

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Annual Report

Kingston, Richmond and
Windsor and Maidenhead

Allegations against professionals, volunteers
and foster carers

April 2021 to March 2022

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the management of allegations against the children's workforce and the role of the local authority designated officer (LADO) in the Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor & Maidenhead boroughs provided by Achieving for Children (AfC), for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

All agencies that provide services for children, provide staff or volunteers to work with, or care for children are required to have a procedure in place for managing and reporting allegations against staff, which is consistent with statutory guidance published by HM Government (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

This guidance outlines the requirement of the LADO to oversee the effectiveness, transparency and record retention of the process, not only in terms of protecting children, but also ensuring that staff who are the subject of an allegation are treated fairly and that the response and subsequent action is consistent, reasonable and proportionate.

'Keeping children safe in education' (KSCIE), updated in September 2021, sets out the legal duties educational establishments must follow to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It includes guidance around the management of allegations against the children's workforce.

The detail of the procedure followed by AfC's LADO to manage allegations against people who work with children is contained within the London Child safeguarding Children Procedures, formerly known as the London Child Protection procedures and the Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures.

One of the revisions included in the 2018 edition of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' is that it no longer refers to 'LADOs', but says 'local authorities should have designated a particular officer, or team of officers (either as part of multi-agency arrangements or otherwise)'. All new appointees to LADO should be qualified social workers, unless an existing LADO moving between authorities. Along with most other London boroughs, Achieving for Children has chosen to maintain the title of LADO, as this is the title that partner agencies tell us they most easily understand. Updated guidance included in working together January 2021 and in KCSIE Sept 2020/2021 respectively, has resulted in the fourth criteria, 'suitability' being added to the LADO threshold. This reflects further emphasis upon the preventative safeguarding agenda as this provides wider consideration of behaviour which may raise wider concerns regarding adults working with children where a direct impact upon a child of the behaviour is identified.

This report sets out the key findings from LADO activity through data analysis and commentary. Case studies have been used to provide an illustration of the complexity and diverse nature of the role.

LADO post pandemic: context

Achieving for Children, a social enterprise company was created in 2014 by the Royal Borough of Kingston and the London Borough of Richmond to deliver their children's services. In August 2017, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead became a co-owner of Achieving for children.

Since January 2019, Achieving for Children has managed LADO functions for Windsor and Maidenhead, therefore the LADO service work across both operational areas (Operational area 1: the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and Operational area 2: The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead). The LADO service is one of the few AfC services within children's social care that work across both operational areas.

In line with all local authorities, the majority of LADO referrals are from the education sector. Across both AfC operational areas this is a total of 221 schools, 25 of which are independent fee paying schools.

Lockdown restrictions remained in place until the end of June 2021, Quarter 2 of this reporting year. From June, all national restrictions were lifted. This meant that leisure, recreational, sports, voluntary and religious settings could fully reopen. This resulted that from Quarter 2, June 2021, LADO referrals increased.

Referrals to LADO are now at the same level as they were for the full reporting year of 2019, pre-pandemic and a clear increase compared to the data reported last year.

From July 2021, the LADO service returned to, 42 York Street Twickenham for three days a week. The LADO service works remotely on Mondays and Fridays.

The author of the LADO report 2018/2019, pre-pandemic prior to full delivery to Windsor and Maidenhead, had projected a rise in LADO referrals over the next year. This did not materialise due to the pandemic, however it is clear from this report that the LADO Service has dealt with cases just above the pre-pandemic level this year.

The LADO service is still experiencing the negative impact of delay due to the pandemic on some of our key partners, noticeably the police and judicial processes, though as shared within this report, LADO conclusion of cases within three months remains high.

Some of the positive factors operating during lockdown and social distancing restrictions have been the necessity to access digital platforms to continue business functions. For LADO, this has particularly been demonstrated in increased multi-agency attendance for allegations against staff and volunteers (ASV) meetings through virtual meetings. This has meant that risk assessments and strategy decisions for managing allegations have been agreed with all parties without any unnecessary delays. The LADO service will continue to use the digital platform to convene ASV meetings given the improvement in attendance seen.

Update regarding service priorities 2021/2022

- To continue the annual delivery of LADO training and awareness raising to partners as well as attendance at AfC team meetings and other multi-agency forums - **Achieved**.
- LADO to establish quarterly meetings with the Early Years Service in Windsor and Maidenhead - **Ongoing**.
- For the LADO to continue to work with the Local Safeguarding Partnerships to further develop networks with local faith groups, to encourage more reporting of allegations within this sector - **Achieved**.
- Liquid logic database to be implemented across Kingston and Richmond - **Delayed due to launch July 22**.
- Outcome letters to be updated and routinely sent out to individuals subject to allegations on conclusion of LADO process - **Achieved**.
- LADO awareness training and raising profile across Early Help services in Windsor and Maidenhead, September 2021 - **Achieved**.
- LADO to develop closer working relationships with the Disclosure and Barring Service department locally to ensure the appropriate exchange of data - **Achieved**
- LADO to deliver training alongside the AfC education safeguarding advisor to and Kingston and Richmond school governors - **October 2021 partially achieved** (training materials presented and shared).
- Children's and young people's information leaflet to be completed. Draft completed - in progress - **awaiting Children in Care Council feedback**.
- Information and guidance regarding employing private nannies and childminders to be completed - **Achieved**.

Additional achievements

- Positive feedback and recognition from Ofsted for the service for Richmond ILAC in March 2022 and the Kingston Focus Visit in May 2022.
- Continued participation in the national LADO network.
- AfC LADO is representative of the training sub group for the national LADO network.
- AfC LADO key contribution to successful delivery of national LADO network training event.
- LADO support and contribution to safeguarding partnerships response to Ofsted thematic review into 'Everyone's Invited' website disclosures.
- Positive feedback from a range of partner agencies following their contact with the LADO service.
- Managing, overseeing and contributing to a number of large scale complex abuse investigations.
- Preventative safeguarding work undertaken within the voluntary sector.

- Consistent quarterly meetings with AfC Early Years Improvement team for Kingston and Richmond.
- Continued regular interface and communication meetings with senior police officers leading the child abuse investigation teams.
- The development of LADO and Standards of Care e-learning module in collaboration with the AfC Fostering Service and Organisational Development.

The role of the LADO

The LADO's key role is to provide advice and guidance to employers or voluntary organisations when there has been an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer.

The LADO will liaise with the police and other agencies, including Ofsted and professional bodies and monitor the progress of referrals to ensure that they are dealt with consistently and as quickly as possible. The LADO ensures organisations operate a thorough and fair process of investigating allegations. The LADO will provide oversight of the investigative process through to its conclusion.

The LADO service will also chair allegations against staff and volunteer (ASV) meetings and establish an agreed format to an investigation, whilst facilitating resolution to any inter-agency issues.

The LADO will also liaise with other local authority LADOs where there are cross-boundary issues. The service collects strategic data and maintains a confidential database in relation to allegations and consultations.

The LADO service disseminates learning from LADO enquiries throughout the children's workforce and wider groups like the performance boards and the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships.

The LADO will attend children's social care and police strategy meetings where there are concerns regarding the children's workforce.

Statutory guidance places a clear responsibility on organisations to report to the LADO where it is alleged that a person working 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 or children in a way that indicates that 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

In Working Together January 2021 and in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 respectively, the fourth criteria known as the suitability criteria was added to the LADO threshold. This reflects how guidance has evolved in relation to the preventative agenda.

This allows for wider consideration of behaviour which raises wider concerns regarding adults working with children. This is linked closely to a significant part of the work of the LADO service when reaching threshold decisions relating to private life or suitability matters. This is discussed later within this report.

Referrals do not always result in an ASV meeting, but instead advice and support is provided by the LADO in relation to disciplinary matters, health and safety measures or identified training needs. LADO consultation and advice is often given with regard to private life matters, whereby the LADO assists the employer in completing a risk assessment of any potential transferable risk that the underlying behaviour might pose to children attending the work setting.

