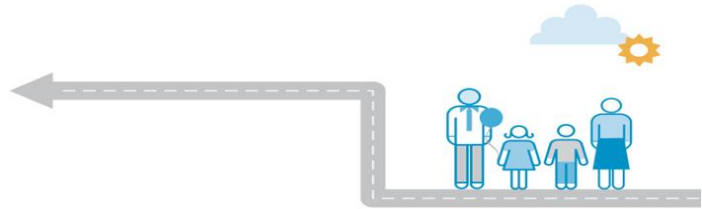


# **City of London**

## **Department of Community and Children's Services**

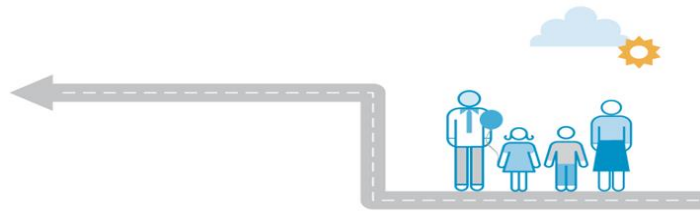
### **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report 2024-25**

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## 1. Introduction

The LADO role forms part of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service which sits within the People's Directorate, within the Department for Community and Children's Services. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the investigations and enquiries that have been made to the LADO service in the City of London for the period of 1st April 2024 through to 31st March 2025. An analysis of the data collected during this period will be set out in the report with reflections on themes and observations.

## 2. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Role

The responsibility of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated 2024), and the London Child Protection Procedures 7th edition (amended March 2025), Chapter 7. All allegations made against staff, including volunteers, that call into question their suitability to work with or be in a position of trust with children, whether made about events in their private or professional life, need to be formally reported to the LADO.

As set out in the London Safeguarding Children Procedures (7th Ed.; updated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025) organisations where employees and volunteers work with children (including foster carers and prospective adopters) should have clear and accessible policies and procedures to manage occasions when allegations are made against staff or volunteers. As part of that, organisations must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to whom the allegations are reported, who would then report it to the LADO who has the responsibility to manage and have oversight of allegations.

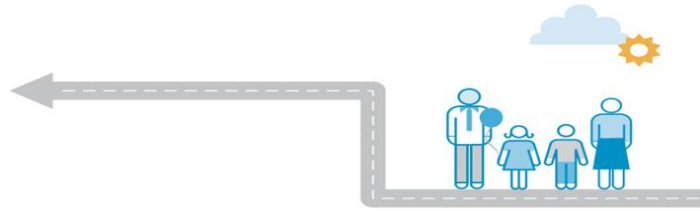
Upon receipt of referrals and enquiries being made to the LADO, a threshold is applied as determined by the criteria set out in the London Safeguarding Children Procedures (paragraph 2.1)<sup>1</sup> when an allegation had been made against a person who works with children or in connection with their employment or voluntary activity that they have:

- 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 or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.
- Behaves in a manner that discriminates against a child on the basis of one or more of their protected characteristics [1].

[1] as defined by the [Equalities Act 2010](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Chapter 7 of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures  
[https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/alleg\\_staff.html](https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/alleg_staff.html)



Further criteria (paragraph 2.2.) relates to allegations that can be made in relation to physical chastisement and restraint but can also relate to inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children or young people, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if consensual (see s16-19 Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- 'Grooming', i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (see s15 Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature e.g. inappropriate text/e-mail messages or images, gifts, socialising etc.
- Possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children.

In paragraph 2.3 it lists incidents where the procedures should be applied when there is an allegation that any person who works with children:

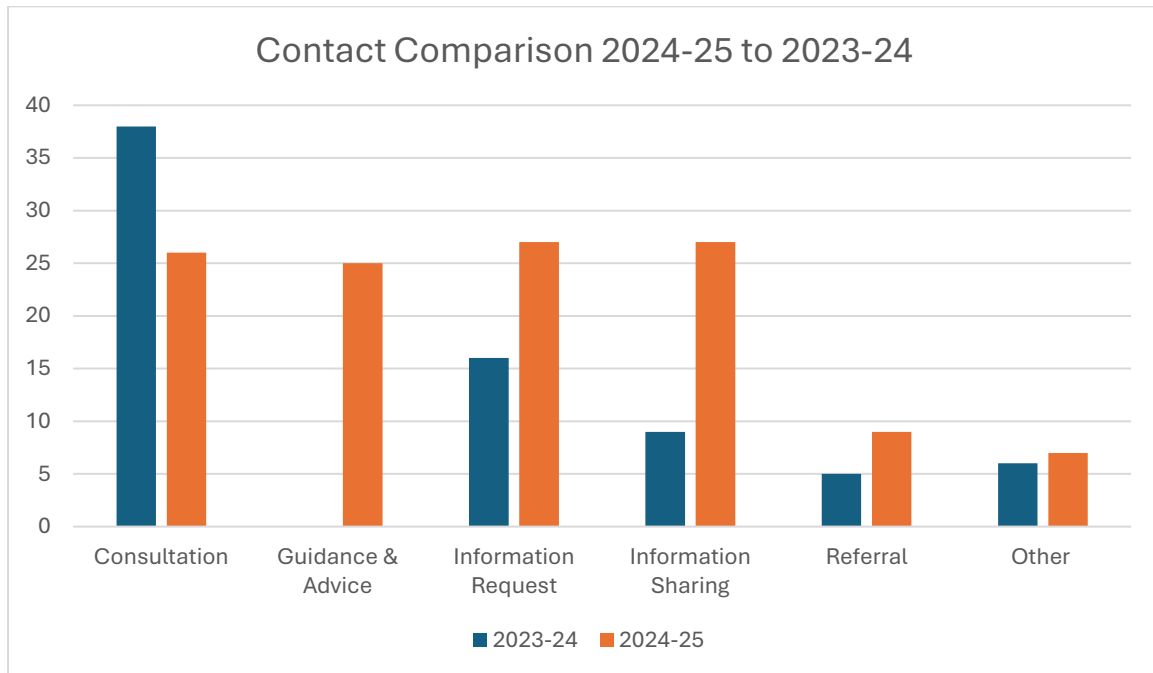
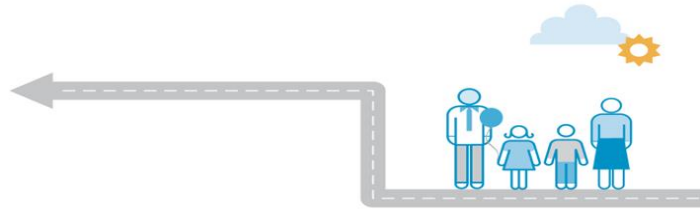
- Has behaved in a way in their personal life that raises safeguarding concerns. These concerns do not have to directly relate to a child but could, for example, include arrest for possession of a weapon.
- As a parent or carer, has become subject to child protection procedures.
- Is closely associated with someone in their personal lives (e.g. partner, member of the family or other household member) who may present a risk of harm to child/ren for whom the member of staff is responsible in their employment/volunteering.

In the City of London, the LADO work is carried out by the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance who reports directly to the Assistant Director of People's Services.

