

Children and Families Services

Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement Service

Managing Allegations Service End of Year Report 2022/23

Purpose of the report

1. This is an annual report written for the Safeguarding Assurance and Information Group and the lead member for Children and Young People. It provides an outline of the progress of, and the challenges faced by the Managing Allegations Service during the year April 2022 to March 2023.
2. I am the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) and Service Manager for the Managing Allegations Service. I have line management responsibility for the LADO Allegations Officers and the Team Manager of the Managing Allegations Team of Social Workers and strategic oversight of wider safeguarding concerns arising in the children's workforce in Nottinghamshire.

Our Statutory Duties

The statutory duties of the LADO and the corresponding requirements on partner agencies are set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

3. Local Authorities are required to:
have arrangements to provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations and agencies on how to deal with allegations against people who work with children;
 - have a designated officer, or team of officers to be involved in the **management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children**. Any such officer, or team of officers, should be sufficiently qualified and experienced to be able to fulfil this role effectively, for example, qualified social workers;
 - have appropriate arrangements in place to liaise effectively with the police and other organisations and agencies to **monitor the progress of cases** and ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process;
 - ensure allegations against people who work with children are not dealt with in isolation and that actions are taken to **address the corresponding welfare concerns in relation to the child** or children involved in a co-ordinated manner and without delay.
4. Partner agencies are required to **have clear policies** in place to deal with allegations against people who work with children and arrangements to ensure that any **allegations** about those who work with children **are passed to the designated officer, or team of officers, without delay**. Such policies should make clear distinctions between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice and a complaint e.g. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 for schools.

Governance

5. The Managing Allegations Service reports annually to the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) through the Safeguarding Assurance and Improvement Group. Allegations relating to Nottinghamshire Children in Care are also reported directly to a cross-party group of Elected Members.
6. The LADO and LADO Allegation Officers attend the Regional LADO Meeting to share good practice, develop effective cross border communication and maintain a level of consistency in the work undertaken.

7. The National LADO Network is currently working with Department for Education to develop a LADO Handbook to promote a shared understanding of the role of the LADO and the scope of the work to be addressed.

Managing Allegations Service (MAS)

Scope of the work

8. All allegations and concerns, contemporaneous and non-recent*, against adults who work or volunteer with children.

*Non-recent abuse refers to an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse made by or on behalf of someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident which took place when the complainant was under 18 years old.

9. The threshold for referring an allegation/concern, contemporaneous and non-recent, to LADO is set out in WT2018 and KCSIE 2022 :
 - Behaved in way that has harmed a child, 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 s/he may pose a risk of harm to children; or
 - Behaved or may behave in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
10. There are three strands to the management of allegations against adults or volunteers who work with children :
 - Protection of children
 - Criminal investigation
 - Employment/disciplinary process

How we work

11. The Managing Allegations Service offers a comprehensive service to all professionals who work with children and young people, the service is well received and valued by those who have contact with it. Over the last four years there has been a consistent increase in demand particularly for the LADO Allegations Officers but through audit work we are confident that the referrals are appropriate and the work of the LADO Allegations Officers effective. (see paragraph 22).
12. The Managing Allegations Service aims to :
 - provide a proportionate response to concerns referred;
 - gain assurance that the child(ren) linked to the adult of concern are safeguarded;
 - gain assurance that a duty of care is offered to the adult of concern;
 - offer a fair process to the linked children and the adults of concern.
13. The Service works closely with Employers, Nottinghamshire and other Local Authorities and Police colleagues and aims to progress referrals in a timely manner. In some situations, lengthy police investigations have resulted in processes continuing for longer than expected, this proves difficult for the child, the adult of concern and the employer and can result in strained relationships. While case by case discussions are undertaken with police colleagues, further exploration through the Partnership may be beneficial.
14. In Nottinghamshire, and nationally, the child(ren) and adults of concern do not attend the MA meetings. A Social Worker from MAS is allocated to the child(ren) and the adult of concern, meets with them and conveys their views to the meeting. This practice, in respect of the adult, has been

queried in the light of 'natural justice' and strengths-based practice, given this, consideration is being given to whether the process should be amended to ensure those adults involved experience a fair process.

