



Camden Safeguarding
Children Board

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ADULTS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2016 – MARCH 2017

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1. Introduction

1.1 There have been no changes to the LADO procedures during the period covered by this report and the following is an outline of the current procedures. However, the procedures are currently under review and following an extensive consultation period the new procedures are due to be implemented in September 2017

1.2 The current LADO procedures are:

The management of what to do if there are concerns about an adult who works with children is outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013) and the London Child Protection Procedures. In April 2015 the "New Working Together Guidance" made the following amendments to the guidance;

- *Policies around allegations against staff should include a distinction between an allegation, a complaint and a care or practice standard concern.*
- *Actions on allegations should be co-ordinated and carried out without delay by a designated officer or team of officers; the officer(s) should have sufficient qualifications and experience to carry out this role – normally it should be a social worker. New appointments to this role should be qualified social workers unless the designated officer is currently in post and is moving from one authority to another.*

1.3 Apart from this the guidance and procedures have not changed in relation to when there are concerns or it is alleged that an adult who works with children, either as an employee or in a voluntary capacity, has:

- Behaved in a way that may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child;
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.

Such behaviour should be considered within the context of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect. It includes concerns about inappropriate relationships between members of staff and children.

1.4 The role of the DBS:

The DBS procedure considers the following work with children as regulated activity. This covers:

- Unsupervised activities such as teaching and social care
- Work for a limited range of establishments such as schools, children's homes and other child care premises
- Relevant personal and healthcare even if done once only
- Registered child minding
- Foster care

1.5 The employer has a duty to refer; the Local Authority has a power to refer when:

- A person has been permanently removed from regulated activity
- The referring party thinks that the person has:
 - Engaged in relevant conduct
 - Satisfied the harm test
 - Received a caution for, or has been convicted of, a relevant offence.
- For most cases the DBS only has the power to bar a person who is, has been or might in future engage in regulated activity

2. Lead officer for managing allegations against adults who work with children

2.1 A named senior officer who has overall responsibility for ensuring that allegations are responded to appropriately and that any difficult interagency issues are effectively resolved;

2.2 A Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who will be involved in the management and have oversight of individual cases, provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organizations and liaise with police and other agencies;

2.3 Employers in each agency should designate a senior manager to whom allegations or concerns should initially be reported;

2.4 The police should designate a named police officer to liaise with the LADO; take part in strategy discussions and share information as appropriate.

2.5 Below are Camden's lead officers for managing such allegations:

- **Anne Turner**, Director of Children's Safeguarding and Social Care, is the lead for Camden.
- **Bodil Mlynarska**, Head of the Quality Assurance Unit is the LADO
- **Kurt Ferdinand**, Service Manager for Children Looked After, is the Deputy LADO.
- **IROs: Sarah Brown, Hellen Stack, Jas Johal and Sonia Forbes** are the local LADO leads and they now share a duty rota taking referrals, providing advice and chairing LADO meetings as required.

3. Future changes to the LADO procedures

3.1 Following a process of extensive consultation significant changes will be made to the LADO procedures.

3.2 Key proposed changes are below:

- The meetings chaired by LADOs to investigate allegations will no longer be referred to as 'strategy meetings' – they will instead be referred to as 'Allegations against Staff and Volunteers' Meeting and abbreviated to ASV meetings. The purpose would be to avoid confusion with the Section 47 process for the assessment of child protection concerns
- There is an emphasis throughout on the difference between an allegation and a concern and it is highlighted that an ASV should not be held unless it has been decided that the matter reaches the threshold of being an 'allegation'. Reference to

the need to follow the procedures when 16 & 17 year olds are working with other children will be added.

- The threshold of *significant* harm is not used as criteria for an investigation to take place – this threshold is not set within Working Together and the Child Protection Procedures cannot set a more restrictive criterion than the statutory guidance.
- There will be further procedures concerning cases which cross borough boundaries

3.3 Following the consultation process the new procedures will be implemented in September 2017.

4. Management Information from April 2016 to the end of March 2017

4.1 139 referrals were made to the LADO regarding allegations or concerns about the behaviour of adults who work with children. This was an increase of 19 referrals compared to the previous year.