Staffing, including administrative support

The LADO service consists of Head of Service (1fte), LADO (1fte) and LADO Contacts and Referral officer (1fte)

The LADO Service first point of contact is to the LADO Contact and Referral officer. Their role involves:

- taking LADO referral calls, emails and referral forms
- providing advice and closure to cases not meeting a LADO threshold
- passing cases to the LADO or Head of Service for LADO support, advice and action
- maintaining an up to date database by recording all LADO contacts, including consultations and referrals
- arranging LADO meetings and reviews
- maintaining contact with partner agencies when necessary
- taking accurate minutes of LADO meetings and distributing these securely
- performing checks for child chaperone applications
- maintaining, collating and updating the high profile case and critical incident tracker
- providing the LADO dataset for the monthly Performance Board's and the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- preparing documents and information relating to Disclosure and Barring Service and Freedom of Information access requests

Contacts that reach the threshold for LADO process are passed to the LADO, whilst more complex investigations are managed by the Head of Service. Having a designated centralised LADO Service for all three boroughs provides consistency and the opportunity to develop good working relationships with partner agencies.

The Head of the LADO Service and the LADO are experienced social workers, registered with Social Work England, fully meeting the requirements of the revisions to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. There are no plans to move the LADO Service outside of the Quality Assurance and Reviewing Service or to rename the role.

The LADO Head of Service provides regular support and supervision to the LADO and the referral and contact officer. The LADO Head of Service also provides professional supervision for the education safeguarding advisor for Kingston and Richmond. Within supervision there is an opportunity to reflect on and discuss individual cases, themes and set short term goals regarding training and development.

Regular fortnightly team meetings track cases and offer case discussion, this also reduces drift and provides valuable peer supervision. Team meetings provide additional consistent management oversight of cases by the Head of Service. There is management sign off in relation to cases that have concluded and require no further action. Management oversight is recorded on each individual case file by the Head of LADO and the Associate Director for Quality Assurance and Review.

The Head of Service completes quarterly audits of the service alongside the Associate Director for Quality Assurance and Review. The Head of Service completes monthly impact audits for Children's social care. The current Head of Service also sits on the AfC ASYE panel and contributes to the learning culture of the organisation.

In line with AfC policy, all members of staff within the LADO Service have a mid-year review and annual appraisal undertaken by the Head of Service where performance, individual and service goals are agreed.

The AfC LADO is represented at the national LADO network and all regional groups, such as the London and Berkshire LADO groups. The AfC LADO is a member of the training sub group at the national LADO network.

Overview of the service function and key areas of work

All agencies that provide services for children or provide staff or volunteers to work with children have a duty to contact the LADO where there are safeguarding allegations about employees or volunteers. Behaviours are considered in the context of the four categories of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Behaviour associated with inappropriate relationships or abuse of trust also come under this remit.

Following a Ministry of Justice review into concerns raised by campaigners such as NSPCC and following high profile criminal cases of systemic sexual abuse in sport, the government announced in May 2021 that they were extending the position of trust offences within sections 16 to 19 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to capture those that lead activities in sporting and religious settings. The impact of this can be seen within the data reported.

LADO procedures may also apply to an individual who works with children, but the allegations or concerns arise in their private life. Allegations can also relate to the partner of the person who works with children, whose response or attitude suggest that their ability to fulfil their role might be compromised.

The LADO has taken responsibility for providing briefings to schools, governors and other settings, including the Early Years teams, in regards to these regulations.

The LADO Service provides advice and support to organisations working with children in relation to safe recruitment practices. This has complimented HR guidance and advice providing a safeguarding context to recruiting staff.

Oversight of non-recent allegations

The LADO continues to assist the police and other agencies in relation to non-recent allegations and enquiries. Many of these investigations take place over a number of years and may not involve those who currently work within the Kingston, Richmond or Windsor and Maidenhead boroughs.

The LADO will liaise with internal and external agencies as appropriate. The LADO has regular communication and assists Operation Winterkey, which is the Metropolitan police's operation into historic sexual abuse. As well providing assistance and response to Operation Hydrant, supporting the delivery of the national policing response, oversight, and coordination of non-recent child sexual abuse investigations concerning persons of public prominence, or in relation to those offences which took place within institutional settings.

The Associate Director for Quality Assurance and Review and the Head of the LADO Service have developed a draft protocol regarding the AfC LADO response, process and guidance to further refine the pathway to responding to allegations of non-recent abuse that are referred directly by the survivor either through SPA or MASH and not always via the police.

The AfC LADO has also contributed to The Whyte Report over the past reporting year. The Whyte Report was co-commissioned by Sport England and UK Sport following a series of complaints at all levels in the gymnastic world.

Training and briefing sessions

An important part of the LADO role is to help ensure that AfC staff and partner agencies understand the role of the LADO and feel confident in their safeguarding role and responsibilities. To this end, the LADO has attended and provided a number of training and briefing sessions for internal staff as well as external agencies.

Training sessions for foster carers to understand how allegations are managed. Two multi-agency training sessions have taken place in Kingston, Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead. All of these sessions have been facilitated through AfC's Workforce Development team.

LADO has collaborated with the fostering service in the development of the e-Learning module as part of the induction for new foster carers across both operational areas.

LADO has offered and delivered training to volunteers through the Richmond Community Voluntary service, residential care workers, AfC frontline social workers, Early Help teams GPs and community health visitors.

LADO now has quarterly meetings in place with the Early Years Improvement Team (Kingston and Richmond).

The LADO continues to work closely with schools, early years providers and AfC's Early Years team to assist in training and policy development. The LADO provides ongoing support to these settings, in the form of written advice and guidance, regardless of whether a particular allegation requires a multi-agency investigation. Windsor and Maidenhead has established a positive working relationship with Windsor and Maidenhead Associate Director for Education and has provided training to school DSLs and early years providers and will continue to do so.

Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships

The LADO continues to support the work of the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children's Partnership, and the Windsor and Maidenhead Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Whilst the LADO is not a standing member of any of the sub-groups, the LADO can and will be called to provide information as required. Over the past year they have contributed to assurance panels in operational area 1 in response to the safeguarding concerns raised by the Everyone's Invited Website and to the Ofsted thematic review undertaken in operational area 2 providing information relating to referrals, contacts made to the LADO service.

The LADO data set, performance and key findings are fed into the Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead Quality Assurance Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership sub-group by the Associate Director for Quality Assurance and Review.

The LADO continues to attend the quarterly Safe in Faith conference for the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children's partnership.

The LADO service has now established regular meetings with the Windsor and Maidenhead safeguarding partnership manager.

The LADO attends the designated safeguarding lead and the independent school designated safeguarding training sessions, all run by the Kingston and Richmond Partnership, providing valuable half day training to local schools in Kingston and Richmond.

LADO has attended the designated safeguarding lead training sessions across Windsor and Maidenhead, for schools and early years providers organised jointly with the school improvement team and Windsor and Maidenhead safeguarding partnership.

How did we do?

Some of the feedback the LADO service has received.

Ofsted Inspector: Verbal Feedback Richmond

LADO is a good service where there is comprehensive and strong practice to manage allegations against staff and volunteers and therefore protect children. The LADO makes effective decisions based on clear thresholds. There is clear recording-keeping. The service has an open and reflective culture which has helped to develop their practice.

Windsor and Maidenhead headteacher:

I highly value the relationship we have with the LADO. The team is responsive and open with us, sharing excellent and timely advice. I feel very comfortable coming to them with queries as well as serious concerns. I honestly couldn't rate the team highly enough and have found them very helpful indeed. I feel lucky as a headteacher to have such a great and supportive LADO - it certainly makes my job easier!

Metropolitan Police Detective Sergeant:

This has genuinely been a huge help so thank you so much.

Kingston headteacher:

Thank you so very much, all of this is incredibly helpful. You've given me clarity of thought and something that I can now go back and share with my team.

NHS training delegate:

I was very grateful and thought your presentation was excellent.

SPA or MASH manager

The working relationship between LADO and SPA is positive and LADO are always approachable and contactable. Really pleased with the working relationship we have.

Senior human resources adviser

As ever, thank you for the accurate notes and the swiftness with which they have been prepared.

Safeguarding coordinator:

Many thanks indeed for your brilliant contribution to the DSL forum this morning. There were almost 100 schools at the event so the reach of the forum is really strong.

All the slides will go to all schools as well. It was a great presentation and so many people commented that it was good to be reminded of your service, plus some new DSLs were in the audience.

Richmond headteacher:

We have found the LADO service to be very helpful when we have been in need of advice or when we have had issues to report. It has been straightforward to contact the LADO – if you call you are able to speak to someone so that even if the LADO is not available you get called back promptly and they take time to listen to any concerns. I have always found them to be calm and supportive, understanding that the issues can be worrying, while the advice is always clear and they help you through the steps that have to be followed.