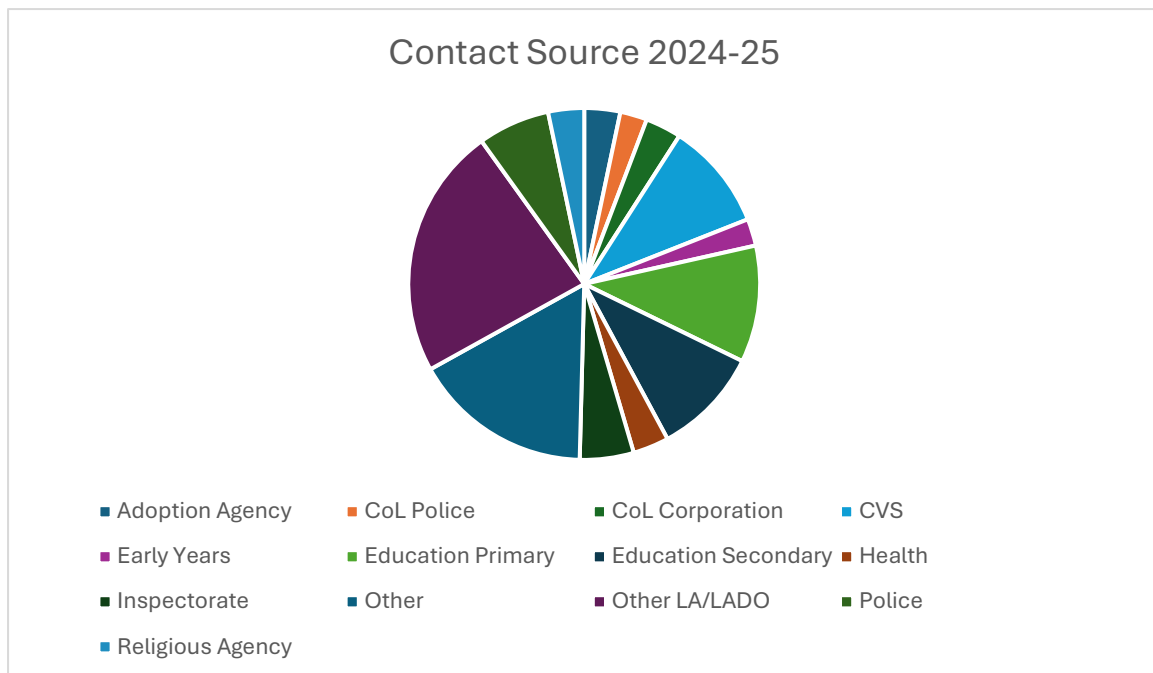
### 3. Contacts

This year there have been 122 contacts to the LADO Service, this is an increase of 48 from the previous reporting year, which is a 65% increase of contacts to the service. The increase in contacts is in line with London and National trends as is the fact that the vast majority of these, do not meet the LADO threshold. The increase in numbers is also attributable to improved recording methods.

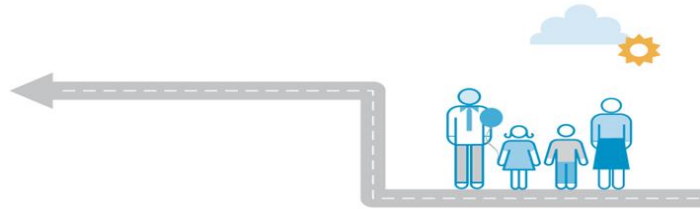
There has also been a change to the categories of contacts recorded to include guidance and advice. Contacts recorded as consultations generally require a one-off conversation to ensure that all aspects of the situation have been considered, and that appropriate action is taken to reduce any risk and improve conduct. Those instances where guidance and advice is provided often results in further action by the employer, such as an internal investigation with oversight from the LADO, rather than requiring an Allegation against Staff and Volunteers Meeting which would be recorded as a referral.



The source of the contact for last year is as outlined below.



There continues to be a wide range of agencies contacting the LADO, which demonstrates that the process is known and understood across a broad range of partners which is positive. The sectors with the highest level of contacts are 'Other LA/LADO' (23%) which given the size of the City there is often cross over with multiple Local Authorities in terms of where jurisdiction and responsibility may fall. This is also particularly prevalent for the City as there are several Head



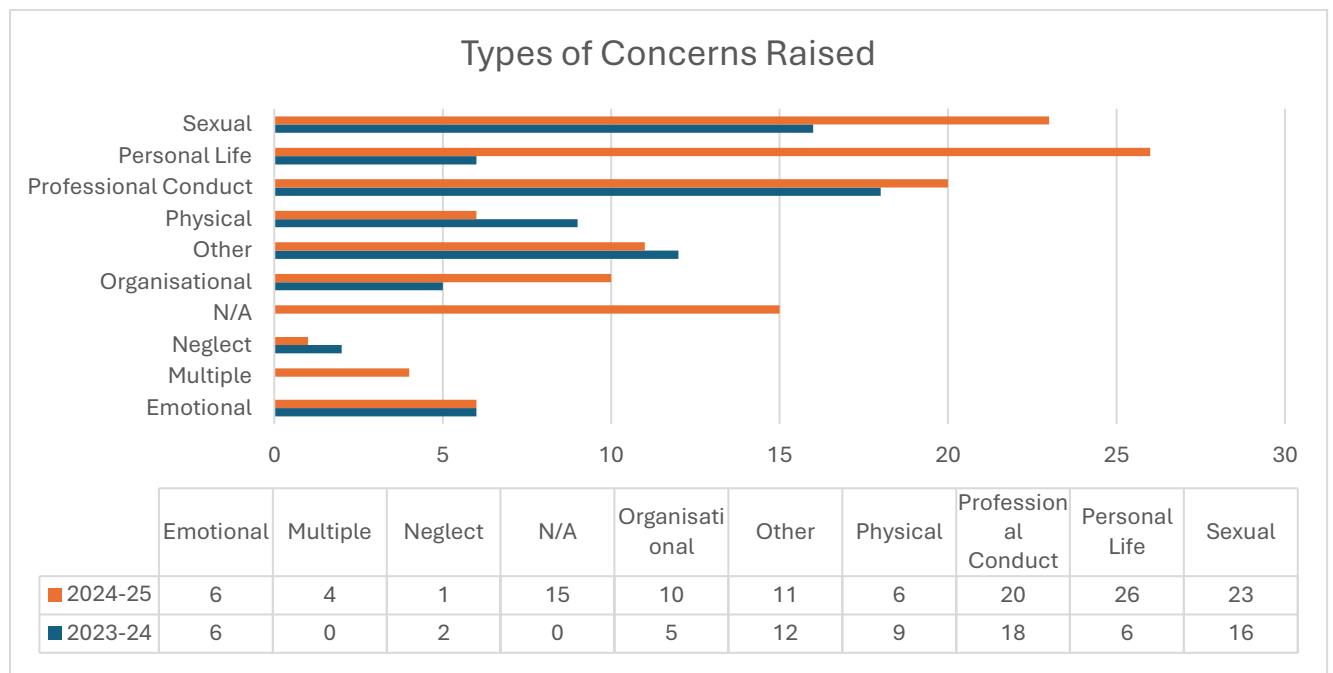
Offices of agencies so whilst professionals may not work in the City their agency employer by virtue of location of the Head Office is in the City. These have been managed in a timely and effective manner, to ensure risk is managed by the appropriate area.

