to individual staff members but as a provider overall. For example, sharing information around perceived cultures within settings or concerns around wider safeguarding processes. These 'pen pictures' are often requested and provided to Ofsted and it may be appropriate to share similar information in relation to commissioned services or for the CLS to track providers/settings to identify or rule out any concerns.

13.4 Training and presentations are an integral part of promoting the importance of allegation management. The delivery adapts to service needs and updates regularly to reflect national changes or address feedback from stakeholders. Currently inclusion of advice around internal investigation reports is being added and there will be a need to update on the changes within Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. There continues to be established management meetings with key stakeholders - Police, Fostering, Front Door, Transport, The Education People (EY & Schools). Alongside this the LADO feedback via 'lessons learnt' is impacting on managing risk, referrals into the service and overall understanding of allegation management. The development of lead roles amongst the LADOs is in place to enhance networking and knowledge e.g. Adolescent Mental Health. Over the last reporting period the impact of links within Early Years was positive.

13.5 There was an increase across all the sectors in referrals relating to inappropriate conduct. An explanation for this can be the impact of the awareness raising of the LADO role and the shared responsibility for everyone to safeguard and not accept poor standards of conduct. The CLS continues to be contacted by all stakeholders on a regular basis to discuss suitability and conduct issues of those staff working within the children's workforce. Areas noted are when members of staff have a pattern of concern or escalating risk and a lack of insight. Typical examples were not maintaining professional boundaries, use of inappropriate or derogatory language and or demeaning / aggressive conduct, not following safeguarding procedures and use of personal mobile phones and or social media accounts.

This is a category likely to increase now there is a fourth threshold of harm – ‘Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children’.

13.6 This reporting year there were several student placements referred into the CLS compared to last year where none were recorded. Despite the numbers not being high (7), this is believed to reflect agencies becoming more aware of and working much closer to the CLS around suitability and transfer of risk.

13.7 Unregulated provision and peripatetic workers still cause some challenge both to the CLS and to LADOs nationally. Determining allegation management when technically staff are not employed but overseen by a Governing body was difficult in establishing a balanced, robust process and accountability. Unregulated providers are a focus nationally and it is hopeful that more guidance will be published centrally but one of the biggest issues is the high staff turnover and lack of regulation.

13.8 Moving forward the CLS are still awaiting the implementation of the Childrens Autonomy Portal for the referral form as it is hoped to have a positive impact on referral rates. Alongside this the potential for the CLS to have an electronic statistical reporting system is still in the planning and will help to accurately track and analyse data. In this reporting period the progression of cases through to closure significantly improved and having a system tracking timescale will add to this process. The CLS still has some way to go to improve and meet the guidelines.

13.9 It is evidenced through this report that Kent’s children continue to be heard when concerns are raised, and allegations and complaints are taken seriously and investigated appropriately in line with guidance and procedure. The report demonstrates Kent’s wider children’s’ workforce has an increased knowledge of the role of the LADO borne out by consistent referrals from the wider workforce sectors.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

	RECOMMENDATIONS	PURPOSE
1.	Review the electronic recording system for allegation management.	Bring the fields in line with Kent's Practice framework and enable LADOs to record rationales, guidance, escalation, adjudication and learning coherently in various fields to enable reporting in the future and assist with auditing.
2.	Statistical reporting mechanisms to be available electronically. To build into this key data such as CIN/CP/EH.	Current data analysis is completed manually. Kent aim to introduce Power BI to afford the CLS with electronic reporting abilities.
3.	Track and report on practice Escalations across the workforce from April 2021.	Provides evidence of LADO challenge and actions taken feeding into the wider learning of the CLS and its stakeholders.
4.	The County LADO Manager will continue to review links to all faith groups , including development of links to Mosques and Gurdwaras	To ensure that LADO information and procedures are accessible to diverse groups (including voluntary services).
5.	The CLS promoting the feedback forms across the children's workforce.	To be aware of how the service is received, to know the positives and to build on and address any areas of weakness.
6.	The County LADO Manager will continue to improve/develop relationships with the Health and Mental Health Service .	To develop an understanding of allegation management within the various departments under health. It is hoped management meetings can be established to encourage review and scrutiny of data and themes.
7.	The performance of completing allegation management within the stated timeframes – 80% 1mth and 90% 3mths to be improved.	The CLS works to the national guidance around length of times cases should be open and challenge stakeholders on length of investigations.
8.	Maintain quarterly management meetings with colleagues in the Disabled Childrens Service to review referrals, analyse data and highlight themes and or practice matters to be addressed .	Continue to develop working relationship and understanding of practice issues, plan a Communities of Practice event and supporting material.
9.	CLS to promote the practice framework and models/approaches of practice throughout the allegation management process.	CLS is able to demonstrate they are referencing the practice framework and areas such as trauma informed practice, restorative practice and contextual safeguarding in their recording.
10.	Tracking of employers who are advised to make a referral via the LEO process .	Action is taken to ensure accountability for completing necessary referrals is clear and timely. The launch of the Children's Autonomy Portal will assist in this process.
11.	Employer/setting concerns to be tracked and recorded within the CLS within the allegation management electronic recording system.	To afford contextual safeguarding against settings to be recorded such as cultural concerns, wider learning needed, safer recruitment issues and so on to allow the CLS to provide a stronger overview of stakeholders' allegation management processes and responses.

Ali Watling (County LADO Manager)

Statistical data provided by Emma Cumberbatch (Contact & Referral Officer)

July 2020