What difference has been made and what is the impact?

The LADO process has continued to ensure that allegations against those who work or volunteer with children are not seen in isolation and that the welfare of children is prioritised. This year, the AfC LADO have continued to provide a timely response to referrals received, with the majority of cases (89 %) being concluded within 12 weeks. Those allegations that are protracted often have police involvement with the police awaiting decisions from the Crime Prosecution Service (CPS). There remains a backlog within the CPS and judicial processes given the impact of the pandemic. This has contributed to the delay in LADO reaching resolution in these cases.

The Ofsted inspection report Richmond (March 2022) comments that the LADO service is **'an effective local authority designated officer service ensures that risks posed by adults are followed up comprehensively'**.

LADO process and recording

Recording is robust for all cases, whether or not they meet the LADO threshold for involvement and files are kept for reference. It is important that cases where the LADO has only provided advice and information are recorded as such. Whilst on their own may not require a LADO response, they may in the future demonstrate concerns and/or identify patterns within the practice of individuals or settings.

Careful attention is paid to the requirements of the Data Protection Act and GDPR. If settings call for advice regarding a particular staff member, they are advised to share this with the staff member.

The LADO may receive requests from those who are the subject of allegations for a copy of LADO records through a 'subject access request' (SAR) and all parties are reminded of this during the management of allegations meeting. Third party or organisation sensitive information may be redacted by the LADO as appropriate. LADO will consult with the AfC Freedom of Information Advice team if requests of this nature come direct to our service after a case is closed and will seek their expertise with regard to ensuring an appropriate and timely response.

The referral data below includes all contacts with the LADO, regardless of whether they have met the threshold for a formal response. All calls and consultations with the LADO are responded to, often in writing, even if the matter doesn't meet the threshold for LADO involvement.

Further measures to ensure and improve effective tracking and capturing of LADO data will be enhanced through the introduction of the planned LADO module in Liquid Logic, across Kingston and Richmond. Liquid Logic in the children's services database and recording system in Kingston and Richmond. With the implementation of a dedicated pathway within the children's recording system, the LADO service will have a more integrated recording system and this will result in improved management information as well as improved transparency within the wider system.

It is envisaged that the LADO Liquid Logic module will be available in operational area 1 from July 22. Operational area 2 also has plans to move to the integrated system. This will ensure parity for the LADO service across both operational areas which will further support and improve the LADO processes.

Allegations against staff and volunteer meetings (ASV)

LADO allegations against staff and volunteer meetings are held where allegations are such that they may require a multi-agency response and involve children's services and the police alongside the employer (named designated safeguarding officer) and often human resources advisor or voluntary organisation.

LADO allegations against staff and volunteer meetings are held under the guidance for managing allegations against adults who work with children as outlined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018 (updated 2021) and Department of Education Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2021.

The ASV meeting draws together four possible strands of enquiries: the police in relation to possible criminal matters, social care in relation to the needs of any child or young person, the employer in relation to disciplinary and employment matters, including support to the adult about whom the allegations pertain, and whether action in regards to the person making the allegation should be considered where the allegation has no foundation and may be malicious.

A plan is devised and continued LADO support and tracking of the case agreed. If a LADO ASV meeting is required, these are normally held within five working days of the referral.

LADO meetings are only held when necessary and often when there is a police investigation.

In this reporting year, Richmond had 12 initial ASV meetings, Kingston 6 and Windsor and Maidenhead 13.

It is sometimes necessary to gather together a number of professionals from organisations at very short notice. The following case example is heavily redacted, however it is an example of where the LADO service needed to act on the same day, where immediate safeguarding advice and employment decisions were required immediately. In these urgent meetings, all parties can agree next steps and implement immediate safeguarding decisions, and consider the timeliness of suspension of staff. It is vital when police wish to pursue a criminal investigation, that no actions advised by LADO or undertaken by an employer will damage a criminal investigation.

Case example: LADO ASV meeting held within 24 hours of referral from police

Referral received to LADO following significant concerns about a school staff member.

LADO received information from police informing of a serious sexual assault that took place on school premises against a current member of school staff, disclosed by a past pupil.

It was agreed on that day that the LADO would make direct contact and disclosure to the school in order to provide immediate safeguarding advice. The staff member was immediately suspended.

An urgent ASV meeting involving all relevant professionals was arranged for the next working day. This meeting shared appropriate information, considered risk to all children and agreed further next steps.

Cases that do not meet a formal LADO threshold

If an allegation does not require police or children's social care involvement, the LADO will support the organisation to investigate, following their own internal procedures and can advise regarding disciplinary, training and policy matters.

All referrals and consultations are checked on the LADO database for any previous involvement. If there is a specific child identified, the Single Point of Access (SPA) or Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) LADO will check the child's electronic file to ascertain if they are known to children's social care, and whether or not a child protection response is also required. The LADO will often attend child protection strategy meetings to support the immediate safeguarding response when serious allegations have been made for a member of the children's workforce and their own children.

There are a high number of requests for support and advice which the LADO will scrutinise even if they do not meet the formal thresholds for intervention. In these cases, the employer is responsible for acting upon advice, implementing local conduct or performance processes and making recommended changes to their local practice or policy. It is these borderline or complex situations that require careful attention.

Advice for employers or those responsible for volunteers is always followed up in writing.

Anonymised example of LADO advice given to an employer where threshold for a multi-agency, ASV meeting was not met, but advice was still provided.

Dear X

Thank you for your referral to LADO for a teaching assistant. XX has worked as a teaching assistant for XXX School for 22 years. There have been no previous concerns about his conduct.

As you know the LADO procedure is applied when there is an allegation or concern regarding a person who works with children. This may be that they:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may harm a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

This was an allegation made by a child, that XX had pinched them.

You have now completed your internal investigation. XX works in a class with seven children and six members of staff. All staff members were interviewed and no one had seen XX pinch the child. Colleagues reported him to be professional and kind at work. There are no marks or injuries.

I can now provide a LADO outcome. I will be recording this matter as unfounded, (that is there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made.

It might indicate that the person making the allegation misinterpreted the incident or was mistaken about what they saw. Alternatively, they may not have been aware of all the circumstances.

This is the second referral to LADO in which this child has reported being pinched, with the previous allegation being towards a different worker. All allegations made by children must be taken seriously and investigated case by case on their own merits. However, it should also be considered that this child is trying to communicate something and I am sure school, parents and their social worker will be working together to identify what this may be.

This matter will now close to LADO and details will remain on our confidential database should we need to cross reference with any new information in the future. Please can you tell XX of the outcome of the LADO referral.

Activity and analysis

The LADO database, which is held by the AfC Quality Assurance and Review Service was implemented in April 2014 and is kept up-to-date with all relevant information by the LADO Contact and Referral Officer. Data is colour coded to reflect the status of each case, including hyperlinks to strategy discussions, correspondence and LADO minutes. This data is provided by the LADO to, Kingston and Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead children's social care performance boards on a monthly basis and forms part of the monthly data set.

The LADO works closely with children's social care, particularly the SPA for Kingston and Richmond and the MASH for Windsor and Maidenhead, where concerns are highlighted in relation to those that care for children, but in an unregulated environment, such as privately employed nannies or tutors.

The LADO also works closely with the police child abuse investigation teams or units across both AfC Operational areas. The AfC LADO also has close links with the Surrey Paedophile Online Investigation team (POLIT).

Referrals are also made to the LADO where there are concerns raised in relation to someone's private life, rather than allegations as a direct result of their position within the children's workforce. Referrals regarding private lives often come from social workers within Children's Social Care (internally and externally) who become aware that an adult, within a family that they are working with also works or volunteers with children.