4.2 As would be expected, the majority of referrals relate to adults who work *directly* with children. The professionals include:

- 60 teachers/teaching assistants;
- 11 School support workers (dinner lady, caretaker, cleaner, bus driver, sports coach, cook);
- 12 nursery workers
- 15 health workers (nurses, hospital staff , GP);
- 9 foster carers;
- 5 child minders
- 2 social workers
- 3 residential social workers
- 2 sports professionals
- Others include– Religious worker, Nanny, voluntary worker, diving officer, theatre employee, play worker.

4.3 The nature of the concerns:

- Physical abuse and/or chastisement were the concerns in 49 cases, which was 16 less than the previous year. Apart from cases of restraint, there was no evidence of a physical injury. In the majority of cases the incidents related to teachers either having difficulty in managing challenging behaviour or children misunderstanding, or not accepting the teacher's authority. The child or their parent made the majority of allegations. Some of the children presented challenging behaviour
- In 26 referrals the concerns were about behaviour in the person's private life. This included physical and sexual abuse of own children, domestic violence and parental substance misuse. This was an increase of 10 cases. The referrals were made by LADOs in other local authorities or Camden managers.
- In 28 cases concerns related to possible sexual abuse/sexual harassment, which was similar to the previous year when 26 cases referred to possible sexual abuse/sexual harassment.

- The concerns in 11 cases related to Neglect and 10 cases related to emotional abuse. In the previous year, no cases were identified to relate to neglect.
- The concerns related to foster carers are reported separately.

5. Outcomes

- 5.1 Virtually all LADO referrals were discussed in a telephone strategy discussion with the CAIT to consider whether the referral was an allegation of abuse, or, a complaint, or, about professional standard concerns.
- 5.2 Thirty-one referrals were deemed allegations of abuse, which had reached a threshold requiring police involvement. Such referrals led at least to a sit down strategy meeting and 15 of these subsequently led to further criminal investigations. The LADO does not currently have the data regarding how many criminal investigations led to criminal court proceedings. One case was referred to the DBS. Eight were found to be historical allegations which were always referred to the CAIT
- 5.3 One hundred referrals were deemed not to reach a criminal threshold because:
- In fifty cases, there was no evidence of abuse or neglect.
 - Forty four were found to be complaints about Professional standards
 - The concerns were investigated by senior managers within the relevant agency and in sixteen of those, it was found that the professional could have managed the situation better and of those, five led to disciplinary procedures.
 - Twenty-four were not substantiated.
 - Six were found to be about restraints of children who presented challenging behaviour for various reasons. Although some of the children did suffer minor bruising the use of restraints was found to have been used proportionately because the children were at risk of harming themselves, other children or members of staff. Restraint training was always explored and staff involved in these cases had all been trained but nevertheless were motivated to explore further training needs
 - Nine were allegations concerning foster carers which will be considered in a separate report.
- 5.4 The investigations were completed within the following timescales:
- 92 within one month
 - 29 within three months
 - 12 within 6 months
 - 7 are ongoing
- 5.5 Was the perpetrator suspended during the investigation?
- 28 were suspended
 - 107 were not but were often moved to positions where they did not have direct work with children.
- 5.6 Was the DBS informed?
- One case was referred to the DBS.

- 5.7 In addition to the above, the LADO frequently gives advice to managers when they have concerns about possible LADO issues. Many such cases, after discussion, are found to not reach the LADO threshold but unless there are strong reasons not to, the referral information and the outcome of the discussion will be included on a LADO file.
- 5.8 LADO Referrals in the last 5 years:
- 2012/13 - 53
 - 2013/14 - 75
 - 2014/ 15 - 117
 - 2015 /16 - 120
 - 2016/17 - 139
- 5.9 In 2016 /17 there has been an increase of 19 referrals to the LADO. Adults who work directly with children are more likely to have allegations or concerns raised about their behaviour. The children themselves or their parents raise the concerns. The remaining allegations relate to adults from a wide variety of services, which would suggest there is good understanding by managers about what to do when there are concerns about adults who work with children.

