



Managing Allegations against Adults who work with children - Local Authority Designated Officer Annual Report 2020-2021.

Report to: Children's Leadership Team, Children and Education Management Team, Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (MSP)

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the annual report is to provide Manchester Safeguarding Partnership with an overview of the management of allegations against adults who work with children in Manchester, for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. The report offers an analysis of allegations against adults who work in a paid or voluntary capacity with children in Manchester and how effectively the safeguarding partnership is discharging its statutory responsibilities.

During the period relevant to this report, we entered a global pandemic that forced the service to work differently in managing allegations against adults, which is discussed throughout the report. The report, more so than ever before, outlines the learning and development over the last twelve months and how this will shape the service moving into 2021/2022.

2. Service & Legal Context

2.1 The Role of Local Authority LADO

Throughout this report the acronym LADO will be used for the Local Authority Designated Officers. The term LADO is clearly referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021, which uses LADO throughout its text to define the role. In Manchester the term LADO has and continues to be utilised by partner agencies who clearly identify the role by the name, LADO.

The role of the LADO in Manchester is responsible for ensuring itself and its partners comply with their statutory obligations as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children¹ in relation to the management of allegations against adults working in a paid or voluntary capacity. These procedures are in line with the DfE Guidance - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021.

The Children Act 2004, Section 11 placed a duty upon a range of organisations and individuals to ensure that their functions and any services that they contract out to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership to appoint a named senior officer responsible for oversight of the management of the allegations process and to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to provide advice and guidance on how to deal with allegations across a range of organisations. This also includes the voluntary and community sectors as well as private companies who employ staff who work directly with children and those engaged as foster carers for both the local authority and private agencies.

2.2 Managing Allegations

Managing allegations involves those working within regulated settings. Regulated activity is defined as:

- Unsupervised activities such as teaching and social care

¹ Working Together to Safeguard Children A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2018

- Work for a limited range of establishments such as schools, children’s homes and other child care premises.
- Relevant personal and healthcare
- Registered childminding
- Foster Care

Statutory guidance makes clear that organisations and agencies must have clear policies for dealing with allegations against adults working with children in positions of trust. Furthermore, such policies should make clear the difference between an allegation, a concern about the quality of care or practice and a complaint. An allegation relates to adults who work with children in a paid or voluntary capacity who have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

Keeping Children Safe in Education updated January 2021, introduced the 4th criteria in relation to “suitability to work with Children”. There was no clear guidance about what behaviour may be deemed unsuitable to work with Children and only related to employees in Education. *An example of a person who has behaved in a way that indicates they are not suitable to work with children, is a health visitor who is consistently under the influence of drugs and alcohol whilst there is no evidence she is a risk to her children due to the family support networks in place and no evidence that she has been unable to function in work, the police have a number logs and had to arrest her for drunk and disorderly behaviour, driving under the influence and making false allegations or assaults.* Over the last few months, we have spent time as a service and regionally through the LADO North West Group implementing and considering this so we are confident that we implement this at the right threshold that is proportionate to staff but effectively safeguards children and this will be reported on in next year's report.

We have continued in 2020/2021 to ensure that allegations against adults who work with children are not dealt with in isolation. The welfare of children remained paramount, and any corresponding actions required to safeguard children are shared, where appropriate, with partner agencies and accurate records of actions kept. *An example of this is where an allegation is made against a professional working in Manchester but living in Trafford and the professional has children living at their home address. The professional also volunteers in a role as a coach with children. The LADO will ensure that a referral is made to Trafford Children’s Services in order that an assessment can be completed in relation to any risk to the children in the home. The Agency where the professional volunteers will be contacted so that the Agency can assess any risk to those children and all parties would be invited to attend the allegation management meeting.*

A further example is when a referral was received from the RSPCA regarding animal cruelty by a person who works with children, the LADO ensured at point of receiving referral that the information was known to children’s service to ensure no delay in assessing the safeguarding concerns.