The guidance in the London Child Protection Procedures states the following:

- 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 (for example partner, member of the family or other household member) who may present a risk of harm to children for whom the member of staff is responsible in their employment or volunteering

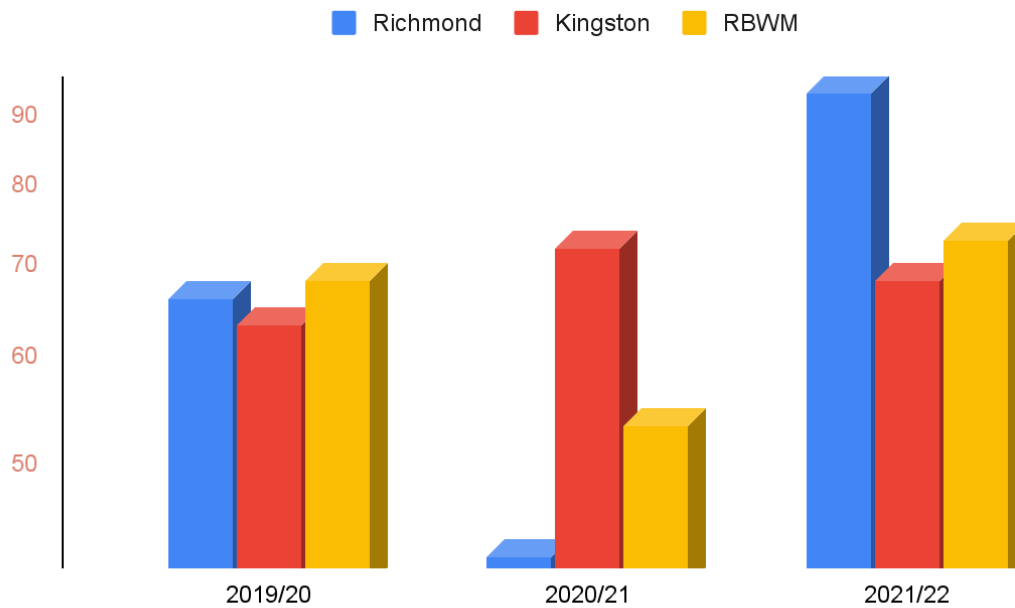
The LADO will discuss these cases with social workers to determine if there is a need to inform an employer about safeguarding concerns. The LADO may suggest that the threshold is met to consider disclosure to employers if children are made the subject of a child protection plan. There are circumstances where this would be considered earlier if there were grave safeguarding concerns in someone's private life that we felt impacted on their ability to keep children safe in their professional role.

These concerns can now also be considered by LADO against the suitability criteria as amended within Working Together 2018 (updated 2021) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021, which is known as the fourth criteria.

The 2020/2021 annual report alluded to concern for a potential rise in referrals relating to private life matters and suitability for this reporting year, this data has been reflected in the following Table 1.

Table 1

Personal life / Suitability concerns made to AfC LADO



	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Richmond	68	44	96
Kingston	65	74	70
Windsor and Maidenhead	70	55	75

It is difficult to be emphatic regarding this increase however concerns regarding the impact of mental ill health, issues regarding interfamilial harm experienced by children of parents in the children's workforce appear to have increased overall, though most notably in Richmond.

The NHS reported that in adults, 1 in 6 experienced some form of depression in the summer 2021, which is still above pre pandemic levels of 1 in 10.

There are documented specific concerns relating to the impact of the pandemic upon the teaching profession. The education sector is the largest referrer to the LADO Service, as well as being the setting where most allegations are reported to take place. The latest teacher wellbeing index suggests that teachers are feeling under more stress and that the impact of the pandemic has had significant effect, with 77% of teachers reporting that they have experienced symptoms of poor mental health, 72% reporting feelings of stress (rising to 84% for senior leaders) and 54% reporting as having considered leaving the sector in the past year.

Therefore, there is real concern that some transferable stress may escalate risk within the work setting. Whilst this may not directly translate to increased referrals to LADO it will be important to review this referral type over the next reporting year. Particularly, given the increase seen in Table 1. As noted the increase in these concerns necessitate LADO advising and assessing transferable risk, this rise is most notable within Richmond.

It will be important for LADO that there are clear threshold decisions made and that these remain consistent regarding this criteria. This introduction of the suitability criteria has been a live topic within the national LADO network with continued discourse and will be monitored within that forum also.

It will be important to carefully audit this referral type across both operational areas over the next reporting year.

Brief overview of the data

Referrals come from a variety of settings and sources. It is not always the setting or establishment that makes the referrals themselves, as demonstrated in the following graphs.

As stated previously, contacts and referrals to the LADO service increased in the last year across Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead by 33% overall compared to 2020/2021 data.

In the 2021/2022 reporting year, there were a total 534 notifications of allegations or professional consultations in Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead. This is in contrast to the pandemic data (2020/ 21) year, when there were a total of 401 notifications of allegations or professional consultations in Kingston, Richmond, and Windsor and Maidenhead.

Of the 534 notifications to LADO this reporting year, there were:

- 169 in Kingston, an increase of 12% from the last reporting year
- 187 in Richmond, an increase of 54%
- 178 in Windsor and Maidenhead, an increase of 36% from the previous reporting year

This data and rise is in keeping with the figures reported in the pre pandemic LADO report of 2019/2020. In this report the author projected an approximate 16% rise applied to referrals to the service over 2020/2021, although given the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns this did not materialise.

However, given restrictions lifting and the level of referrals for this reporting year in applying the 16% projected uptrend from 2019/2020, it is not unreasonable to suggest that referral figures to LADO next year may rise similarly which would result in a projection of approximately 620 referrals for the next reporting year (2022/2023). LADO capacity will potentially need to be reviewed if this is the case.

Richmond

Table 2: Richmond upon Thames - LADO referrals

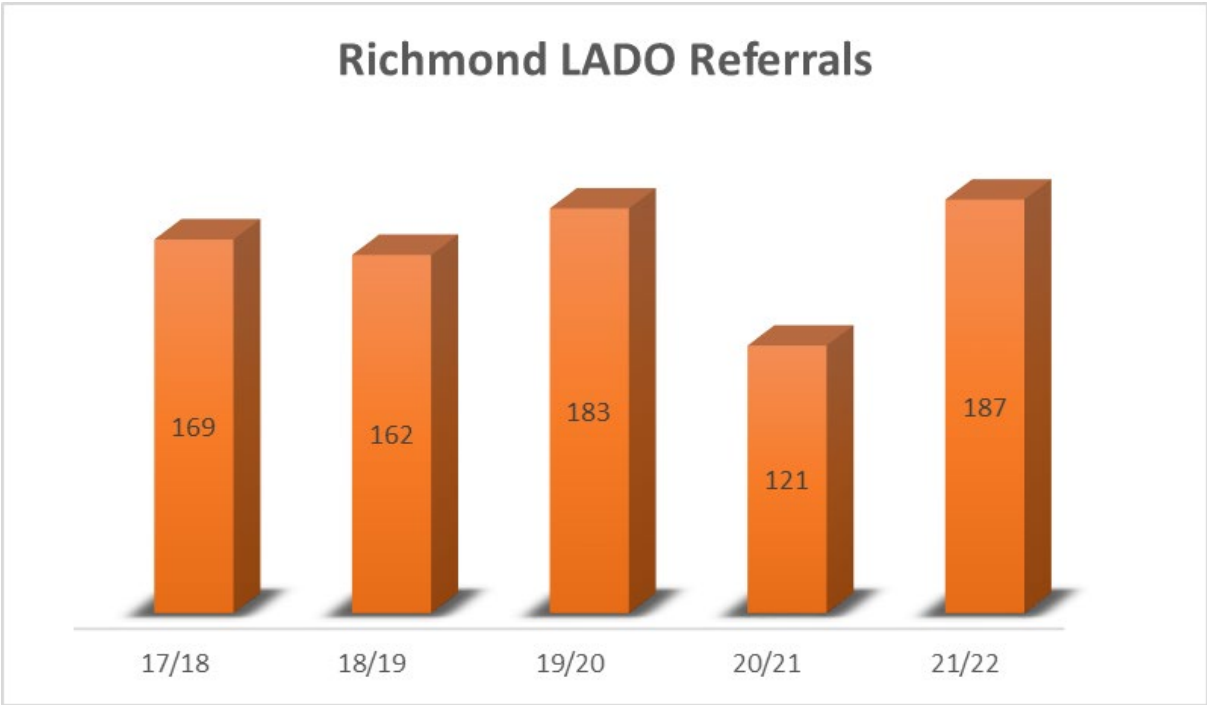
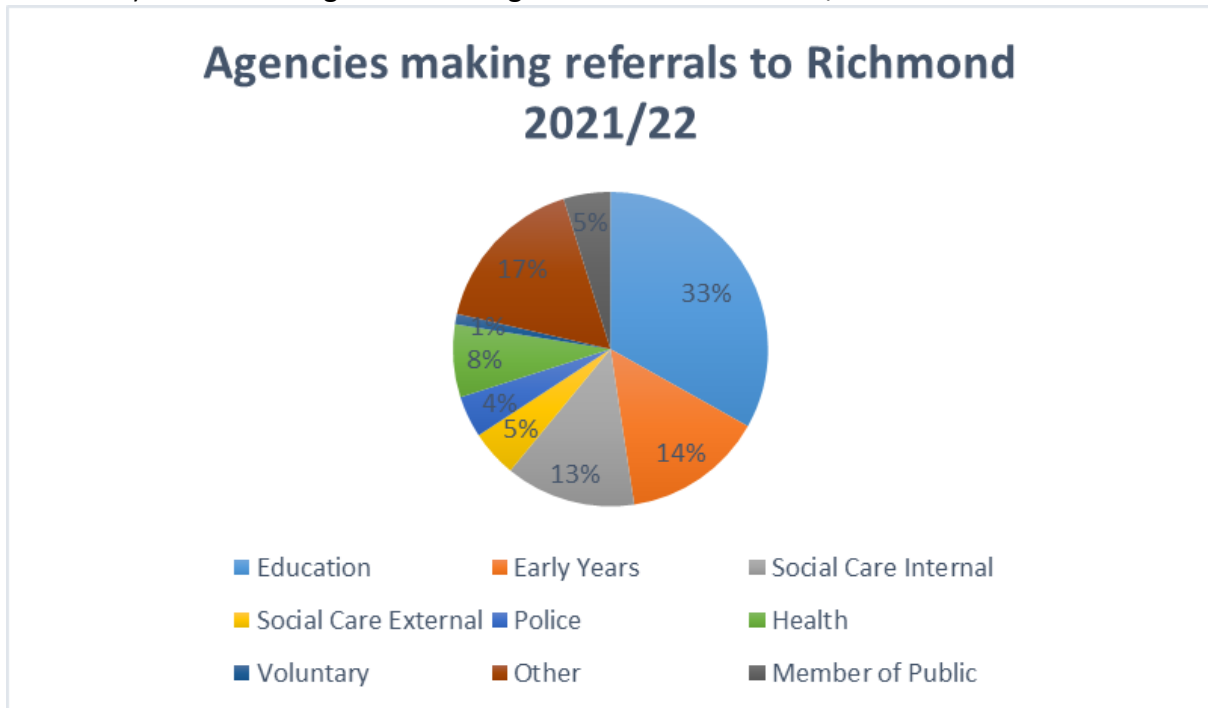


