

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Annual Report 2024-2025

**Allegations against professionals and
volunteers working with children**

The local authority designated officer (LADO) allegation management process provides a timely and coordinated safeguarding response to the oversight and management of allegations against adults who work with children. LADOs raise awareness and provide safeguarding practice advice to a wide range of partner agencies.

OFSTED - Inspection of Gloucestershire local authority children's services
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1. Introduction

1.1 Statutory guidance requires the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) dealing with allegations against adults that work or volunteer with children to report annually about work undertaken.

This report is submitted to the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership together with residents of Gloucestershire as an annual record of allegations management within the county. The annual report provides the statistical data regarding Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) activity during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 on the number, nature, investigation processes and outcomes of allegations. Following the analysis of the data there is a narrative and further analysis regarding Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) activity during the same period, challenges, and recommendations for future development of the service.

2. Building a Safer Children's Workforce in Gloucestershire

2.1 The allegations management service ensures children are kept safe in organisations and that the adults working with and supporting children are safe enough to do so. The welfare of children remains paramount when investigating allegations against a person in a position of trust and part of the LADO role is to ensure that appropriate action has been taken to safeguard and support children where allegations arise.

2.2 The key roles and responsibilities for the LADOs in Gloucestershire are to:

- Collaborate with the police, children's social care, regulatory bodies, other local authorities, and relevant agencies as part of enquiries into allegations.
- Manage the allegation process, including chairing the allegation management meetings, monitoring the progress of the allegation to ensure that it is resolved as quickly as possible, and that the process is thorough and fair.
- Escalate any safeguarding concerns for a child or children to children's social care.
- Provide analysis, highlight patterns, and escalate concerns to the GSCP, working together with all our partners to ensure a safe children's workforce in Gloucestershire.
- Provide bespoke training and development to the partners and other agencies on the role and responsibility of employees in managing allegations against people and the role of the LADO.
- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations.
- Actively participate in quality assurance of service effectiveness through weekly and monthly service meetings.
- Respond to Subject Access Requests (SARs) and requests from the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) for information about allegations and outcomes. Consider Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and provide information to inform foster carer checks.

3. Overview of the Allegations Management Team 2024/25

3.1 The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) role and Allegations Management Service remain physically located within Gloucestershire County Council Offices. The team is comprised of 3 FTE LADOs. 2.5 LADOs are social work qualified, with 0.5 LADO from a Police/Safeguarding background. The team is assisted by the equivalent of 1 FTE & 2 PTE business support staff. The Allegations Management Service sits within the Quality Assurance and Reviewing Service, within the Directorate of Safeguarding and Care. Line management is provided by a Service Manager with oversight from the Head of Quality and ultimately the Service Lead for Safeguarding and Care.

3.2 The LADOs mainly focus on handling allegations and delivering training to various settings. There is a duty LADO on call every day to respond to incoming contacts and make threshold decisions. The business support team handle all incoming calls, arrange all Allegations Management Meetings (AMMs), produce summaries of AMMs and provide any additional administrative support required including collating the data.

3.3 The LADOs are regularly supported through monthly supervision with the Service Manager, monthly in person team meetings and weekly LADO catch ups which are used for peer support and reflection. A new duty rota has recently been implemented to support the LADOs to have protected time to manage large caseloads and catching up on recording.

3.4 The LADOs are members of and meet monthly with the South West LADO group and the National LADO network. The service ensures in person representation at the National LADO Network annual conference.

3.5 The Service Manager represents the service at the quarterly GSCP Quality and Improvement in Practice (QiiP) and Education subgroups.

4. Information Systems

4.1 The Liquid Logic pathway for allegations management processes is fully implemented for managing and recording allegations. The next phase of the development of the Liquid Logic pathway is to build a data reporting function. This should assist in improved analysis of data regarding contacts and referrals, as well as monitor timeliness of allegations management processes and create an improved allocations system. In the meantime, the business support team continue to maintain a manual data management system which is used to inform this annual report. A manual performance dashboard that is in line with other services within the Directorate has been developed and is reviewed monthly and focusses development work.

4.2 The service webpage has moved from the GSCP website to GCC Children's Services. The webpage has been redesigned with new helpful links for professionals and members of the public to easily access. The webpage will include a link to a new contact form when requesting advice and guidance or making a referral. Contact forms will be assessed by a Duty LADO within 48 hours.