The next highest category is 'Other' (16%), which often comprises contact from members of the public, parents, or employees themselves. Members of the public cannot refer directly to the LADO this should be done through the employer. Nor does the LADO communicate directly with any individual who is the subject of an allegation this is the responsibility of the employer. Following this education, both primary (11%) and higher (10%), are constantly high contactors of the LADO which is not necessarily surprising given how much time children spend at school and the range of needs presenting.

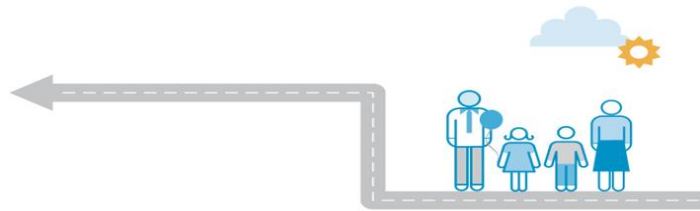
It is positive to continue to see a good level of contact from the Police and LADO, demonstrating that awareness raising and national action in prompting the need to notify of LADO of concerns relating to officers, as well as those who are being investigated who work with children, is having an impact.

In relation to the types of concerns being reported to the LADO Service, the four categories of harm as per child protection procedures are used alongside types of concerns relating to a person's personal life that could present transferable risk factors to their employment or work with children. The categories are recorded as per the presenting issue during the initial contact with the LADO.

For last year these were as follows.



This year a 'multiple' concerns category has been added when a range of allegations are being made about an individual's behaviour or conduct. Additionally, the 'Non-Applicable' category



has been used where contact is made but it quickly becomes apparent it needs to be directed to another LADO, details of the allegation are not sought as there is no reason for the City LADO to have this information, signposting to the correct agency instead.

The 'other' category is used to cover contacts relating to checks for individuals, request for advice around policy/procedure etc. Organisational concerns are logged when an issue has been raised that doesn't necessarily relate to an individual worker, but more a culture or overarching response from an organisation in relation to safeguarding concerns which is considered problematic. These issues do not sit with the LADO role to review but may require initiating a Whistleblowing procedure or notification to a governing body etc.

There continues to be a high level of reporting in relation to concerns of a sexual nature. This is positive and continues to demonstrate the impact of several high-profile sexual abuse prosecutions and 'Me Too' movement. This is a mix on non-recent and recent incidences and online offences.

#### 4. Referrals

Of the 10 contacts that met LADO threshold and were classified as referrals two remain open at the end of the reporting year as further information is being sought from Police and the employer. Three were transferred to other Local Authorities as this is where the employer was based.