Table 2 illustrates a 54 % increase in referrals to LADO compared to the previous year

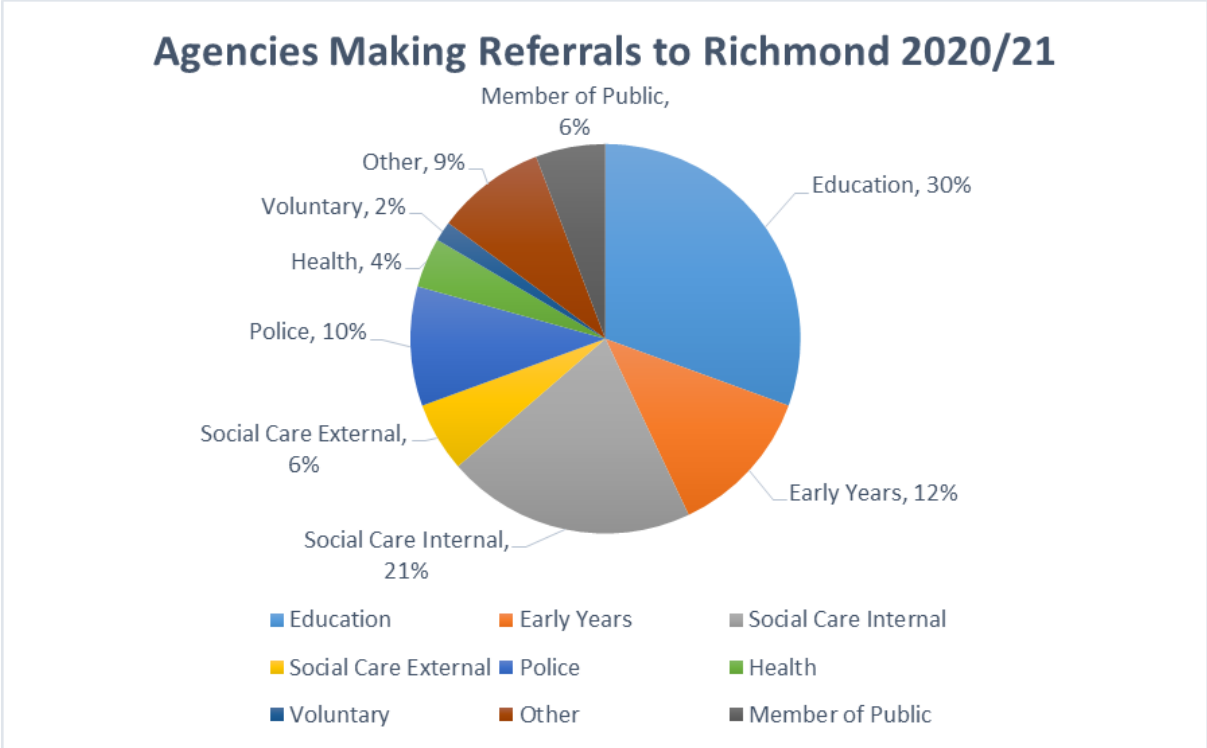
2017/18 Referrals	169
2018/19 Referrals	162
2019/20 Referrals	183
2020/21 Referrals	121
2021/2022 Referrals	187

Table 2: a) Richmond - Agencies making referrals to LADO 2021/22



Education	33.2%
Early Years	14%
Social Care Internal	13%
Social Care External	5%
Police	4%
Health	8%
Voluntary	1%
Other	17%
Member of Public	5%

Table 2. b) Richmond - agencies making referrals to LADO 2020/2021



Education	30%
Early Years	12%
Social Care Internal	21%
Social Care External	6%
Police	10%
Health	4%
Voluntary	2%
Other	9%
Member of Public	6%

Across Operational area 1: Kingston and Richmond, Richmond, over the past 5 years, remains the borough with the highest referral rate to the LADO Service.

As seen from the previous data, education settings remains the largest referrer sector for referrals to LADO for Richmond. This is in line with all three boroughs, and remains consistent with previous data held pre-pandemic.

As seen within Table 1, Richmond appears to have had the highest number of concerns relating to personal life and suitability. As seen, this is also above pre-pandemic data, which may lend weight to the concerns stated within the teacher wellbeing index and impact of the pandemic upon adult mental health as stated previously.

There may be various explanations; could this be the demography of the borough? One hypothesis being that there may be more professionals residing in the borough compared to the other boroughs within AfC. This is an area as indicated which may need further auditing over the next year to identify any themes and a breakdown regarding referral criteria for the next report if this remains a concern.