The web page can be accessed here;

[The Role of the LADO & The Allegations Management process | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

5. Statutory Guidance

5.1 The Allegations Management Service is underpinned by statutory guidance – Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023. 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. Following the publication of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2023) (Hesley Report) the National LADO Network (NLN) has worked alongside the Department for Education (DFE) revising the current Working Together guidance. The National Review recommended an updated LADO Handbook providing further LADO guidance. This remains in development. The intention is for the handbook to be implemented as guidance in the form of an appendix to any Working Together to Safeguard Children as well as Keeping Children Safe in Education. The handbook will contain national standards for LADOs across the country.

5.2 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 in contact with children through work on a regular basis and would be seen as being in a position of trust over them.

5.3 Sections 10 and 11 of the Children's Act, Working Together 2023, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024 direct partners in their safeguarding duties to children. KCSIE was updated in 2024, the changes were minimal, primarily consisting of technical amendments to align with the Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance 2023 with expanded focusses on contextual safeguarding, exploitation and early intervention.

The team employ the Southwest Policy and Procedures for Allegations Management in line with Allegations Management teams across the Southwest which also reflects the National LADO Network principles.

5.4 It is a requirement nationally for all employers within the children's workforce to have clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place when responding to allegations against staff, whether they are paid or voluntary. Working Together, 2023 provides 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.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children.
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

5.5 The Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts act 2022 introduced a new offence criminalising sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old by an adult in a 'position of trust' ensuring that such actions are illegal regardless of a minor's consent. This legislation expands the definition of 'position of trust' to include individuals like sports coaches who have a considerable influence over younger people, thereby closing legal loopholes and improving protection for vulnerable children.

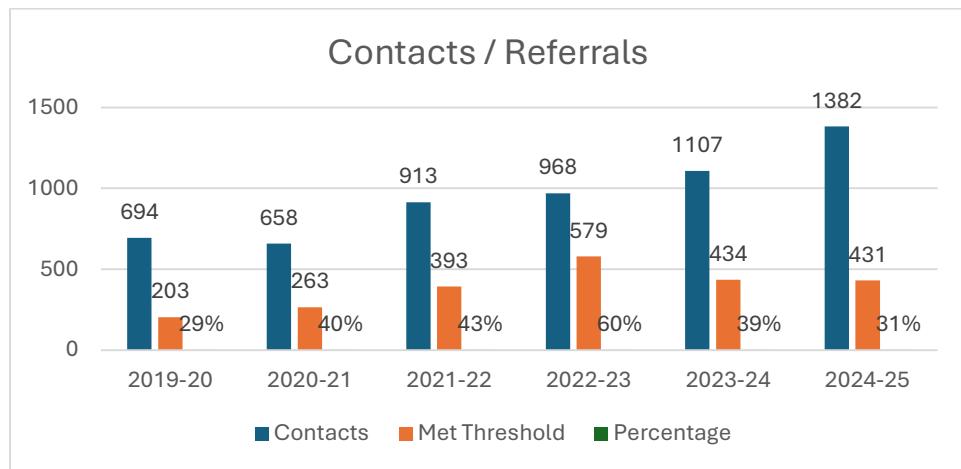
6. Allegations management performance data from 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

6.1 A contact is defined as a communication into the Allegation Management Service whether to seek advice and guidance around the thresholds for AM or to make a referral. Contacts are made through the advice form which was introduced this reporting period and is accessed via the public webpage. This can be as an advice form or a referral,

All contacts are considered by a duty LADO and advice given for further action. If the threshold for Allegation Management is met a referral form is requested. Expected timescale for the return of the referral form is 24 hours.