Three referrals were taken to Allegations against Staff and Volunteers (ASV) Meetings, two resulted in a substantiated outcome and one in an unsubstantiated outcome. A substantiated outcome means "there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation that a child has been harmed or there is a risk of harm" whilst unsubstantiated means "there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence"<sup>2</sup>. Two were for sexual concerns whilst the third was physical. Where there was a substantiated outcome actions were made to refer to DBS, which is a legal duty for employers. In one case the statutory body was notified and there were ongoing internal HR processes that followed. In all cases individuals have been removed from their work with children in a timely way.

In a further case due to a significant delay in the Local Authority referring to the LADO the window (Section 47/significant harm threshold) to share information with the employer without the individual's agreement and hold an ASV Meeting had been missed, this was escalated with the Head of Safeguarding in the home Local Authority. Efforts were made to ensure that the individual had self-disclosed the issues in their personal life which may have transferable risk to their employment, and they indicated that they had.

In another case whilst the initial information appeared to indicate high and significant harm in the individual's personal life, once further information was shared by the investigating Police Force a very different picture of the circumstances were shared. Based on the updated

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<sup>2</sup> Section 7 [CP7. Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers \(People in Positions of Trust\), who Work with Children](#)



information received it was concluded that no further LADO action was required, that disclosure to the employer would be disproportionate, and the referral was closed with no further action.

## 5. Raising Awareness

LADO training continues to be provided through the CHSCP facilitated jointly by the Hackney LADO and the City LADO. This year the below training has been facilitated.

| Date       | Focus  | Facilitator              |
|------------|--|--------------------------|
| 17/04/2024 | LADO Training for Faith Group Leaders                          | City LADO & Hackney LADO |
| 03/05/2024 | Reporting Low Level Concerns – David Game College              | City LADO                |
| 19/06/2024 | LADO Training – Completing Internal Investigations             | City LADO & Hackney LADO |
| 05/11/2024 | LADO Overview Training   | City LADO & Hackney LADO |
| 27/01/2025 | LADO Training – Completed Risk Assessments                     | City LADO & Hackney LADO |
| 28/01/2025 | LADO Overview Training – City of London Public Protection Unit | City LADO                |

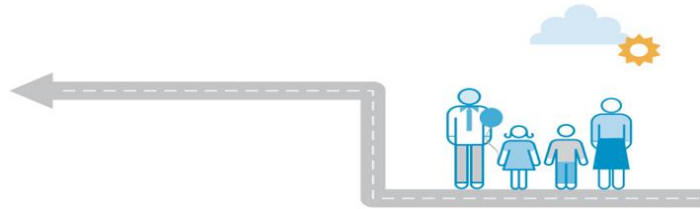
Training continues to be well attended with positive feedback. Bespoke training requests for specific settings or teams can be provided as needed. The LADO also attends and contributes to the Safeguarding in Education Forum on a quarterly basis.

The overview of the LADO continues to be part of bi-annual People’s Directorate Inductions which last took place on 15/11/2024. A LADO podcast has also been recorded for Early Years workers who often struggle to attend day time training sessions, this can be found on the Family Information Service website; [Training, forums and continued professional development - City of London Family Information Service](#).

This year there has been continued focus on developing support tools to aid consistency and clarity in relation to LADO and employment processes. A LADO Referral Form has been developed and now sits on the CHSCP website<sup>3</sup> as well as the finalisation of “A guide for parents/carers who are considering engaging a private tutor or similar”. An overview LADO leaflet has been updated and distributed. Also in train is the development of some guidance for employers around making referrals to the DBS, this is being produced in conjunction with the DBS Regional Outreach Advisor for London.

<sup>3</sup> Please see [Allegations against Staff & Volunteers | chscp](#)





## 6. Emerging Themes and Trends

This year there has been a change in relation to the highest reported concern which has been personal life (21%) matters where there may be potential transferable risk to employment or voluntary roles. In line with last year's report sexual concerns (19%) and those in relation to professional conduct (16%) remained high. As outlined earlier City is somewhat unique in terms of LADO work due to the number of Head Offices located in the City. Therefore, individuals may not live or work within the City but the risks in relation to their employment is managed by the City LADO due to the Head Office being based in the area.

London wide there has been an increase in relation to personal life concerns being raised which may demonstrate better understanding of individuals and services to notify employers. Also, we continue to live with the post COVID impact and ongoing physical and mental issues associated with this, a cost-of-living crisis, increased worldwide political instability and extremism, a more digital and online world and accessible content, all of which potentially impact individuals' emotional resilience and ability to respond empathetically to more challenging behaviour in both their personal and professional lives.