While the DfE places a duty on the employer or voluntary agencies to make referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where they have removed a person from their work due to them posing a risk to children, as set out in Working Together 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, the LADOs will provide guidance to organisations and partners, at the conclusion of an allegation, as to the need to refer to the DBS.

2.3 Profile of Service

The LADO Service sits within the Safeguarding Improvement Unit and is responsible for ensuring that there are effective and timely responses to allegations against adults who work with children. The LADOs provide advice and guidance to employers on policies and safer working practice that enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities and oversee the allegation management process.

There are 1.4 full time equivalent staff in the Service, which consists of 1 full time member of staff and 0.4 member of staff. Both LADOs hold a Social Work qualification, and one is registered with Social Work England. The LADOs in post are permanent members of staff for Manchester City Council and have both been in the role for 4.5 years and 13 years. They are sufficiently qualified and experienced to fulfil their role as set out in Working Together 2018 and are skilled in managing allegations.

The LADO service in Manchester receive business support equivalent to 1 full time member of staff. This support is vital to the effectiveness of service delivery. They support the administration of referrals, allegation meetings, maintain the data base and respond to other general enquiries such as freedom of information requests and other data information requests.

2.4 The key roles and responsibilities of the LADO

In Manchester, the key roles and responsibilities for the LADOs are to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police, children's social care, other local authorities, and relevant agencies
- Manage the allegation process, including chairing the allegation meetings and monitor the progress of the allegation to ensure that it is dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.
- Participate in the Manchester Safeguarding Partnership Learning and Development programme.

The LADOs also play a role in responding to Subject Access Requests (SARs), responding to requests from DBS for information about allegations and outcomes, Freedom of Information Requests and providing information about adults who have worked in Manchester in the past as part of historical abuse enquiries.

LADOs are managed by the Service Lead for Children's Safeguarding and receive both monthly formal supervision and informal supervision, support and development, which includes regular Team Meetings.

The work carried out by the LADOs is all recorded electronically. Enquiries are kept on an electronic file and referrals through to allegation meetings recorded on the Children's Services electronic system (Liquid Logic).

The full time LADO is actively involved in the North West Regional LADO forum. This forum provides an opportunity for peer support, sharing practice and key performance data, considering new developments and the review and development of regional policies and procedures.

2.5 Complaints

There has been 1 complaint about services for managing allegations against adults who work with children in Manchester during the reporting period and this complaint was unfounded. This reflects the continued quality of service provided.

3. **Overview of enquiries and referrals data - 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021**

Collectively there were 497 contacts made to the LADOs between 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, which were assessed by the LADO to either be an enquiry or a referral. All contacts are received through telephone calls, emails or written referrals into the Safeguarding Improvement Unit and responded to by a LADO on the same day as contact is made - this will always involve a telephone call/email to the person making the enquiry/referral. This is a reduction from last year of 69 contacts, which is a consistent picture with a drop in contacts across other local authorities in the North West. While there has been a drop in contacts the percentage is only 12% in Manchester, which demonstrates that while contact rates dropped this was not a considerable proportion despite several influencing factors throughout the year:

- Covid19 and lockdown restriction meant that some of the workforce who work with children had less face-to-face contact with children.
- Voluntary agencies, e.g. Scouts, youth clubs, sporting clubs all suspended face to face contact.

3.1 Enquiries

An Enquiry is assessed as only requiring advice, guidance or information and does not meet the threshold for a referral. The methods for enquiries come in a variety of ways from email requests for advice directly to the LADO, emails sent via the generic Safeguarding Improvement Unit email that is directly forwarded to the duty LADO and through telephone calls via the Safeguarding Improvement Unit. We know from the volume of enquiries that professionals find this service extremely beneficial and that a significant proportion (65%) of all contacts are dealt with as enquiries only. It could be argued that this is a significant draw on LADO resource that does not meet threshold, and may be an indication that agencies lack confidence in judging this. However it is important to recognise that this is true for other Local Authority areas, that many contacts are from agencies where safeguarding children is less familiar to them and the safeguarding of children in these circumstances is often complex and is better judged through initial discussion.