6 Listening to children

- 6.1 It is important that all children feel they can tell someone if they are worried that they, or, one of their friends are being abused by an adult who works with children.
- 6.2 Information specifically for children about what to do if they or a friend believe they are being abused by an adult who works with them has been added to "BACKCHAT " the Camden website for children and parents from Camden and who have an allocated social worker. The information has also been added to the CSCB website. The online format ensures that participation is accessible to all CYP including those out of borough.
- 6.3 The annual *Young Inspectors programme* continues to undertake inspections of a wide range of statutory services in order to adapt and improve services for the benefit of children and families. This ensures that the views of children and young people have an impact on services. The next young inspectors program will focus on practice and services for children with disabilities and the young inspectors will include you people with disabilities.

7 Analysis

- 7.1 The number of referrals have increased by 19. . Whilst we cannot be sure about the reasons for this, I believe the increase in referrals is partly due to an increase in recent major historical enquiries in the world of sport rather than evidence of an increase in abusive and inappropriate behaviour.
- 7.2 As expected, concerns refer in the main to adults who spend most of their working life with children.
- 7.3 Whilst all abuse of children is serious and its prevention a priority, in the majority of cases, after thorough enquiries, concerns were not substantiated. The concerns were often found to relate to a misunderstanding between the adult and the child, or the child was finding it difficult to accept the authority of the adult.

- 7.4 Part of the LADO's role is to monitor how quickly and consistently cases are dealt with to ensure that the process is fair and thorough. All cases should be concluded within 6 months and for most, the timescale continues to be met. Cases that are not comprise criminal investigations
- 7.5 The LADO has continued to provide advice and consultation to managers in all agencies. This has helped named staff to gain further clarity about thresholds and any action to be taken. The LADO service provide a daily duty rota to manage referrals.
- 7.6 The Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) and the LADO have worked well together. Almost all referrals are discussed with the CAIT and strategy meetings held as required. Information sharing has been effective and both agencies have been able to challenge one another. In February 2017, the police safeguarding structure was redesigned and, therefore, there may be some early issues about effectively working together which will need to be monitored.
- 7.7 No anonymous referrals were made to the LADO.
- 7.8 there has been an increase of 10 cases of concerns that relate to an adult's behaviour in his/her private life. All adults working with children have responsibility for maintaining public confidence in their ability to do so safely. They are, therefore, expected to maintain high standards of conduct in their private as well as their working lives. They must also understand that the behaviour and actions of partners may reflect on their suitability to work with children.
- 7.9 Guidance on appropriate behaviour is part of the Local Authority's induction program and Camden has produced a leaflet for members of staff who are subject to an investigation.
- 7.10 The concerning behaviour in the adults private life include substance misuse, domestic abuse and parenting issues which have led to their own children being added to a child protection plan . It also includes concerns by association if a close associate of the worker has behaved in a way that has placed children at risk of significant harm.

8. Historical Child Abuse

- 8.1 A historical allegation of abuse is one that is made after the abuse has stopped. It includes allegations made by adults about their experience of abuse during childhood.
- 8.2 The response to an allegation of historical abuse made by an adult must be as robust as that to referrals about current abuse because there is every possibility that a person who has abused a child in the past may still be abusing other children.
- 8.3 In addition, a criminal prosecution might still be possible if care is taken to collect sufficient evidence. The Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) leads on historical allegations and will pursue a criminal investigation if the alleged victim requests this.
- 8.4 In Camden, referrals of historical abuse by adults were relatively common in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Overall, they related to abuse experienced during the 1970s and 1980s in Camden's residential homes or foster homes. All Camden's children's homes were closed about 15 years ago and few historical allegations have been referred over the last 10 years in relation to children's homes.

- 8.5 Sometimes children who are looked after and placed in foster or residential homes will make allegations of abuse after they have moved to another placement and the abuse has stopped. Such allegations are always responded to vigorously and are fully investigated.
- 8.6 Sometimes adults report historical abuse by a professional such as a teacher, doctor or social worker.
- 8.7 In the time period covered by this report the LADO service received nine historical child abuse referrals. Which included seven allegations of sexual abuse and two allegations of physical abuse which took place over the following timespan:
- *One 50 years ago*
 - *Four 15 years ago*
 - *Four 10 years ago*

The CAIT police leads on historical allegations and all the cases were robustly investigated as far as possible

