



Safeguarding Children

ALLEGATIONS MANAGEMENT	
Report to GSCB for Annual Report April 2014	
Title of Report	Allegations Management Progress
Date of Report	From 1.04.13 – 31.3.14

Working Together 2010, Appendix 5 states that “LSCBs have a responsibility for ensuring there are effective inter agency procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with Children, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of those procedures”. The new Working Together 2013 retains this responsibility, asking LSCBs and Local Authorities to have their own arrangements in place. The South West Policy and Procedures group has adopted the Working Together 2010 framework for Allegations Management as the local arrangement with the agreement of all the South West Local Authorities.

The framework for managing cases under Allegations Management procedures is broader than the remit for criminal investigation or situations where there is reason to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm (Section 47 Children’s Act). The procedures also look at allegations that might indicate someone working or volunteering to work with Children is unsuitable to do so

The Allegations Management process within Gloucestershire is managed though the GSCB Business Unit. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Gloucestershire is also the Safeguarding Children Development Officer (education) and the post is funded by Gloucestershire County Council. The LADO provides advice and guidance in relation to allegations as well as monitoring the progress of cases to ensure they are managed consistently across agencies and private employers and are brought to a close as quickly as possible. The publication of Working Together 2013 also includes the role of the LADO.

Figures 1.4.13 – 31.3.14

There have been 329 Allegations made to the LADO this year. This compares to 240 in the time period 1 April 2012 to 31 Mar 2013. Of these allegations, 120 were taken forward to a multi agency Allegations Management meeting because they met the thresholds under the Government’s Allegations Management process which are: if the allegation is true, the member of staff has:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards children in a way that indicates they might be unsuitable to work with children (or for teaching staff behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children)

This compares to 102 meeting the same thresholds for the same period last year.

A breakdown of the agencies of the referrers and allegations is attached at **Appendix A**.

Trends:

The previously identified trend for high number of allegations made against education staff continues. There were 47 allegations made against education staff of physical abuse, 23 of sexual abuse and 20 of emotional abuse. This follows a consistent pattern across other LA areas in the South West and more widely. However, this is closely followed by an increasing number of physical abuse allegations made against foster carers (25). Many of these allegations are made against new foster carers.

Who is making allegations?

Interestingly, the number of allegations made by educational settings i.e. education as the referrer, has reduced to 74 from 80 last year after a continuous increase year on year previously. In comparison with this, the number of referrals made by social care has increased this year to 76 (43 last year). Referrals from education are now broader and not only against their own staff. For example, schools are increasingly referring drivers, early years settings (for younger siblings) and voluntary groups which might either be using the school site, or are mentioned by pupils making a disclosure. Previously social care mainly referred foster carers for Allegations Management but as with schools, there is a change in this pattern and social care are now referring a much broader range of staff e.g. health workers in contact with social care for domestic abuse or voluntary sector workers whose own children are under Section 47. This is encouraging as consideration of the 'whole family' has been a lesson publicised within local and National Serious Case Reviews.

It has been noted this year that the number of referrals in general made by an agency against a member of staff in a different agency is increasing. Referrals from the police have decreased slightly (45 this year compared to 53 last year) but are notably of a more complex nature with many (12) being serious on-line/e-safety cases.

There is wide range of other agencies referring in Allegations Management cases (see **Appendix A**) but the main ones include: social care, education and the Police. There has been a marked increase in referrals from care homes, early years settings and foster care agencies, Health and one particular area of the voluntary sector¹.

¹ It would not be appropriate to identify this area in a public report but the issue has been highlighted by the LADO within the SCR Sub Group of the GSCB, the SW LADO group and also directly with the Chair of the GSCB for further action, as recommended by the SCR Sub Group.

The number of referrals from Youth Services remains low. Referrals have also been received on a regular basis from Ofsted, CQC and the NSPCC.

Very small numbers of referrals have also been received this year from: parents, drugs services, transport services for young offenders, housing providers, Armed Forces, Cafcass, Integrated Transport Unit, Sports clubs, faith groups (including non-Christian denominations) and taxi licensing authorities. This is very encouraging and is a sign that the knowledge and confidence of other agencies is increasing. Last year there were 26 referrals from smaller sectors compared to 53 this year.