Table 1: Total number of enquiries against adults who work with children over the past 2 years:

| Total allegation enquiries by year | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | 351 | 326 |

We have only seen a reduction of 7% in enquiries over the last 12 months as discussed above demonstrating that partners have continued to seek advice and guidance from the LADO service in Manchester. We have been consistent over the last twelve months by continuing to provide the same standard of service to managing enquiries with all enquiries being responded to within 24 hours, but general practice is the same day.

Table 2: Total number of enquiries & % against adults who work with children over the past 12 months:

| Sector of Enquiries | | |
|----------------------------|------------|-------|
| Health | 44 | (13%) |
| Children's Social Care | 76 | (23%) |
| Education | 113 | (35%) |
| Early Years | 16 | (5%) |
| Faith Groups | 8 | (2%) |
| Police | 12 | (4%) |
| Transport | 10 | (3%) |
| Sport/Leisure | 12 | (4%) |
| Voluntary | 2 | (1%) |
| Sector not recorded | 7 | (2%) |
| Youth Work | 0 | (0%) |
| Other | 26 | (8%) |
| Ofsted | 0 | (0%) |
| Total | 326 | |

Table 2 highlights the key agencies whose contact with the LADO results in advice or guidance only. The 2 key agencies who received the most advice and guidance in 2020/2021 are Education and Social Care. This is different to last year when the 2 key agencies had been education and health. The Table highlights a few sectors who had minimum contact with the LADO service in 2020/2021, including Youth Work and the Voluntary Sector. While during Covid there was less activity in these areas face to face they are sectors in previous year too that we have small numbers of enquiries from. In 2021/2022 we will prioritise some briefings with these sectors to raise awareness of the role of the LADO service.

Last year we presented in the annual report new ways of working to manage the demand at the front door for the LADO service and to ensure that we accurately record the volume of work. The number of enquiries this year are consistent to last year and what we have found is that when telephone enquiries are received, they demand a greater amount of time to triage with partners.

Enquiries often refer to conduct issues rather than behaviour that has harmed or may have harmed a child. The complexity around adult behaviours when working with children is often the reason for the enquiry and organisations / partners require support to navigate through the complexities of safe recruitment and practice. It is positive to see that the police and health have also used the expertise of the LADO to consider whether it meets the threshold for investigation. These partnership conversations strengthen professional knowledge and skills in managing concerns when adults work with children.

3.2 Referrals

A referral to the LADO where the referrer considers that an adult who works with children in a paid or voluntary capacity in Manchester has:

- *Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child*
- *Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child*
- *Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children*
- *Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.*

The table below (Table 3) highlights the number of referrals over the last two years. It shows a decrease in the number of referrals by 22%. It is likely this decrease is not a failure in the partnership to identify and refer children who are in need of safeguarding, but is most probably due to the reduction in activities being held face to face during the Covid 19 Pandemic. Schools had a reduced number of pupils face to face with only keyworker & vulnerable children and lessons taking place virtual for all other children, while voluntary groups such as the Scouts, sports clubs etc all had to find different ways of conducting their groups. Many used Social Media platforms and met virtually which meant less direct contact and less opportunities for abuse to take place and the opportunity for false allegations to be made.

We have seen again, as with enquiries, an increase in the complexity of referrals, which has also included an increase in referrals in relation to downloading or possessing Indecent Images of Children. This increase was also reported nationally and might be expected given the increase in all on-line activity during the lockdown arrangements.

An example of a complex case where downloading Indecent Images of Children is a factor is a case where the subject of the referral lived in greater London for part of the week. The house he resided at was a house of multiple occupancy. Police information advised that the IP address at that house had been used to download Indecent Images of Children. The Subject of the referral lived for part of the week with his mother in Manchester and was a Scout leader, as was his mother. The subject also worked with adults with additional needs as a support worker, for a friend's company. This case had several complicating factors including initially identifying which occupant was responsible for downloading the images.