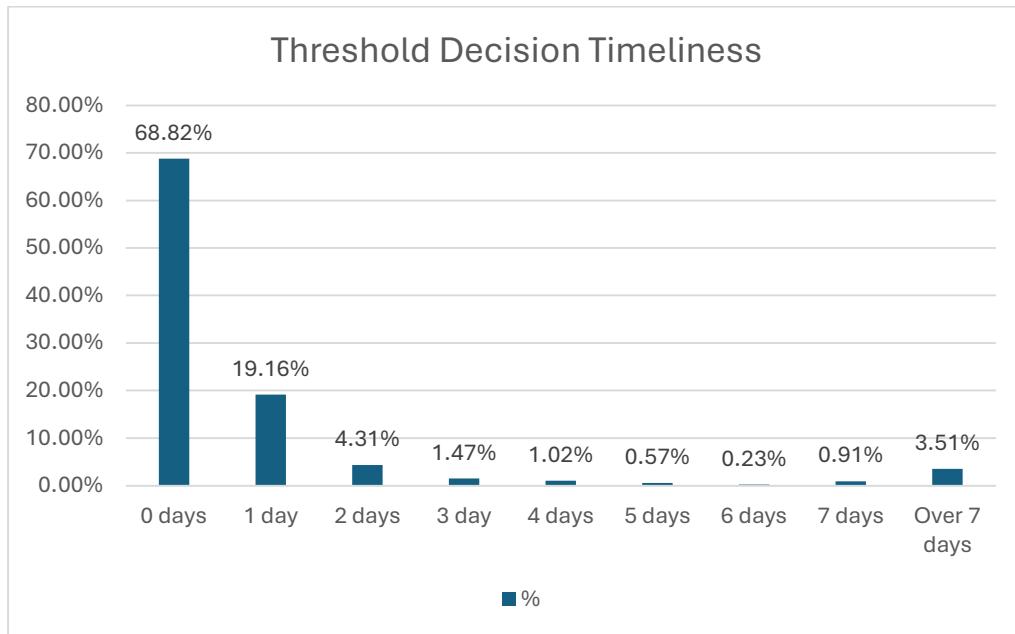
In the last four years, volumes of activity in the team have risen significantly each year. As per Table 1 below, for 2024/25, the total number of contacts to the service was 1382, an increase of 25% from the previous year (in comparison to 2023/24 where an increase of 13% was recorded). The increase in contacts will be linked to the service focus on promoting awareness, in addition to delivering bespoke training. The service also receives more contacts now seeking advice and guidance regarding low level concerns. 31% of contacts resulted in a referral (met the AM threshold).

Table 1 – Contacts



6.2 **Table 2** - Timeliness of decision making for contacts. The expected standard of practice is that for every contact received, a threshold decision must be made by a LADO within 48 hours. Most contacts (88%) were responded to within 48 hours. 12% of contacts were not responded to by a LADO within the expected timescale.

Table 2



6.3 Agencies who submit contacts

As per **Table 3** the highest number of contacts received in 2024/25 were from Educational establishments (total of 325, 37%). Of these 325 contacts from 28% were from primary schools.

951 of these contacts, when assessed by a LADO, did not meet threshold for an allegations management process. Agencies who make contacts which do not meet the threshold, receive advice and guidance from a LADO, this will often include follow up for assurance.

156 contacts (18%) are from Social Care.

149 contacts (17%) are from independent providers (includes for example community based services such as, Children's supported accommodation and independent fostering agencies.

121 contacts (14%) are from Police.

32 (4%) contacts from Health.

Table 3 – Contacts by agency as percentages

| Referring Agency | Total | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| Early Years | 103 | 7.45% |
| Education - Alternative Provision | 9 | 0.65% |
| Education - Higher | 21 | 1.52% |
| Education - Independent | 31 | 2.24% |
| Education - Other | 6 | 0.43% |
| Education - Primary | 161 | 11.65% |
| Education - Secondary | 105 | 7.60% |
| Education - Special | 72 | 5.21% |
| Health - GHC | 15 | 1.09% |
| Health - GHT | 8 | 0.58% |
| Health - ICB | 3 | 0.22% |
| Health - Not Given | 3 | 0.22% |
| Health - Out of County | 1 | 0.07% |
| Health - Primary Care (Health Centres) | 3 | 0.22% |
| Health - Private | 1 | 0.07% |
| Health - SWAST | 5 | 0.36% |
| Ofsted - Early Years | 20 | 1.45% |
| Ofsted - Social Care | 3 | 0.22% |
| Other | 28 | 2.03% |
| Other - Charities | 14 | 1.01% |
| Other - Faith Groups | 13 | 0.94% |
| Other - Family Member | 19 | 1.37% |
| Other - Gloucestershire Council | 29 | 2.10% |
| Other - Independent Provider | 235 | 17.00% |
| Other - Member Of Public | 23 | 1.66% |
| Other - School transport | 3 | 0.22% |
| Other - Voluntary Organisations | 10 | 0.72% |
| Other - Whistleblower | 21 | 1.52% |
| Other Local Authority | 15 | 1.09% |
| Police | 4 | 0.29% |
| Police - MASH | 54 | 3.91% |
| Police - Out of County | 15 | 1.09% |
| Police - Professional Standards Department (PSD) | 5 | 0.36% |
| Police - Specialist Unit | 44 | 3.18% |
| Police - Uniform | 30 | 2.17% |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|--------|
| Social Care - Charities | 1 | 0.07% |
| Social Care - Children's Services | 180 | 13.02% |
| Social Care - Fostering | 24 | 1.74% |
| Social Care - MASH | 15 | 1.09% |
| Social Care - Other | 11 | 0.80% |
| Social Care - Supported Accommodation | 1 | 0.07% |
| Social Care - Youth Support Team | 2 | 0.14% |
| Sports Association | 16 | 1.16% |
| Grand Total | 1382 | |

6.6 Positions of Trust by Agency Type

There were 431 contacts that met the threshold for allegation management.