15. This is a complex and challenging area of work with the outcome of the process having a significant and potential long-term impact on the adult involved. The service has previously received a high number of complaints some of which have been complex and protracted. As a result, we have focused on improving practice to ensure the allegations are specific and evidence-based and decision making is clearly recorded. While this area will by nature continue to attract complaints, it is pleasing to note a reduction in complaints in the current period. (see 2.9 pages 8,9)
16. This year we held the first Managing Allegations Practice day in conjunction with the Independent Chair's Service and we plan to continue development work particularly in relation to our value base and best practice in the service. This work will focus initially on making the redacted output from meetings more accessible to the adults involved.

Our achievements and challenges in 2022/23

Training and Workforce Development

17. The MAS remains a fairly new service, 2022/23 is the second full year of operation, and we continue to develop our practice. January 2023 saw our first Managing Allegations Practice Day joint with the designated Independent Chairs. An NCC Solicitor gave valuable guidance on clarifying the allegations made by children and a professor from Nottingham University's School of Forensic Psychology gave useful insights into adults who groom and abuse children.
18. The Managing Allegations eLearning was launched in November 2022 as first stage training provided by the NSCP. Work with NSCP to develop Stage 2 Multi Agency training will begin in 2023/24 now Stage 1 is embedded. MAS has developed and delivered training to ASYEs and Foster Carers annually and further role specific briefings and training is delivered to Social Work Teams on request.
19. An electronic leaflet explaining the MA service and the Employer's responsibilities has been developed and will soon be ready for release.

Priorities from 2021/22

20. **Understand and address the increase in work being managed by the LADO Allegations Officers.**

This has been a priority throughout 2022/23 and several methods have been employed to understand this increase in work. An online referral form has been developed and came into operation in April 2023, while initial views are positive the full benefits will be reported in the next financial year. The results of a LADO Audit confirmed the challenges were a continued increase in demand rather than ineffective practice and there were some good examples of practice by the LADO Allegation Officers. They also regularly receive positive feedback from partner agencies.

Given the outcome of the above measures and the further increase in the LADO AOs workload seen in the current data 2022/23, a business case will be made to increase the capacity of the LADO AO function.

21. **Complete the LADO Audit process and incorporate learning to improve practice.**
See 22 above. Audit findings relating to more efficient case notes will be incorporated into practice.
22. **Develop further the reporting format and the BI reporting facility.**
We continue to work with BI colleagues to develop the reporting facility.

23. Develop a Multi-Agency Managing Allegations Briefing with NSCP partners.

Now the Managing Allegations eLearning is embedded, this next stage briefing will be a priority for this year.

Commitments for 2023/24

- To continue to develop the maturity of the service and what best practice looks like through development days, reflective supervision and evidence-based research and to draw on the expertise of the wider system such as Legal Services, Human Resources and relevant colleagues across the partnership.
- To address the ongoing impact of the increase of work on the LADO Allegation Officers.
- To work with the Independent Chair Service to improve the quality of information provided to the adult of concern on the conclusion of the Managing Allegation Meeting process.
- To develop an effective method to gather the voice of the children and adults who experience the Managing Allegations process.
- To work with NSCP to develop a Multi-Agency Managing Allegations Briefing and to further increase the MAS training offer.