A further example of a recent complex case was a professional working for the Health Service in a Local Authority outside of the Northwest. The initial referral was sent to the LADO and it was discovered that this person was also employed by Manchester Trust and was attending University in Manchester training to qualify as a Health Visitor. Police were investigating allegations by this person's adult sister of enforced marriage, physical assault, threats to kill (by named professional), rape by another family member (which it was alleged) the professional knew and was involved in the imprisonment by family. This professional had a young child who social care felt was not safeguarded or prioritised over the needs of the brother (who allegations of rape had been made against.) The sister fled to another area where she was threatened by a stranger who she believed to be acting on her family's behalf. This case involved Children's Services from 2 Local Authorities,

Police from 2 different forces, Safeguarding staff from Manchester hospital trust, Safeguarding staff from university.

Table 3: Number of Referrals:

| Total allegation referrals by year | 2019/2020 | 2020/2021 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 218 | 171 |

Table 4: Source of Referrals:

| Sector making the Referral | Total Referrals 2019/2020 | Total Referral 2020/2021 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Early Years | 5 (2%) | 8 (4%) |
| Education | 53 (24%) | 28 (16%) |
| Faith Groups | 2 (1%) | 2 (1%) |
| Health | 4 (2%) | 6 (3%) |
| Sport/Leisure | 5 (5%) | 1 (1%) |
| Police | 26 (11%) | 36 (21%) |
| Children's Social Care | 92 (42%) | 73 (43%) |
| Transport | 4 (2%) | 0 (0%) |
| Voluntary Organisation | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Youth Work | 1 (0%) | 1 (1%) |
| Ofsted | 0 (0%) | 1 (1%) |
| Cafcass | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Other | 26 (11%) | 15 (9%) |
| | 218 | 171 |

It is clear from Table 4 that the key agency whereby contacts are assessed as being a referral is from Children's Social Care. This is consistent year on year. As expected, there is a decrease in the referrals from Education. There is an increase in referrals from the police this year. This would be in line with an increase of referrals linked with on-line abuse.

Table 5 below highlights the occupational sectors of the adults who has been referred to the LADO service. You will see the highest 2 sectors are Children's Social Care and Education. The roles within these sectors are often foster carers, teachers, teaching assistance and the children's Social Care workforce. This is consistent with North West data and would be expected as these roles have the most significant levels of contact with children and young people.

Table 5: Occupational sectors of adults referred to LADO.

| Sector of the Alleged Adult | Total Referral 2019/2020 | Total Referral 2020/2021 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Early Years | 15 (7%) | 10 (6%) |
| Education | 72 (33%) | 54 (32%) |
| Faith Groups | 7 (3%) | 7 (4%) |

| | | |
|------------------------|----------|----------|
| Health | 15 (7%) | 20 (12%) |
| Sport/Leisure | 10 (5%) | 4 (2%) |
| Police | 2 (1%) | 0 (0%) |
| Social Care | 59 (27%) | 63 (37%) |
| Transport | 10 (4%) | 0 (0%) |
| Voluntary Organisation | 1 (1%) | 1 (0%) |
| Youth Work | 3 (2%) | 3 (2%) |
| Ofsted | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Cafcass | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |
| Other / not record | 24 (11%) | 9 (5%) |
| | 218 | 171 |

Table 6: Nature of harm by sector

| Sector of Alleged Adult | Nature of harm | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------------------------|-------|
| | Physical | Sexual | Neglect | Unsuitable behaviour/risk | Total |
| Early Years | 6 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| Education | 15 | 25 | 0 | 4 | 44 |
| Faith Groups | 1 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 7 |
| Health | 11 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| Sport/Leisure | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Police | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Youth Work | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Social Care | 26 | 8 | 9 | 20 | 63 |
| Transport | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ofsted | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| CAFCASS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 2 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| Total | 62 | 57 | 12 | 30 | 161 |

The highest category of harm continues to be that of physical abuse. This year 39% of all referrals made related to physical abuse, this is a decrease of 5%. The high rate of physical abuse allegations is all from within the Social Care and Education sectors. However, this year we see an increase in category of harm being sexual abuse with 35% of all referrals being categorised as sexual abuse with the high rate of allegations within education. Over the last twelve months this has related to online activity, downloading indecent images of children and/or grooming. This activity or behaviours are mainly recorded to have taken place outside of the work environment and in most cases, it is not directly linked to children in the work-place.