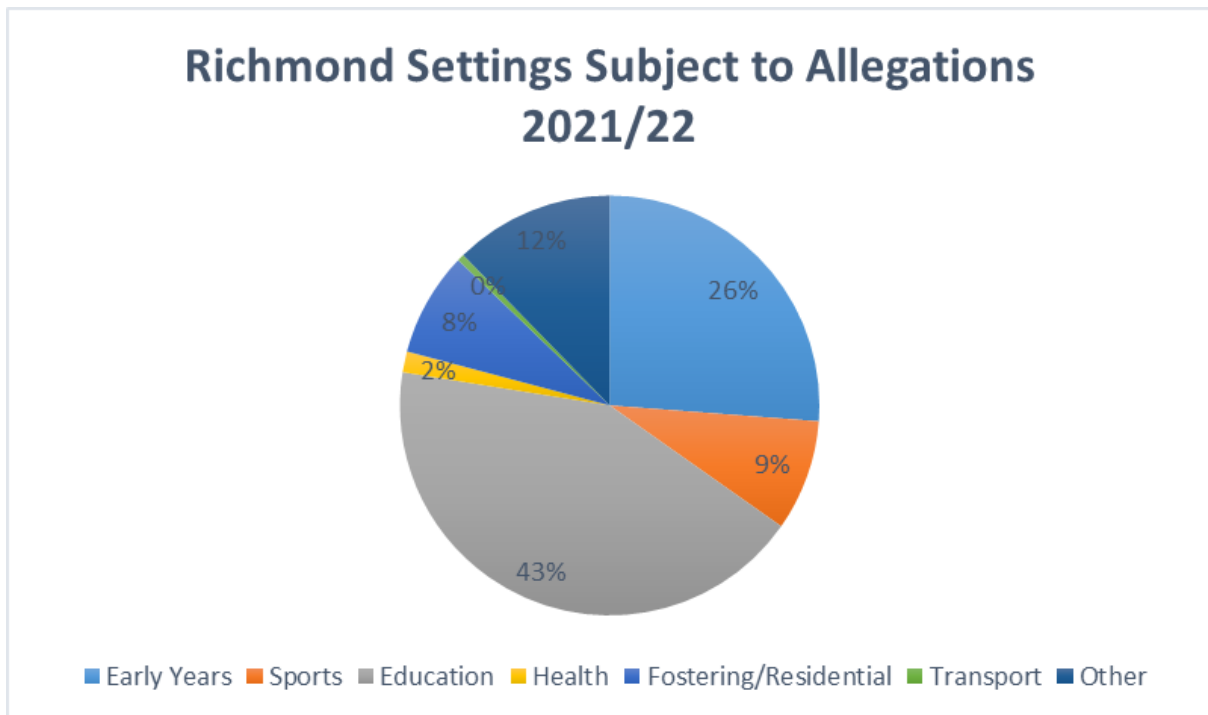
As seen by the data, there has been an increase in referrals made from the sector labelled 'Other' which includes faith groups, Ofsted, and sports. This may also further highlight success in raising LADO profile within these sectors.

In comparison to last year's data, the referrals from social care colleagues, external and internal, has reduced. This is in keeping, considering that during the height of the pandemic, most contact with concerns for children and young people would have been through children's social care front door as schools and other settings did not fully open up until July 2021.

The police will often make a LADO referral if they have investigated a criminal offence, and they realise through their own investigation that the alleged perpetrator works with children, or can have access to children through volunteering. As seen from the data, the referral rate to LADO from the police has also decreased in comparison to last year. Again this could be due to the police continuing to remain operational during 2020/2021 compared to other referral sectors which were not operating and therefore contact with children was limited.

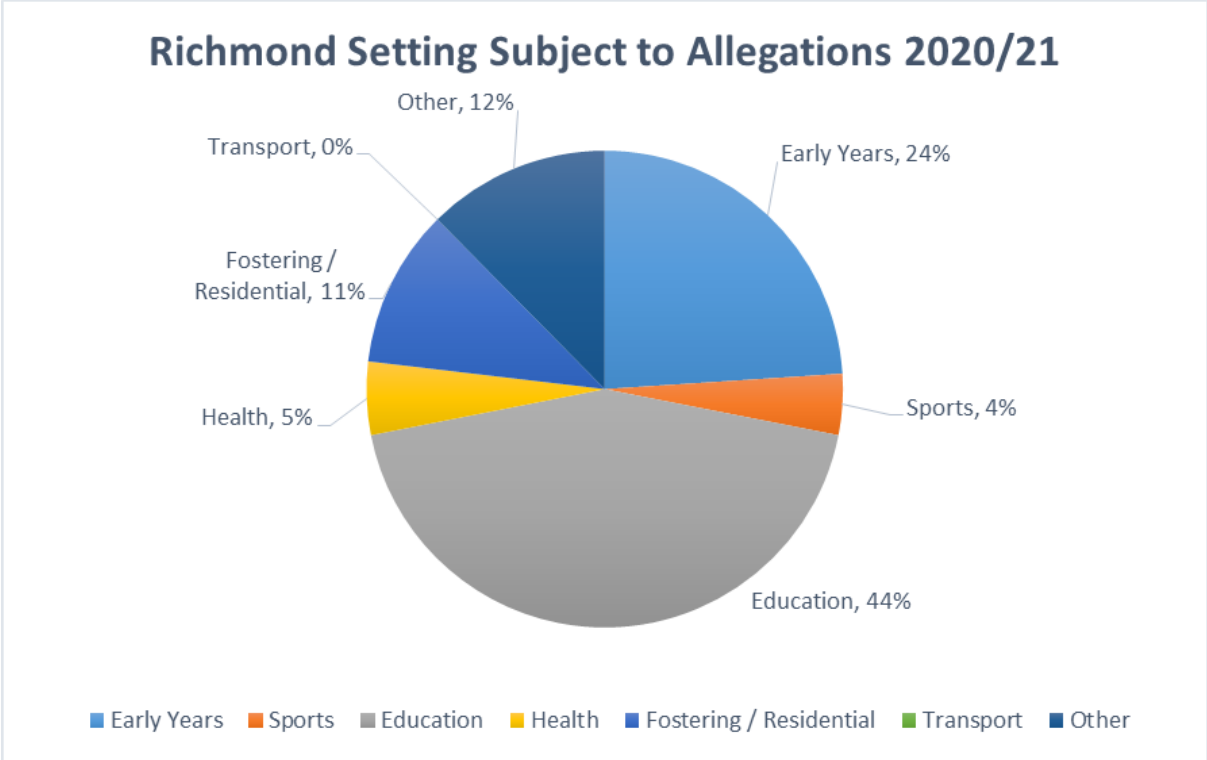
There were a total of 12 initial allegations against staff and volunteer meetings held by LADO in 2021/ 2022, compared to eight the previous year. Whilst this is a slight increase, this is not a concern comparatively given the rise in numbers of referrals.

Table 3. a) Richmond settings subject to allegations 2021/2022



Early Years	26.0%
Sports	9.0%
Education	43.0%
Health	2.0%
Fostering and Residential	8.0%
Transport	0%
Other	12.0%

Table 3. b) Richmond settings subject to allegations 2020/21



Early Years	24%
Sports	4%
Education	44%
Health	5%
Fostering and Residential	11%
Transport	0%
Other	12%

When looking at Table 3 a), the notable increase here is within early years settings; nurseries and childminders. There is also an increase seen in relation to sports settings. This data may reflect the impact of the full easing of restrictions on settings such as leisure centres and sports clubs which were operating fully from July 2021. It could be argued that staff and children resuming these activities after a sustained break may have caused some tensions and or stress as both made adjustments to returning to these activities.

Last year's LADO annual report raised a concern regarding a rise in fostering and residential settings being subject to allegations. The hypothesis mooted was that this was a result of the increased stressors upon children and carers during the lockdown period with the caveat to look at this over this reporting year.

As you can see from this year's data, this has not continued to increase and is a consistent finding in Kingston and Richmond and broadly in line with pre pandemic data. This adds weight to the hypothesis raised last year regarding the specific stressors and impact upon residential settings, staff and young people during the lockdown periods. Further, there has been continued effective collaboration with the fostering service over the past reporting year, including the development of the e-Learning module as part of new foster carers' induction period. This year's figures do not raise any significant concern for LADO regarding this sector.

The LADO service was inspected as part of the Richmond Ofsted inspection (ILAC), the feedback was positive and there were no actions of improvement suggested by Ofsted for the service.

