

Rutland County Council

People Directorate Vulnerable Children

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report 2013/14

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The national requirement for local authorities to appoint a designated officer (LADO) to manage allegations against adults who work with children was introduced in Working Together (2006) and in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2006).
- 1.2. Further guidelines can be found in the publication Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff (July 2011).
- 1.3. Local allegations procedures are contained in Chapter 7.2 of the Leicestershire & Rutland Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Policies and Procedures.
- 1.4. The LADO responsibility sits with the Head of Service for Vulnerable Children in Rutland County Council.

2. Aim and Objectives of the LADO

2.1. Aim:

- 2.1.1. To safeguard children by working with multi-agency stakeholders to promote a safer workforce culture within the Local Authority and the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) boundaries.

2.2. Objectives:

- 2.2.1. To address allegations against adults who work with children as quickly as possible to reach a satisfactory conclusion and a final outcome.
- 2.2.2. To be consistent and fair using a thorough process including robust and timely actions
- 2.2.3. To ensure that all referrals and procedures are recorded on the Rutland CC internal systems and electronic database to enable statistics and quality assurance to influence good practice, future developments and resources.

- 2.2.4. To promote safer working practices by contributing to the LSCB and other relevant training programmes.
- 2.2.5. To work proactively with external agencies to ensure that LADO referrals are appropriate and that agencies understand and respond to their LADO responsibilities.

3. Complaints and Allegations

- 3.1. The process of managing allegations starts where information comes to the attention of a Senior Manager which suggests that an adult working with children may have:
 - 3.1.1. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - 3.1.2. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - 3.1.3. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

- 3.2. Employers may also seek the advice of the LADO where an employee's behaviour is a matter for concern to his/her manager because it compromises or may be seen to compromise the reputation and ability of the organisation to safeguard children and young people. Some examples of this may be where an individual has:
 - 3.2.1. contravened or has continued to contravene any safe practice guidance given by his/her organisation or regulatory body
 - 3.2.2. exploited or abused a position of power
 - 3.2.3. acted in an irresponsible manner which any reasonable person would find alarming or questionable given the nature of work undertaken
 - 3.2.4. demonstrated a failure to understand or appreciate how his or her own actions or those of others could adversely impact upon the safety and well-being of a child
 - 3.2.5. demonstrated an inability to make sound professional judgements which safeguard the welfare of children
 - 3.2.6. failed to follow adequately policy or procedures relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
 - 3.2.7. failed to understand or recognise the need for clear personal and professional boundaries in his or her work
 - 3.2.8. behaved in a way in her or her personal life which could put children at risk of harm
 - 3.2.9. become the subject of criminal proceedings not relating to a child
 - 3.2.10. become subject to enquiries under local child protection procedures
 - 3.2.11. behaved in a way which seriously undermines the trust and confidence placed in him or her by the employer.

- 3.3. In some instances the LADO would advise that there is a conduct issue that needs internal investigation by the employer without recourse to a LADO meeting.

4. Workload

- 4.1. There were 17 LADO referrals in 2013/14 compared with 15 in 2012/13.
- 4.2. Analysis of the data has been based on manual extraction of the information from each LADO case file. The review has highlighted the need to use the RCC adults and children database to record referrals electronically which will improve data extraction.

5. Breakdown of referrals received

- 5.1. Of the 17 referrals received:
 - 5.1.1. 2 did not meet the criteria for a LADO referral.
 - 5.1.2. 1 was cross-border and investigated by a neighbouring local authority.
 - 5.1.3. 8 related to educational establishments. Three of these concerned independent boarding schools. Two of the 8 related to concerns raised about the care of school assistants' own children resulting in social care involvement.
 - 5.1.4. 3 related to sports coaches.
 - 5.1.5. 3 related to a residential establishment for autistic children. These children are the most challenging and also vulnerable. Two of the children have made repeated allegations with one child making 16 complaints in a 6 week period. The LADO has met with the school to agree a safe process for managing the large number of complaints whilst ensuring a robust safeguarding approach.
 - 5.1.6. In addition, 4 of the 17 referrals included an element of on-line social media grooming
- 5.2. The analysis of the data shows that over 50% of the referrals related to schools. There is a good relationship between the LADO and schools, which appear to have a good grasp of risk and the process to be followed.
- 5.3. There have been no referrals from health-related professions during the reporting period.

6. Number of meetings and outcomes

- 6.1. Where required, a strategy meeting is convened by the LADO to include the key agencies (police and referring organisation) to consider the matters and risks that have led to the meeting and any actions required. During 2013/14, 5 strategy meetings were held with 1 case requiring a subsequent/concluding meeting. One of the referrals required an initial child protection conference (ICPC) without the need for a LADO meeting. 8 of the referrals resulted in

the relevant setting undertaking an internal investigation within their own disciplinary processes.

6.2. Of the 14 referrals investigated, 7 were substantiated, 4 were unsubstantiated and 2 were unfounded. The remaining case is still to be resolved. One matter was referred back to the school as a conduct issue and the teacher subsequently retired. Another teacher has since been dismissed and referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service by the school following professional conduct concerns.

7. Review Strategy Meetings

7.1. There has been 1 review strategy meeting.

8. Children Using Sexually Abusive Behaviour (CUSAB) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

8.1. There have been no LADO referrals regarding children using sexually abusive behaviour. However there have been two CSE cases involving Rutland children that have been subject to police investigation and cross authority action in Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire. Neither of these is captured in this report as CSE cases follow a different pathway.

9. Themes and Future developments

9.1. There are a number of key themes that have arisen during 2013/14:

9.1.1. There are some good relationships with schools and agencies and particularly the local independent schools

9.1.2. There is evidence that social media is being used as part of the grooming process

9.1.3. A local residential school for children with autism generates a significant number of referrals although we have established a new process for managing these cases.

10. Actions for 2014

1. Rutland has developed a Joint Learning and Achievement Strategy (2014-2016) between RCC and its local schools including maintained schools, academies, and related educational settings. Whilst its key aims are learning and achievement a strong focus on safeguarding activity including the LA's LADO function underpins this approach.

2. The information about LADO referrals will be tracked electronically in future.

3. A new LADO protocol, which clearly sets out the processes and procedures, roles and responsibilities, will be rolled out across the Rutland area to key agencies and included in revisions to Tri-x. (Tri-x is a national organisation that works with local authorities to enable them to update their policies and procedures which are available on line for staff to access)
4. The Leicestershire and Rutland LADOs are working to establish a regional East Midlands group to support and strengthen our processes and procedures to ensure a more consistent approach across the region.

Colin Pennington
Head of Service
Rutland County Council
25.04.14