The third largest category with a percentage of 19% relates to allegations against adults who may pose a risk to children; linked to unsuitable behaviours this is a 6% reduction from last year.

As in previous years we continue to see the referral rate from Youth Services being low. We had said last year that it is reasonable to conclude that the number of allegations should be higher, and

this is an area of work around multi agency training for key partners where referrals are lower than would be expected. This has been hindered in 2020/2021 with the restrictions and identifying new ways of delivering training.

4. Managing Allegations: Allegation Meetings & Outcomes

The LADOs take a multi-agency approach at the first point of contact ensuring the management of the allegations have strong partnership engagement. The lines of communication with key partners are strong and results in decisions being made as to the response to a referral being more effective.

When allegation meetings take place, they are always in a timely manner and information sharing is strong given the partnership working mentioned throughout this report. While we do not currently have the systems to report on timeliness this is something that has been work in progress and is likely to be a feature in the 2021/2022 report.

It is important to note that the LADO will ensure that all safeguarding measures are in place prior to the allegation management meeting and throughout the allegation meetings thereafter. The safeguarding of the children forms part of the agenda in considering that professionals have all taken appropriate steps to safeguard children.

4.1 Allegation Meetings

Table 7: Initial Meeting taken place between 1st April 2020- 31st March 2021

| Initial Meetings taken place | 2019/2020 | 2020/21 |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| | 69 | 83 |

We have seen an increase in meetings in the last twelve months. The increase in meetings is due to a few factors, the referrals received have been more complex and have met threshold often requiring more than one meeting.

From the 83 meetings held 29% of allegation meetings required at least one further meeting, which is a consistent outcome as with the previous 2 years. The main reason for further meeting being required is a result on ongoing police investigations.

Table 8: Sector where alleged perpetrator is employed that had an Allegation Meeting.

| Sector where alleged perpetrator is employed | Total Referral 2019/2020 | Total Referral 2020/2021 |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Early Years | 8 | 4 |
| Education | 25 | 24 |
| Faith Groups | 4 | 0 |
| Health | 7 | 9 |
| Sport/Leisure | 5 | 3 |
| Other | 0 | 5 |

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Social Care | 17 | 37 |
| Transport | 2 | 0 |
| Youth Groups | 0 | 1 |
| Police | 1 | 0 |
| Total meetings | 69 | 83 |

Table 8 demonstrates that a significant amount of the LADOs workload from enquiry/referral through to meetings is focused on the social care and education sector with 73% of all meetings taking place in 2020/2021 involving an adult from the education or social care setting.

There has been a change in the Fostering Management, and it was acknowledged that referrals to LADO were not always received within a timely manner. The LADO service offered bespoke LADO training to the Fostering Service. It is hoped that this has raised awareness of what the LADO's role entails, when and how to make a referral and what the LADO process is in relation to Fostering.

4.2 Outcomes of Allegations Meetings

Table 9: Outcomes of Allegation Meetings for alleged adult.

| Outcome | Meaning | Number |
|---|--|---------------|
| Substantiated | <i>There is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation.</i> | 39 (47%) |
| Unsubstantiated | <i>There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation</i> | 26 (31%) |
| Unfounded | <i>To reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation/s being made.</i> | 6 (7%) |
| Ongoing Police Investigation / ongoing employment investigation | <i>The investigation has yet to conclude.</i> | 12 (15%) |
| Total | | 83 |

In 2020/2021 47% of all Allegation Meetings / investigations concluded as substantiated this is a significant increase from 29% last year. There is no evidence to suggest there has been a change in the application of the threshold, but we will review this with an audit. There are 12 investigations that remain ongoing at the time of writing this report from this reporting year

From the referrals that met the criteria for a LADO involvement 70% concluded within 6 months in 2020/2021. We have not measured this performance indicator previously so no comparable data available. We know that when they are not concluded within six months this is often as a result of ongoing police investigations that require ongoing LADO Meetings to be assured that the investigations are thorough and fair. When over six months this is generally a result of complexities.