Table 4 shows the Agencies that submitted a referral.

Table 4

| Referring Agency | Total | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| Early Years | 46 | 10.67% |
| Education - Alternative Provision | 6 | 1.39% |
| Education - Higher | 7 | 1.62% |
| Education - Independent | 7 | 1.62% |
| Education - Primary | 45 | 10.44% |
| Education - Secondary | 39 | 9.05% |
| Education - Special | 26 | 6.03% |
| Health - GHC | 3 | 0.70% |
| Health - GHT | 5 | 1.16% |
| Health - Out of County | 1 | 0.23% |
| Health - Primary Care (Health Centres) | 1 | 0.23% |
| Health - SWAST | 1 | 0.23% |
| Ofsted - Early Years | 5 | 1.16% |
| Other | 3 | 0.70% |
| Other - Charities | 5 | 1.16% |
| Other - Faith Groups | 6 | 1.39% |
| Other - Gloucestershire Council | 2 | 0.46% |
| Other - Independent Provider | 67 | 15.55% |
| Other - Member Of Public | 1 | 0.23% |
| Other - School transport | 2 | 0.46% |
| Other - Voluntary Organisations | 2 | 0.46% |
| Other Local Authority | 6 | 1.39% |
| Police | 1 | 0.23% |
| Police - MASH | 13 | 3.02% |
| Police - Out of County | 9 | 2.09% |
| Police - Professional Standards Department (PSD) | 3 | 0.70% |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Police - Specialist Unit | 17 | 3.94% |
| Police - Uniform | 5 | 1.16% |
| Social Care - Charities | 1 | 0.23% |
| Social Care - Children's Services | 67 | 15.55% |
| Social Care - Fostering | 11 | 2.55% |
| Social Care - MASH | 3 | 0.70% |
| Social Care - Other | 6 | 1.39% |
| Sports Association | 9 | 2.09% |
| Grand Total | 431 | 31.19% |

Table 4.1

Table 4.1 shows the agencies that the individuals, who had an allegation made against them worked in.

| Position of Trust | Total | Percentage |
|--|-------|------------|
| Early Years | 54 | 12.53% |
| Education - Alternative Provision | 5 | 1.16% |
| Education - Higher | 8 | 1.86% |
| Education - Independent | 5 | 1.16% |
| Education - Primary | 58 | 13.46% |
| Education - Secondary | 48 | 11.14% |
| Education - Special | 31 | 7.19% |
| Education- independent | 2 | 0.46% |
| Health - GHC | 5 | 1.16% |
| Health - GHT | 7 | 1.62% |
| Health - Independent Provider | 1 | 0.23% |
| Health - Primary Care (Health Centres) | 1 | 0.23% |
| Health - SWAST | 4 | 0.93% |
| Health - Unknown | 2 | 0.46% |
| Other | 7 | 1.62% |
| Other - Charities | 5 | 1.16% |
| Other - Faith Groups | 8 | 1.86% |
| Other - Independent Provider | 116 | 26.91% |
| Other - School transport | 8 | 1.86% |
| Other - Voluntary Organisations | 1 | 0.23% |
| Police | 1 | 0.23% |
| Police - Uniform | 11 | 2.55% |
| Social Care - Children's Services | 7 | 1.62% |
| Social Care - Fostering | 17 | 3.94% |
| Social Care - Other | 1 | 0.23% |
| Sports Association | 18 | 4.18% |

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| Grand Total | 431 | 100.00% |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|

6.7 Categories of Harm

As per **Table 5** below, the primary category of harm identified in referrals was transferable risk at 35% with physical harm next at 28%.

The service focussed on educating agencies regarding transferable risk during 2024/25; This seems to have increased awareness and has seen a proportional increase of referrals indicating concerns relating to transferable risk. There is guidance available on the Allegations Management website around this.