Who are the Allegations made against?

The majority of allegations remain against education staff (in total 107 compared to 89 last year). This year there has been an increase in allegations made against foster carers (50 with most being physical compared to 26 allegations in total against foster carers last year), Early Years Settings (42, with 21 being related to neglect compared to 19 allegations in total against Early Years staff last year), care homes (19 compared to 14 last year) and sports settings (14. Not previously recorded as there were not enough to be measurable as a lone group). There has also been a small increase in the number of allegations made against health staff (16 compared to 9 last year). Allegations made against Religious groups have remained the same over the last 2 years.

Numbers of allegations made against police officers remain low. This has been highlighted by the South West LADO group and is thought to be because police have their own Independent Police Complaints Committee (IPCC) which completes its own investigation without referral to the Allegations Management process. Despite this, there have been a small number of referrals relating to police officers within this reporting period (6).

Small numbers of referrals have also been made against host families, those within the voluntary sector, fire fighters, prison officers and housing officers having contact with children.²

Types of Allegations made

Across all agencies, there were 74 allegations made of sexual abuse against a child and in addition to this, there were 13 allegations of use of sexual images/inappropriate texting/inappropriate use of social media by staff working or volunteering with children. The highest numbers of allegations of a sexual nature were made against education staff (23), drivers, (7), early years (6), faith groups (5), foster carers (5) and health staff (5).

There were 110 allegations of physical abuse against children across the agencies. As recorded in previous years, by far the majority of these were lower level allegations made against education staff (47) however this majority is decreasing.

There were 67 allegations of neglect, with the majority of these being within the Early Years sector (21) and also for foster carers (10). Other agencies all received fairly small numbers of allegations of neglect.

² Agencies about which there were very small number of allegations made have not been identified within this report as to do so may inadvertently identify the individual.

For emotional abuse, the majority again were from education (20) and foster carers (10) and included mostly allegations of a bullying nature made against the member of staff.

This year, the number of allegations of physical abuse made during formal and authorised restraint procedures has increased, with 17 allegations made during restraints in schools or care homes compared to 9 last year. As well as this, there have this year been a small number of children alleging that authorised restraints have been used as punishment where it was not required. In addition to running the Allegations Management process on individuals in these cases, settings where this is alleged to have occurred have been referred to the appropriate regulatory body.

Outcomes from Allegations Management cases

The Allegations Management process allows for a number of possible outcomes: Unfounded, Unsubstantiated, Malicious, Substantiated, Resignation, Disciplinary, Suspension, Cessation of Use, Dismissal, Referral to regulatory body, Referral to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Criminal Investigation, Caution or Conviction. This means that for most cases, more than one recording will be made to show progress through the process e.g. someone suspended pending a criminal investigation who then resigns and is later convicted will have all of these recorded against their case at any one point.

The new guidance for educational settings³ reduces these recordings for teaching staff to; Substantiated, Malicious, False and Unsubstantiated as a final recording. The South West LADO group will be looking at whether to adopt these final recordings for other cases.

For this annual period, there were:

- 131 disciplinary investigations⁴
- 59 criminal investigations
- 38 suspensions
- 8 resignations
- 62 allegations were eventually recorded as unfounded
- 34 allegations were recorded as unsubstantiated following investigation
- 15 dismissals,
- 19 referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service,
- 6 cautions, convictions or imprisonments
- 5 people are currently charged with a further number currently on police bail.

Three allegees died (two of old age as these were historic allegations). Fifteen families were opened to social care under Section 47 of the Children's Act due to allegations made against their parents who also work with children.

³ Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE published 3.4.14 (supersedes Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007))

⁴ The number of disciplinary investigations (131) is higher than the number that went forward for an Allegations Management meeting (120) because occasionally, where it is clear that the police do not want to become involved, the employer is asked to undertake an investigation and report back without the need for a formal meeting.

High Profile Cases

There have been 3 particularly high profile cases this year and 7 which have been reported in the local or National press. The Gloucestershire Public Protection Bureau Safeguarding Unit and the LA press offices are continuing to release pre-discussed press releases, however these have moved away from being joint press releases. It is the intention that the LADO and the LA Press Officer instigate a discussion with the Police Press Office to reinstate joint press releases to ensure that the message is clear that we are working together.