This would also be consistent with the NW picture. However next year we will focus on understanding better the timescales around the conclusion of LADO involvement.

5. Service Reflection

The past twelve months have enabled the LADOs to work differently to deliver this service and the below are the reflections and learning.

5.1 What went well

Virtual Managing Allegation Meetings - Allegations Meetings have exclusively been held virtually over the reporting period. We have seen significant benefits, with less cancellations as agencies have found it easier to attend within the 5 working days. Consequently, more meetings have been held in a shorter timeframe. With the complexity of allegations over the last twelve months Review Meetings have been more regularly required and virtual meetings again has aided a timely review being arranged.

Partnership Participation - There has been an increased attendance from all key partner agencies alongside increased participation from other agencies that would have previously not attended. *For example in one case 2 members of the National Crime Agency attended 4 LADO meetings virtually (1 x Initial meeting and 3 Review meetings). They are both based in London and would not have attended a meeting in Manchester. We would have had a Local Police Officer attending who would have needed to take questions and respond later or we would have had updates via reports which again would have been more difficult to manage and again would have required ongoing emails.* The engagement of national agencies or agencies not based in Manchester has been a real benefit to the quality of the LADO meetings over the last twelve month.

Training with Manchester staff – We have spent time over the last twelve months improving the relationship with fostering to improve both the quality and timeliness of referrals. We have developed a training package, which has been delivered in the year and will be used again throughout 2021/2022. The IRO & CP Service have also benefited from a LADO briefing given their role within managing Children’s Safeguarding and working citywide.

Agile Working - The service has been able to adopt an agile working approach, which has allowed all LADO meetings to take place virtually using video conferencing facilities (Microsoft Teams). This has allowed both the LADOs and partners to work remotely.

Feedback from partners – This year we asked all partners for feedback following LADO Meetings, 41 partners responded throughout the year and general feedback was extremely positive about when asked how satisfied they were of the meeting, the general score overall was 4.8 out of 5. Generally, everyone felt that virtual meetings were as effective and that when asked for any areas for improvement it was generally a reflection of how well they had been organised and carried out and a recommendation to continue ‘as is’.

5.2 What we are worried about

Managing Enquiries – Last year we presented a report that said we would continue to manage the LADO front-door within the Safeguarding Unit by the LADOs. The frontdoor allows for an informal approach to professionals ringing / contacting for enquiries and this is an important and invaluable

part of the role. While we agree this is the right approach given the complexities of the advice and guidance this remains very time-consuming for the LADOs.

Quality of Minutes - Over the last twelve months moving into conducting meeting differently we have seen an increase in the volume recorded in the minutes of the meetings. This has made the minutes at times lengthy and often written verbatim rather than concentrating on actions and outcomes. The template of the minutes has not been reviewed for a number of years and it has been a good opportunity for the service to review the minutes, so they can become smarter in the coming year.

6. Service Achievements 2020/ 2021

We set ourselves some ambitious goals at the beginning of 2020 without knowing what we were about to be faced with the impact of Covid19. So, while we have not achieved some of the original goals that we set around increased outward training and development with partners and improving quality assurance we have adapted well to new ways of working and the below are the achievements the service are proud of in 2020/2021.