Table 5- Categories of Harm

| Column1 | Total | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|----------------|
| Emotional harm | 41 | 9.51% |
| Neglect | 82 | 19.03% |
| Not given | 1 | 0.23% |
| Physical harm | 119 | 27.61% |
| Sexual harm | 39 | 9.05% |
| Transferable Risk | 149 | 34.57% |
| Grand Total | 431 | 100.00% |

6.8 Primary Outcomes of investigations

As outlined in KCSIE, the Allegations Management process allows for several possible Primary outcomes to be recorded. These are:

- Unfounded
- Unsubstantiated
- Malicious
- False
- Substantiated/founded.

Table 6

Outcomes for referrals received and concluded in 2024-2025

| Primary Outcomes | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Did not meet LADO Threshold | 8 | 3% |
| Malicious | 1 | 0% |
| Substantiated/Founded | 114 | 40% |
| Unfounded | 44 | 16% |
| Unsubstantiated | 106 | 37% |
| FALSE | 10 | 4% |
| Grand Total | 283 | 100% |

194 (23%) of all contacts are currently ongoing allegations management processes, this is due to ongoing criminal investigations.

114 (11%) of contacts progressed to substantiated allegations.

106 (37%) of contacts progressed to unsubstantiated allegations.

44 (16%) of contacts progressed and were concluded as unfounded.

Of the substantiated outcomes:

| Column1 | Total | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Early Years | 17 | 15% |
| Education - Alternative Provision | 1 | 1% |
| Education - Higher | 5 | 4% |
| Education - Independent | 1 | 1% |
| Education - Primary | 13 | 11% |
| Education - Secondary | 12 | 11% |
| Education - Special | 2 | 2% |
| Health - GHC | 1 | 1% |
| Health - GHT | 2 | 2% |
| Ofsted - Early Years | 3 | 3% |
| Other | 1 | 1% |
| Other - Charities | 1 | 1% |
| Other - Faith Groups | 3 | 3% |
| Other - Gloucestershire Council | 1 | 1% |
| Other - Independent Provider | 24 | 21% |
| Other - Voluntary Organisations | 1 | 1% |
| Other Local Authority | 2 | 2% |
| Police - MASH | 1 | 1% |
| Police - Out of County | 2 | 2% |
| Police - Specialist Unit | 3 | 3% |
| Social Care - Children's Services | 10 | 9% |

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|------|
| Social Care - Fostering | 4 | 4% |
| Social Care - Other | 2 | 2% |
| Sports Association | 2 | 2% |
| Grand Total | 114 | 100% |

6.9 Secondary Outcomes

Secondary outcomes are recorded for both contacts which result in advice and guidance as well as those which progress to an allegations management process. Of the 283 contacts which met threshold for an allegations management process, 67 (24%) did not require a secondary outcome (NFA). **Table 7** shows the secondary outcomes agreed in 2024/25, a percentage of which remain ongoing.

Table 7

| Secondary Outcome of AM Processes | Column2 | Column3 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Awaiting Panel decision | 4 | 1% |
| Cessation of Use | 6 | 2% |
| Continued registration with additional guidance | 2 | 1% |
| Demoted | 2 | 1% |
| Deregistration | 5 | 2% |
| Disciplinary | 6 | 2% |
| Dismissal | 30 | 11% |
| Final Written Warning | 16 | 6% |
| First Written Warning | 12 | 4% |
| Informal Warning | 2 | 1% |
| Management Advice | 13 | 5% |
| Management Monitoring | 21 | 8% |
| No Further Action | 67 | 24% |
| Referral to DBS | 2 | 1% |
| Reflective Practice | 2 | 1% |
| Reflective support | 3 | 1% |
| Resignation | 13 | 5% |
| Review of Training | 17 | 6% |
| | | |
| Risk assessment by Employer | 5 | 2% |
| Setting of Standards | 2 | 1% |
| Support plan | 2 | 1% |
| To be Confirmed | 1 | 0% |
| Training | 37 | 13% |
| Verbal Warning | 5 | 2% |
| Warning | 3 | 1% |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----|------|
| Warning / Retraining | 2 | 1% |
| Grand Total | 280 | 100% |

7. Reflections & achievements for 2024/25

7.1 Compliments & complaints

There were 2 complaints received by the service during 2024/25. Complaints received tend to come from individuals who have been the subject of an allegation. There can be confusion regarding the role of a LADO and the LADO's independence which often requires clarification.