Operation Yew Tree

It is difficult to know whether the criminal action against a number of celebrities in the UK and the media reporting of these cases has had an impact on the figures for Allegations Management this year. There has been an increase in historic allegations (17 reported this year compared to 6 last year) however this on its own is not enough to explain the increase in the number of allegations made. It is possible however, that the higher profile of what is acceptable and what it not, has made people more aware of the requirement to refer in when there are concerns and that coupled with more publicity about the LADO role generally, this might explain the increase in referrals.

South West

Gloucestershire's LADO continues to chair the South West Local Authority Designated Officer Committee. 13 LAs are represented on the Committee which has been running since 2007. The group has a business plan and terms of reference and its primary functions are to ensure SW LADOs are up to date with national guidance, developments within the South West (as neighbouring LAs) and are working in a comparable way. This year the Committee has set up secure web pages so that there is easy access to cross county communication and ensures that each LADO has an opportunity for contact with another LADO to share practice reflections and difficult cases, which are completely anonymised.

In March 2014, the first National LADO conference was held in Manchester and was attended by approximately 150 LADOs from across the Country. The conference was very well attended by those from the SW LADO conference. Speakers included Ofsted, National Sports, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Armed Forces and Manchester's LADO. It is hoped that a National Conference for LADOs will become an annual event.

Learning from LADO cases

This year's statistics and qualitative data show that the number of cases is rising and that the cases going on to a multi agency Allegations Management meeting are becoming more complex. It is the intention next year to include a figure for the number of cases requiring a second or subsequent meeting.

However, the figures also show that agencies making referrals are becoming more diverse, as are employment settings where those who have allegations against them

work. It is hoped that this is due to continued roll out of training and an increase in knowledge across the county. This year a series of forums has been rolled out to the Diocese. The number of allegations made by (and against) faith groups is therefore expected to rise next year.

In previous years, the number and severity of allegations made against taxi drivers has been high. However this year there is a marked decrease in allegations against taxi drivers (5% last year to 2% this year) following a concerted effort to work with the taxi licensing authorities and taxi companies themselves. The Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) continues to be supportive of this work, as do the district councils and their legal support.

Communication between agencies continues to be a strength, particularly within the police. The re-organisation at the latter end of this year from a Child Abuse Investigation Team to the teams of the Public Protection Bureau Safeguarding Unit and Investigation Unit has meant a slight change of staff but this has worked well. Police and social care continue to prioritise Allegations Management and attendance at what are often short notice meetings is high.

Working with other processes

As well as learning from figures and trying to target responses to specific areas, the Allegations Management process is interlinking with other processes such as: Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPPA), Domestic Abuse referral process (DARP), Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Gang Support, General Medical Council assessment process and drug support services.

This has contributed to learning but also ensured that referrals through to Allegations Management are included within other relevant processes and action can be taken much earlier than previously. Working in an interlinked way enables an earlier outcome and also ensures that any learning is disseminated across other processes and is therefore multi agency.