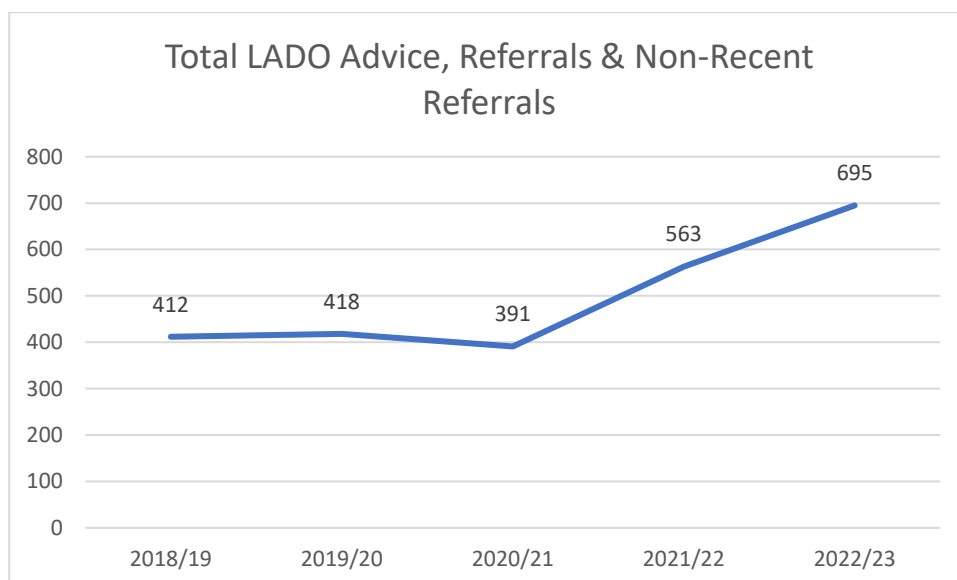
Hazel McKibbin
Service Manager
Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review
3.8.23

DATA

Key findings 2022/23

1. Work coming in to MAS

1.1 Total Advice, Referrals – Contemporaneous and Non Recent work



The total work coming in to MAS has increased by 43% in 2021/22 and again in 2022/23.

LADO ADVICE BY QUARTER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2018/19	73	70	72	94	309
2019/20	70	69	66	95	300
2020/21	58	75	79	53	265
2021/22	103	90	98	127	418
2022/23	112	92	161	164	529

LADO Advice, where the concern is reported to LADO but remains with the employer to address, increased significantly in this financial year. Most of the Advice relates to colleagues in Education settings followed by Residential, Fostering, Sports and Health.

REFERRALS (CONTEMP) BY QUARTER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
2018/19	14	35	25	20	94
2019/20	19	19	30	35	103
2020/21	22	24	17	39	105
2021/22	39	27	31	37	134
2022/23	44	46	31	39	160

LADO Referrals have increased in 2022/23, the LADO AO tracks all these concerns to employment outcome with the more complex concerns progressing to Managing Allegations multi-agency meetings.

Educational settings account for most of the referrals followed by Fostering, Residential, Sports and Health.

The main reason for LADO Referrals remains physical abuse followed by sexual abuse, suitability and emotional abuse.

REFERRALS NON-RECENT BY QUARTER	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
--	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	--------------

2018/19		2	3	4	9
2019/20	3	5	5	2	15
2020/21	4	7	5	5	21
2021/22	3	3	3	2	11
2022/23		3	3	3	9

Non Recent Referrals to LADO have decreased slightly on 2021/22, this continues the expected downward trend. Most of these Non recent referrals relate to colleagues in an Educational setting followed by colleagues in the Faith and Sports settings.

The main reason for Non recent referrals remains sexual abuse.

Civil Claims	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2022-22	2022-23
	46	36	28	31	13

Annex C	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	82	50	25	6

Linked with Non recent work, Civil Claims and Annex Cs have reduced markedly in 2022/23.

2. Managing Allegations meetings

2.1 Number of MA meetings

The decision to convene a Managing Allegations Meeting in both non-recent and contemporaneous cases, is made at a multi-agency Strategy Discussion. In contemporaneous cases, where necessary and possible, the S47 and the LADO Strategy Discussions will be combined, for those cases where children are not open to Children's Social Care, the MAS Team Manager will chair the S47 Strategy Discussion.

In 2022/23, the MA Service chaired a total of 67 Strategy Discussions (TM chaired 58 and CSM chaired 9 in the TM's absence). The Team Manager attended a further 25 Strategy Discussions chaired by other Children's Services Team Managers; the LADO AOs attended additional Strategy Discussions.

The MA service convened a total of 196 contemporaneous meetings, 63 initial meetings and 129 reviews, these included cases involving foster carers where a couple is considered in one meeting.

A total of 22 non-recent meetings were convened, 6 initial meetings and 16 reviews.