An effective local authority designated officer service ensures that risks posed by adults are followed up comprehensively. (Published 18 March 2022)

Kingston

Table 4. Kingston LADO referrals

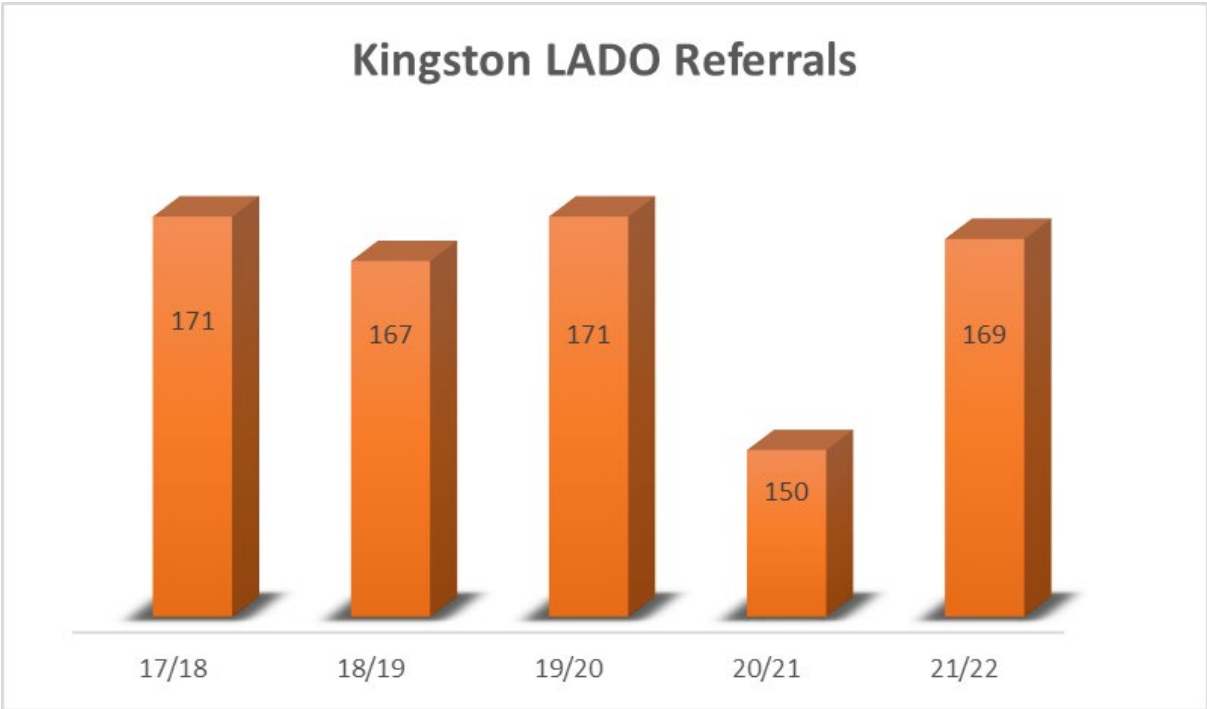
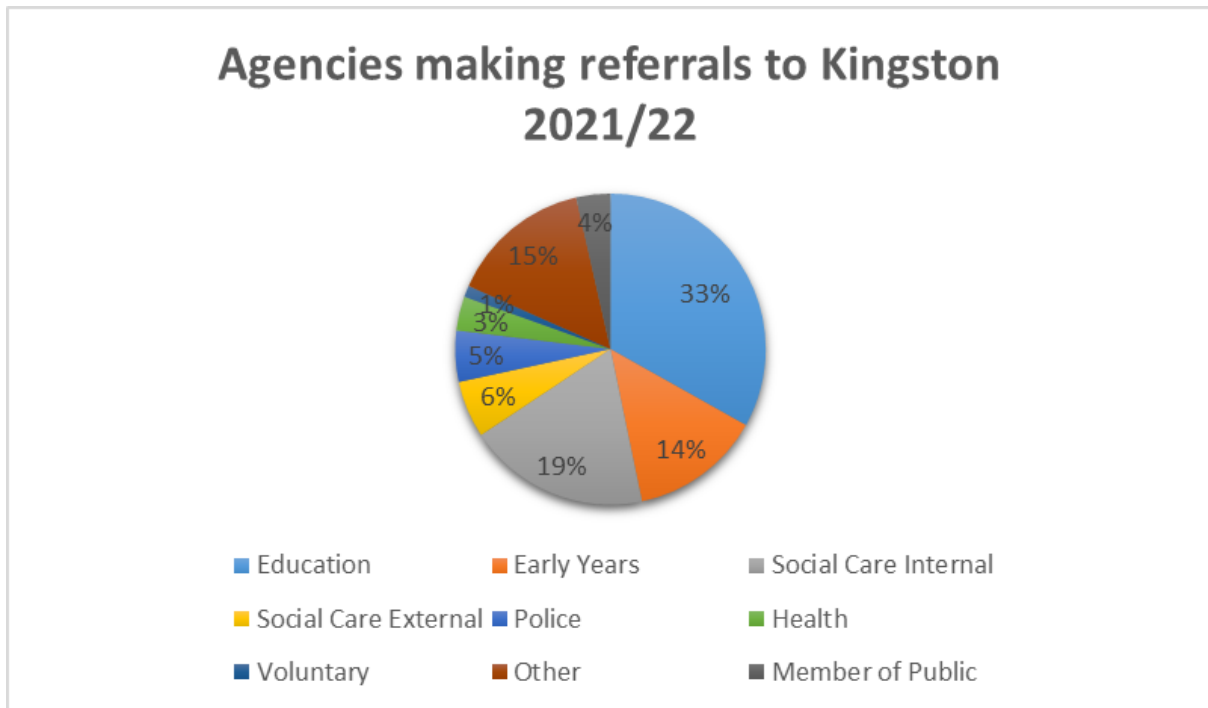


Table 4 illustrates a 12% increase in referrals to LADO.

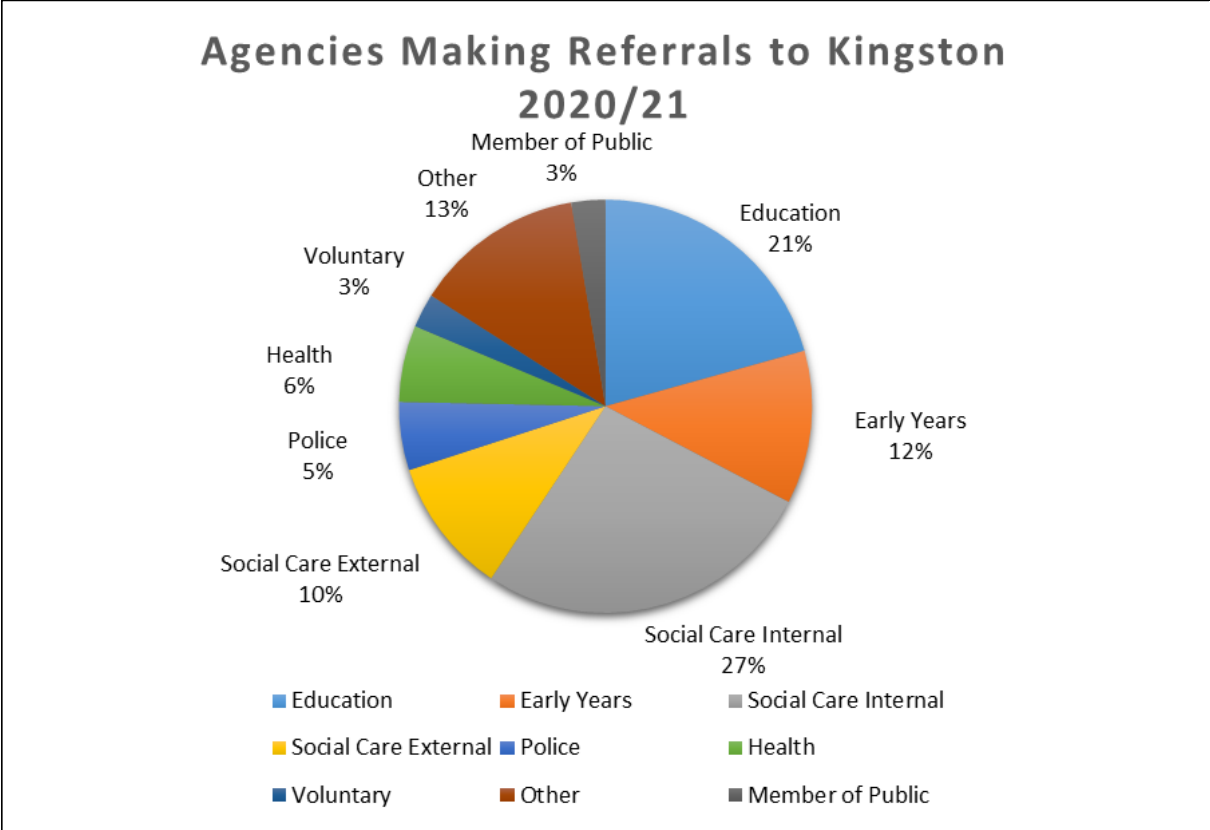
2017/18 Referrals	171
2018/19 Referrals	167
2019/20 Referrals	171
2020/21 Referrals	150
2021/2022 Referrals	169

Table 4. a) Kingston- agencies making referrals to LADO 2021/2022



Education	33%
Early Years	14%
Social Care Internal	19%
Social Care External	6%
Police	5%
Health	3%
Voluntary	1%
Other	15%
Member of Public	4%

Table 5. b) Kingston - agencies making referrals to LADO 2020/2021



Education	21%
Early Years	12%
Social Care Internal	27%
Social Care External	10%
Police	5%
Health	6%
Voluntary	3%
Other	13%
Member of Public	3%

As seen in Table 4, referrals received to LADO from Kingston remain consistently stable over the five years except for the drop recorded last year due to the pandemic. Referrals rates from Kingston are now almost equal to figures reported pre pandemic.

