

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: 22 November 2023

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL
REPORT 2022/23

Contact Officer: Stuart Hills, Head of Service Quality Improvement
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Chief Officer: Richard Baldwin
Director of Children's Services

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 The report is written to provide an overview of the activity of the Designated Officer (LADO) for the period April 2022 to March 2023 in managing allegations against people who work or volunteer with children and are therefore in a position of trust.
- 1.2 Nationally all agencies and settings that provide services or staff working with children are required (under statutory guidance – Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018), to have clear procedures for responding to allegations against staff, whether they are paid or voluntary, such as sports clubs and associations. Within education services, additional guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' outlines specific requirements when managing allegations against staff working in educational settings. The requirements of the LADO process are set out in the London Child Safeguarding Procedures and Practice Guidance, and these procedures are followed by all London boroughs.
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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 2.1 The Children, Education and Families PDS Committee is requested to note the report.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The report demonstrates the impact of the Local Authority Designated Officer in ensuring positive outcomes for all Bromley children where they have cause to make an allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Not Applicable
 4. Total current budget for this head: Not Applicable
 5. Source of funding: Not Applicable
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Not Applicable
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: No Executive decision.
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All Bromley children
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 The role of the LADO is to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations.
- Liaise with the police, children’s social care and other relevant agencies.
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.

3.2 Every agency that works with children and young people should have a Designated Officer whose job it is to liaise with and refer to the LADO.

3.3 The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child in a way that may not be suitable to work with children (includes transfer of risk or risk by association).

3.4 Referrals and consultations come from a range of agencies. Most referrals have been from education settings, including early years providers. Training and awareness of the LADO role has been targeted to early years providers within the year as well as faith groups and health agencies. The data highlights the need for the LADO to continue to work with the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership in improving awareness and links within Police and Health but also the voluntary sector.

3.5 During 2022-23 the LADO received 500 contacts, an increase from 437 in 2021-22. Of these, 212 met the threshold to be recorded as a referral, while 288 had the status of consultation.

3.6 The number of referrals that met the threshold for harm is higher than the previous reporting year. Of the 212 referrals, the LADO finding outcomes saw 55 allegations substantiated, 19 unsubstantiated, 47 unfounded, 1 false and 90 involvements remain ongoing at the end of the year. There was no evidence to support any allegation being deemed malicious, which involves a purposeful act to deceive.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

4.1 The report demonstrates the impact of the Local Authority Designated Officer in ensuring positive outcomes for all Bromley children where they have cause to make an allegation against a member of staff or a volunteer.

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| Non-Applicable Sections: | Policy/Financial/Personnel/Legal/Procurement Implications |
| Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer) | [Title of document and date] |