When an allegation case is concluded users of the service are invited to feedback via a link to survey monkey. During 24/25 feedback was received from 10 users. Two users found the service and support to be poor. 'Communication is poor, processes seemed biased when working with social services.' The remaining feedback was positive and comments such as 'we have a very good LADO this helps us as a Nursery deliver a robust, safe and fair safeguarding'

The Allegations Management Service has featured in Children's Services monthly compliments collection on two occasions for providing supportive and helpful advice and guidance (compliments highlighted at the beginning of this report). Compliments have also been received regarding the quality of bespoke training delivered by the service. For example;

I just wanted to express my gratitude for your CPD session today on behalf of the school. I found it incredibly useful, and several staff members have already shared how beneficial they found it as well. I also really appreciate your guidance on accessing advice and support at the LADO level—it was valuable insight for my role. Thanks again for your time and expertise!

Secondary School, DSL

Many thanks for Monday's session. Found it informative and helpful.

Nigel has been very supportive through the case and has been on hand to advice and support.

Feedback from questionnaire

On behalf of XXX and myself, I would like to thank you for all your support, advice and guidance throughout this process. This is the first time either of us have had to engage in allegations management and it has been quite tough for all involved. It has been reassuring to know that there is someone we can go to with even what may seem the most basic of safeguarding queries; that has been very reassuring for me in particular

Feedback from a professional using the service

7.2 Training

The LADOs have provided bespoke allegations management training to areas they have identified as requiring a refresh and from services who make specific training requests. A summary of the training delivered in 2024/25 is outlined in **Table 7**.

Table 7

| Date | Agency | LADO |
|------------|--|------|
| 02/04/2024 | SENTE | NH |
| 24/05/2024 | Wicks Elm House | NH |
| 11/06/2024 | Police (Wheatstone House) | NH |
| 03/07/2024 | Oakwood Primary | NH |
| 26/11/2024 | Barnwood House | NH |
| 27/11/2024 | SW's and Lead Professionals from Early Help (Jane Heath) | NH |
| 09/01/2025 | Beaudesert School | NH |
| 28/01/2025 | Class Recruit | NH |
| 24/02/2025 | SGS Forest High School | KG |

7.3 What went well in 2024/25

- We continue to provide timely responses to contacts into the service
- Training - As set out within this report the team have been delivering bespoke training to a variety of agencies across Gloucestershire as when the need is identified or training is requested by the agency themselves.
- The team has worked closely with health colleagues to develop their awareness of allegations management and provide targeted training.
- A Liquid Logic allegations management pathway has been launched and is being used by the service. This will enable the team to create an improved data dashboard.
- Guidance around Transferable risk and how to risk assess, has been developed for all agencies dealing with allegations of this nature. The fact that Transferable Risk is now the highest category of harm this year reflects the impact of the awareness work the team have undertaken.
- The 'Managerless individuals' policy has been reviewed and updated to ensure individuals have a right to reply before a multi-agency decision is sought regarding concluded outcomes.
- A LADO representative is now invited to attend every Rapid Review for a child in Gloucestershire.
- The service webpage has been redesigned to be more user friendly and includes helpful links for professionals and members of the public.
- There are lead LADOs linked to key partners.
- Nigel Hatten is lead for Police and Faith Groups
- Nicky Power is lead LADO for social care and Fostering
- Karen Goulding is lead LADO for Education and Health
- Karl Carter has recently joined the service and will lead on Sports Clubs and Health
- We are providing exceptions reports to partners to assist them in their section 11 duties. We can provide detailed data on where referrals are being

received from and to whom they relate. This data can be used comparatively with internal safe recruitment processes for partners assurance.

7.4 What we will focus on in 2025/26

- The allegations management pathway on Liquid Logic needs further review to function as it needs to for the service.
- The service webpage will undergo further development. The webpage will have a number of new links added including a webinar explaining the role of the LADO and the allegation management process. There will be updated guidance for conducting investigations and reports.
- A new contact form has been drafted and will become mandatory for all enquiries into the service, whether a referral or for advice and guidance. There will be a link to this form on the service webpage.
- Contacts into the service regarding police and health professionals remain low despite bespoke training being provided. We will continue to raise awareness with these agencies. Lead LADOs will deliver advice and guidance and provide bespoke training to key partners.
- We look forward to the revised National LADO handbook due in January 2026 and review our own policies and procedures if required.
- Arrange a peer audit review by January 2026.
- We will review the feedback system to ensure that feedback from users of the service is analysed and learning is used to improve the service further.
- Launch a rolling training schedule which can be accessed by multi agency groups.