2.2 Work with children linked to the adult of concern

MAS Social Workers are allocated to children linked with the adult of concern, the adult's own children and the children making allegations, to undertake focused Child and Family Assessments.

Where children do not have an allocated Social Worker, the MAS Social Worker will undertake the Child and Family Assessment and in cases where the child already has an allocated SW, the MAS SW will liaise with the allocated SW to agree how best to obtain the account from and views of the child.

These assessments are focused and proportionate and where a need for ongoing work to support or protect is assessed, the children are allocated to a long term CSC SW team.

Children allocated to MAS SWs

Children allocated to MAS SWs	2022/23
CAFA	29 (+16)*
Co-allocated - LAC	28
Co-allocated - OLA	42
Co-allocated - CSC	51
Total	150

* an additional 16 children remain allocated linked to ongoing MAS processes starting pre April 2022

2.3 Work with Adult Complainants making Non recent allegations

During this period, MAS SWs have worked with 14 adult complainants linked to non-recent abuse disclosed in 2022/23.

2.4 Case Outcomes

A total of 105 Managing Allegations processes were closed, 100 Contemporaneous and 5 Non recent. This is a slight increase in Contemporaneous case closures and a consistent picture for Non recent cases.

The outcomes for Contemporaneous cases remain largely consistent on 2021/23 with 54% Substantiated; 29% Unsubstantiated and 14% Unfounded. Very few cases are considered either False or Malicious.

Of the 5 Non recent cases, 2 were Substantiated, 2 Unsubstantiated and 1 had no outcome, this can occur given the passage of time and the difficulties in assessing and investigating non recent allegations.

2.5 Police outcomes

Contemporaneous work has seen an increase in no police action, a decrease in the police investigation resulting in no further actions and very slight increases in the police investigations resulting in either cautions or prosecutions.

The Non recent work saw no police action in 2 cases, investigations no further action in a further 2 and 1 prosecution.

2.6 Employer outcomes

The LADO AO tracks and monitors the MA process to the Employer outcome.

In Contemporaneous work, 20 colleagues were dismissed, 24 resigned as an alternative to dismissal, 14 received a sanction and 33 were offered additional support or training.

Of those colleagues subject to Non recent allegations, 1 was not employed, 1 resigned, 1 received support or training and 2 others received no sanction.

2.7 Case duration

Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022 (Sept 2022) states these processes should be 'thorough and fair' and 'dealt with as quickly as possible', timescales are no longer specified. The available data measures the duration of cases from initial referral to the LADO to when the LADO AO closes a case following the tracking and monitoring of the employment process.

Every attempt is made to address concerns in a timely manner and resolve cases promptly however timeliness remains a challenge particularly in those cases requiring forensic interrogation of electronic devices.

Duration of Closed Contemporaneous referrals	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23

Less than 1 month	10	3	4	2	6	8
1 to 3 months	25	21	14	18	13	26
3 to 6 months	38	25	18	20	26	21
6 to 11 months	34	27	20	30	26	36
1 year+	26	36	12	17	20	15

There has been an increase in Contemporaneous cases closed within 3 months, before 11 months and a decrease in those cases open for more than 12 months.

The difficulty in assessing and investigating Non recent work results in cases being open for longer with 3 cases open up to 11 months and 2 cases open more than 12 months.

2.8 Referrals to DBS and Regulatory Bodies

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
DBS Referrals	34	26	44	36	29
Professional Regulatory Body					4

2.9 Complaints

The number of complaints coming to MAS has reduced by 50 % in the period 2022/23.

During this period, 5 complaints were received, of these, 1 has been withdrawn and 4 have been investigated.

Of the 4 investigated, 2 were complaints shared with the Fostering Service, 1 had Group Manager agreement for a reconvened MA meeting process and both went to Stage 2 complaint processes before they were resolved.

The other 2 complaints both had Group Manager agreement for reconvened MA meeting processes resulting in partial alteration of the outcomes.

In response to these complaints, and with advice from colleagues in Legal Services, the MAS now ensures the allegations and the evidence supporting these are outlined clearly.