| <u>What we said</u> | <u>What we achieved</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>We said we would embed training for organisations and partners around the role of a LADO and managing allegations and adults working with children.</p> <p>We said we would work with Manchester Safeguarding Partnership (MSP) to deliver twice year training for organisations and partners. The setup of (MSP) virtual training did not occur during the year.</p> | <p>We continued despite the difficulties with COVID19 and school closure to remain in contact with the Education Safeguarding Team to share any specific learning from individual enquiries and referrals rather than wider learning and development.</p> <p>We delivered a service wide training on the role of LADO and managing allegations to Family Placement Services, which was well delivered and promoted better understanding and networking between LADOs and Fostering.</p> <p>While we didn't have an opportunity to provide learning and development to partners, we did take the opportunity to develop a feedback mechanisms.</p> |
| <p>Improve IT solutions to enable more effective responses through virtual multi-agency meetings.</p> | <p>A feedback form has been developed to capture how attendees felt about virtual as opposed to face to face meetings. Only 6.9 percent of respondents would wish to return to face to face meetings.</p> <p>Virtual Meeting have become the new business as usual method to conducting meeting using video conferences through Microsoft Teams. This has been extremely successful with increased participation to improve the outcomes and impact of the meetings.</p> |

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7. Key priority Areas 2020 / 2021

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| <p>What we aim to do: Broaden the training offer</p> | <p>How we will Do it: Through Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, North West Regional LADO Meetings and in-house training.</p> <p>We will concentrate on bespoke 'training/awareness raising sessions for sectors that have small number of enquiries/referrals into the LADO Service, with a specific focus on the youth and voluntary sectors.</p> |
| <p>What will be the impact:</p> <p>Increased awareness about when to refer to LADO, the difference between an allegation and concern about the quality of care and/or practice or a complaint.</p> | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>What we aim to do: Develop our Quality Assurance framework</p> | <p>How we will do it: Strengthen Peer audits</p> <p>Dip sampling of quality of recording & minutes, timeliness and outcomes and impact of service delivery.</p> <p>Continued feedback</p> <p>Improved Performance Indicators around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timeliness of progression from referral to meeting and subsequent meeting. - Timeliness of conclusion of LADO involvement. |
| <p>What will be the impact:</p> <p>Peer audits will provide a “critical friend” from another authority and moderation by someone familiar with the role. By collating the information in the North West forum, themes and trends will be highlighted and can be shared with partner agencies and will inform service development.</p> <p>The feedback from partners will continue to drive service deliver and allow us to sense check our new ways of working.</p> | |

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| What we aim to do: | How we will do it: |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|

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| <p>SMARTER ways of managing enquiries and allegation meeting.</p> | <p>Enquiries - We will develop with partners agencies to template for them to assure themselves that the information required is sought before a call is made to the LADO to aid the conversation. We will role this out with a One minute guide or 7 minute briefing on LADO to all agencies safeguarding leads so they are confident about what is required.</p> <p>Allegation Meetings - We will review and improve the quality of minutes for meetings by review the template and ensuring that it aligns within Children's Service strengthen based approach using signs of safety (what is working well, what we are worried about and what needs to happen both from the adult and child perspective.</p> <p>We will review how we feedback to children and families following the LADO process.</p> |
| <p>What will be the impact:</p> <p>To allow information to be triaged and any information omitted will be requested before assessment of criteria and threshold made. This will cut down on the amount of time needed by LADO to gather information.</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings will be SMARTER, focusing on outcomes and impact.</p> <p>We will make sure that children and their families feel they have been listened to, they have understood the process and the outcome. We will use their feedback to continually improve the service.</p> | |

8. Conclusion

The last twelve months have been unprecedented times with managing a global pandemic while ensuring we continue with business as usual. The safeguarding of children is paramount to the service we deliver and ensuring that we continued to manage allegations against adults who work with children in an effective and timely manner was critical. The ability of the LADO service to adapt over the last twelve months has allowed us to continue to deliver a good quality service.

This year has seen a real transformation to how we conduct meetings, and whilst the majority of children's social care might not suit virtual communication, in the LADO sphere it can be an effective solution.

9. References

Greater Manchester - Managing Allegations of Abuse Made Against Adults Who Work with Children and Young People – Policy, Procedure and Guidance

http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_man_allegations.html

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People.

<http://www.manchesterscb.org.uk/docs/Guidance%20for%20Safer%20Working09%281%29.pdf>

Regulated activity in relation to children: scope

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522656/Regulated_Activity_in_relation_to_Children.pdf.pdf