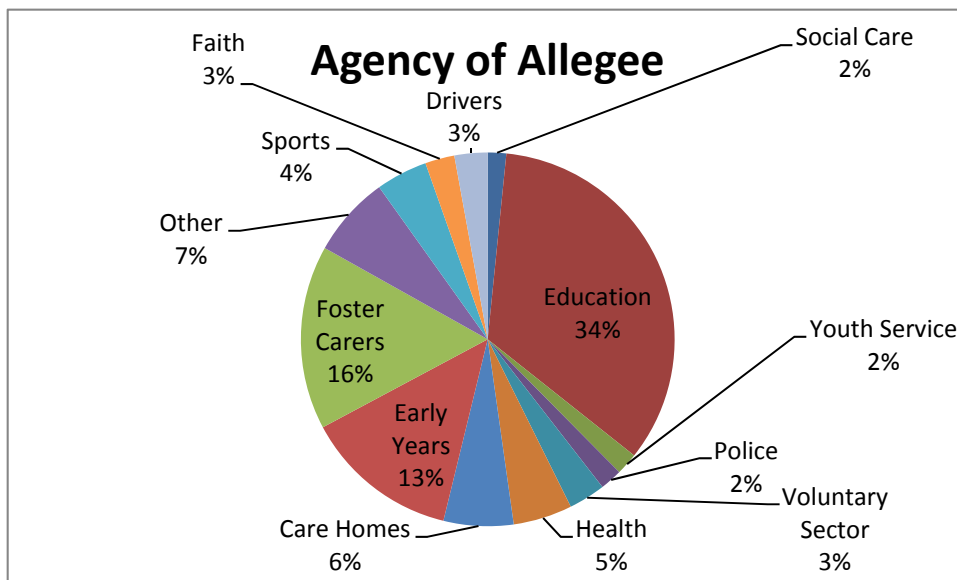
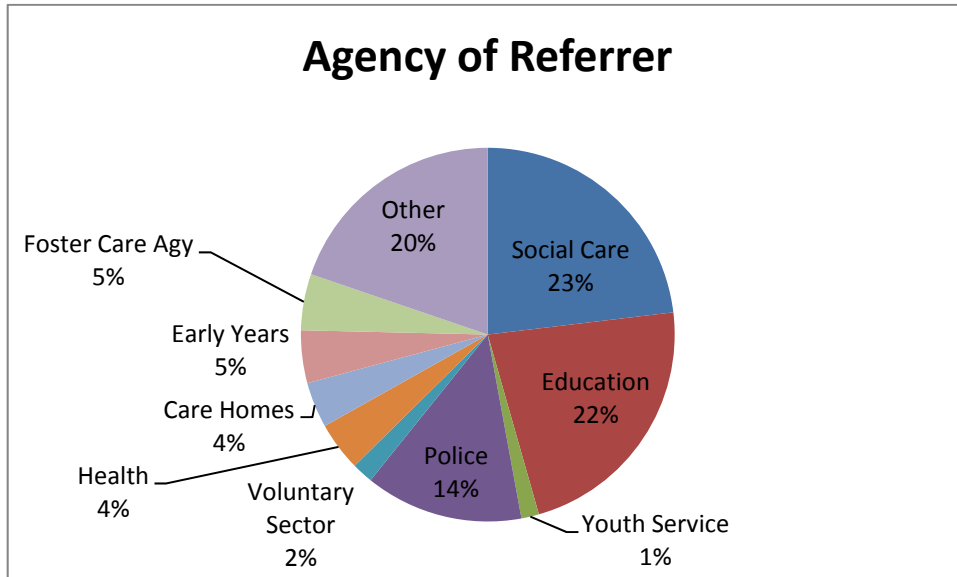
Future areas for development

Allegations against Education staff continue to be the highest and are increasing year on year. All Gloucestershire schools are asked to include Safeguarding (including Allegations Management) within the induction for each member of staff. Most schools report that they are beginning to do this and 65% of them are now providing a copy of the Guide to Safer Working Practice to all school staff and making it a requirement that staff sign to say that they have read this⁵. However the new 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2014 makes it a requirement of all educational settings that Safeguarding becomes part of induction. It is hoped that this might also help to improve the message about safe working practice to school staff, reducing the number of allegations made.

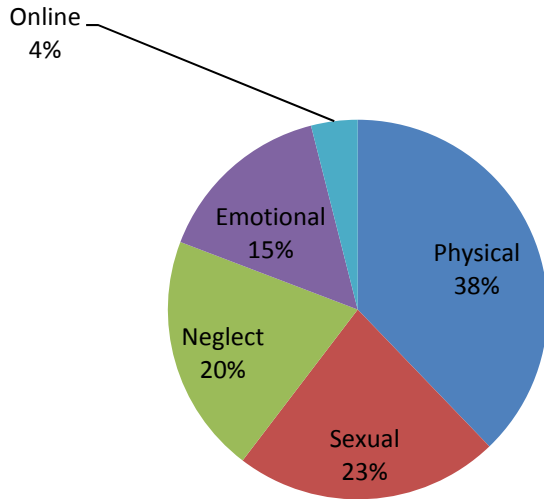
⁵ Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 - Audit of all educational settings within Gloucestershire 2013

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Appendix A – Statistics:



Allegations by Category



Outcomes