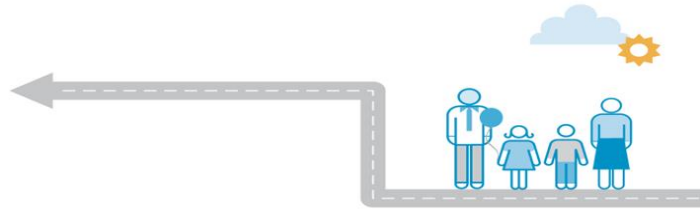
Whilst the LADO is not a public facing service parents and individuals are more aware of it and increasing making contact to directly to raise concerns, seek information, or share dissatisfaction with the outcome of a complaint dealt with by an employer. In these instances, they are directed back to the employer to gain information or follow their complaint/escalation process.

## 7. Multi-Agency Working

The data shows a good spread of contact from a wide range of agencies which is reassuring that the LADO role is well known in the City and understood. The central LADO email address provides consistency of contact and means the service is not dependent on a single individual being available. There remain some challenges when individuals are self-employed so there is no overarching employer or regulatory body to act. However, this is an issue for all LADO's and not unique to the City.

Police have been an engaged partner in ASV Meetings as required and employers have been responsive to any requests to notify regulatory bodies, or complete DBS Referrals. Given the number of consultations and requests for guidance and advice it appears that organisations in the City are comfortable in contacting the LADO and confident in the responses given, which will help develop strong working relationships going forward.

Given the unique position of the City, contact is often made by agencies who believe an individual works or volunteers 'in London' every effort is made to try and support agencies to direct their concerns to the most appropriate LADO. Often there is limited information on which to work but signposting is made to try and support the identification of the employer.



## 8. Oversight

### London LADO Network

The City LADO is a member of the London LADO Network which is a subgroup of the London Safeguarding Children Partnership. This network meets quarterly and is a good sounding board for any complex LADO cases, to share intelligence about emerging issues, and to map any patterns across the capital. It also provides individual peer support, builds good cross Borough LADO relationships, and gives a stronger collective voice to raise any concerns with partner agencies or to champion changes to policy or procedure. This year we have recently developed subgroups within London to provide additional peer support and strengthen working relationships across local areas.

### CHSCP Quality Assurance and Training, Learning and Development Subgroups and Safeguarding Partnership Board

The LADO Annual Report is taken to the CHSCP Quality Assurance Subgroup and Partnership Board Meeting for review. Any themes or emerging trends are raised at the Quarterly Subgroups as required, specifically any learning needs being identified through LADO cases.

### Safeguarding Sub-Committee

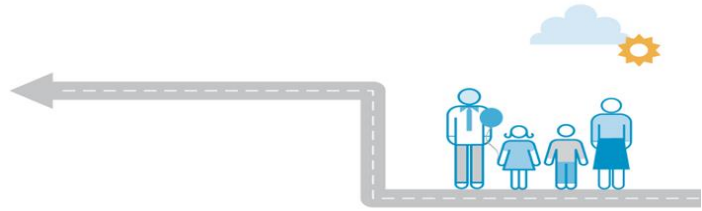
The LADO Report is taken to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee for consideration of Members, to ensure that there is a safe and effective workforce providing services to children and families in the City.

## 9. Update of 2024-25 Priorities

1. **Continue to develop the LADO training offer available through the CHSCP** – this is in place there has been a comprehensive package offered in the last year and dates are in place for next year
2. **Implement a LADO referral form to improve consistency of initial information received and recording** – this has been completed, and the Referral Form is now in place and sent to those wishing to make a referral.
3. **Review and update LADO information and guidance available for employers** – the LADO overview leaflet was updated and is accessible.
4. **Review internal recording procedures to ensure consistent and effective reporting of LADO data** – some refinements have been made this year to the LADO recording processes which support analysis of the data and performance.

## 10 Priorities for 2025-26

1. Continue to refine and develop the LADO training offer to ensure a diverse range of opportunities to engage a wide variety of professionals.
2. Review and update website information in relation to LADO to ensure this is accurate and easily accessible.
3. Continue to refine and develop recording systems to ensure that data and performance can be easily analysed and extrapolated.



4. Concerted efforts to be made to reach out to religious institutions in the City to raise awareness of LADO and when to contact, training available, and to offer bespoke sessions as needed.