- 8.8 The outcomes:
- Three criminal investigations could not be completed because in spite of robust attempts by both the Police and CSSW it was not possible to identify the alleged perpetrator.
 - Three cases were investigated and no evidence was found to support the allegations.
 - Two investigations could not progress because the young adults did not want to pursue the matter and therefore refused to make statements to the police without which the criminal investigation could not progress
 - One case was against a foster carer and was found to be about professional standards and not an allegation of abuse
- 8.9 Research shows that in the majority of cases adults who made allegations of historical abuse had attempted to disclose the abuse at the time it was happening. However, not all disclosures were heard, or if heard, acted upon. Research also highlighted how important it is to make children aware of appropriate boundaries, their right to protection, safety, and healthy relationships. It is crucial that children are given information about how and where to seek help.
- 8.10 The Children's Commissioner's report on the findings from a national Enquiry into CSA confirmed that professionals are not always confident in their ability to identify child sexual abuse. In addition, children often find it difficult to disclose the abuse and therefore professionals have to develop additional skills in how to work with suspicion of sexual abuse.
- 8.11 The CSCB have continued to support training to increase the awareness of child sexual abuse and how to respond when there are suspicions that a child is suffering child sexual abuse.

- 8.12 Camden schools have worked closely with the NSPCC training program for schools to equipping children to understand healthy and safe relationships. Schools play a key role in safeguarding children and schools try to ensure that children have a number of trusted adults they can talk to about their worries. In addition to safeguarding, there are also workshops on subjects such as e-Safety, gangs and radicalisation.
- 8.13 A multi-agency professional CSCB group led by the NSPCC has developed workshops for all school staff (including teachers, dinner ladies, teaching assistants etc.) with a view to raising awareness and early detection of children who may be suffering from child sexual abuse.
- 8.14 The CSCB annual conference was held in February 17 and focused on sexual abuse within the family context and children sexually exploited. The conference focused on how to increase the identification of child sexual abuse and how to protect children from abuse in the first place. Subsequently a “Task and Finish group” has been set up to ensure that the recommendation from the conference are implemented in Camden.
- 8.15 When a child becomes looked after they are given an information pack, which includes details of who to talk to if, they have concerns. The pack also includes leaflets about e-Safety.
- 8.16 In addition to their allocated social worker, all children/young people looked after have an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who will also try to ensure their safety and welfare. The IRO has an independent relationship with the child /young person and will meet with them both before and after the formal childcare review. If the young person presents troubling behaviour, the IRO will discuss with sensitivity what may explain such behaviour and how the child/young person can be helped. Awareness/training has included being vigilant about possible abuse by carers or if there is sexual exploitation.

9. Implementation of recommendations from 15/16 report

- 9.1 To monitor that we are reaching the whole community The LADO file template will be amended to include checklist information on disabled children and children from BME communities.
- 9.2 *Nine child victims were identified as disabled. This is the first time the disability of the child victim has been counted so it is not possible to compare with previous years. However, there is an impression that there has been an increase of disabled child victims, which corresponds to an increase of strategy meetings where the child victim is disabled. In addition, there has been an increase of children and young people with autism and some of them have presented with very challenging behaviour.*
- 9.3 *Unfortunately, it was only possible to identify ethnicity of a 3rd of the victims and it is therefore not useful to include the information for this report.*
- 9.4 To monitor the nature and outcomes of historical allegations the LADO template will be amended to include check list information on historical referrals.
- Nine referrals were historical. The detailed information is included in chapter 6.

- 9.5 As part of the “Prevent “agenda the LADO service to monitor any referrals against adults who in a statutory or voluntary capacity groom children and young people for radicalisation and extremism.
- 9.6 No allegations were referred to the LADO of adults who worked with children groomed them for radicalisation and extremism.
- 9.7 Feedback from referrers to be obtained. Schools, nurseries and health referrers are invited to provide feedback on what the LADO service has done well. So far, the response has been positive.

The referrers welcome the following

- 9.8 The LADO response has been helpful reflective, sensible, informative and professional. The response has been timely and the communication effective.
- 9.9 What could have been done differently?
- 9.10 One referrer reported that she had not always been able to get hold on the duty LADO in a timely way.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 To monitor the amended Bail Act (RUI released under investigation).
- 10.2 Future reports to include information from the Police regarding how many cases went to court and the outcome and identify the average time for a case to proceed to court.