As seen from the data above, education settings remains the largest referrer sector for referrals to LADO for Kingston. This is in line across all three boroughs, and remains consistent with previous data held pre-pandemic.

As seen in Table 1) referral rates regarding concerns for personal life and suitability concerns did not spike for Kingston which is in contrast to the data for Richmond and Windsor and Maidenhead. Figures for this category over the past three years in Kingston remain relatively consistent, with a small rise in reporting these concerns seen in 2020/2021. Comparatively we have yet to see an increase in this criteria.

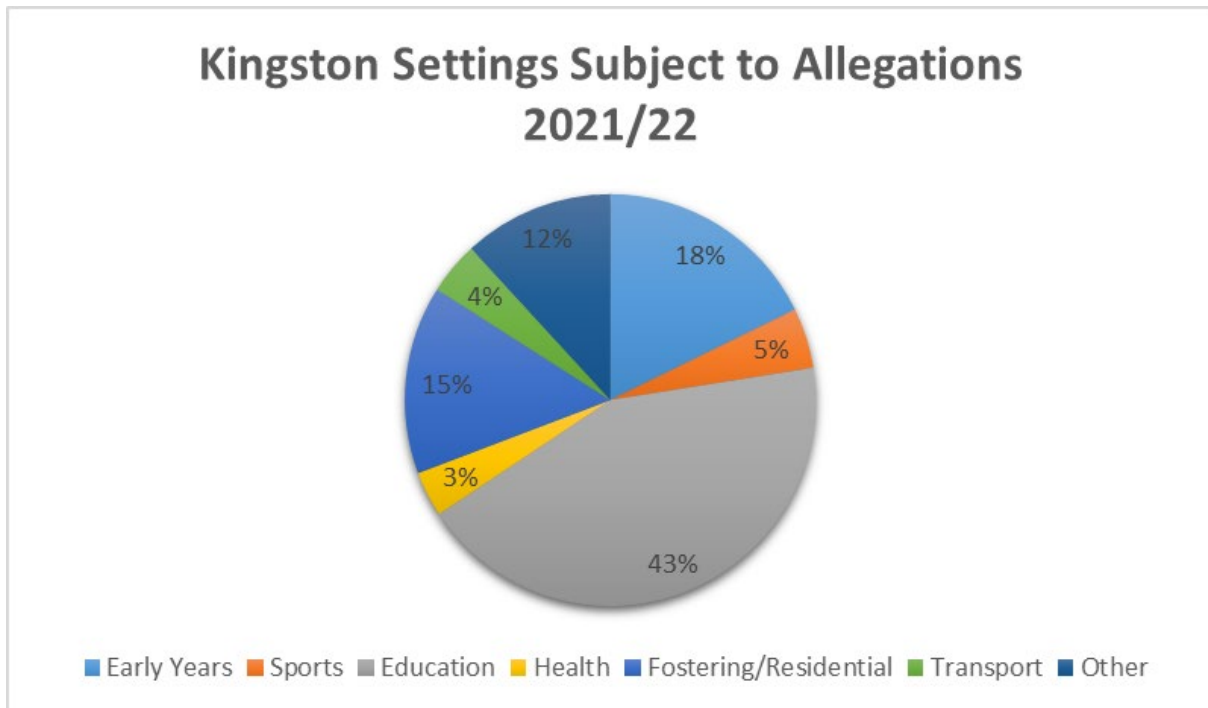
As stated above, further research regarding the differences in demography of the boroughs may provide an explanation regarding this. This is an area, as indicated, which may need further auditing over the next year to identify any themes and a breakdown regarding referral criteria for the next LADO annual report to enrich any emerging narrative regarding this criteria.

In comparison to last year's data, the referrals from social care colleagues both external and internal has reduced which is in keeping considering that during the height of the pandemic most contact with concerns for children and young people would have been through children's social care front door as schools and other settings did not fully open up until July 2021. There is also a small decrease for referrals from health in comparison to last year. It is thought that the 2020/21 increase may have been related to the fact that health and social care sectors remained operational during the lockdowns therefore referrals increased comparatively to those closed settings. It will be important to monitor this over the next reporting year.

As seen by the data, there has been a slight increase in referrals made from the sectors labelled 'Other'. This includes faith groups, Ofsted, and sports, and early years settings such as nurseries and childminders. This may demonstrate the progress made by the LADO service made over the reporting year regarding raising the LADO profile within these sectors.

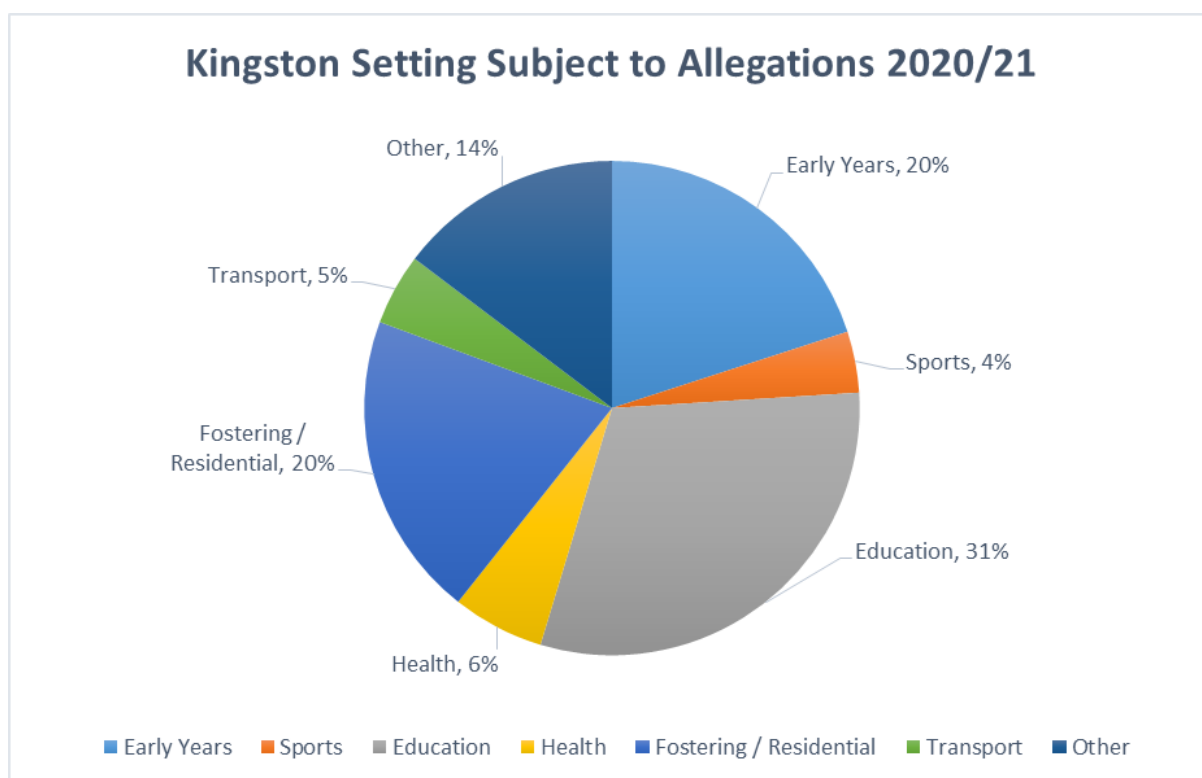
The police will often make a LADO referral if they have investigated a criminal offence, and they realise through their own investigation that the alleged perpetrator works with children, or can have access to children through volunteering. As seen from the data the referral rate to LADO from the police has remained consistent compared to the previous year. There were six initial allegations against staff and volunteer meetings held by LADO in Kingston for 2020/2021, compared to 10 the previous year.

Table 6. a) Kingston - settings subject to allegations 2021/2022



Early Years	18%
Sports	5%
Education	43%
Health	3%
Fostering and residential	15%
Transport	4%
Other	12%

Table 6. b) Kingston - settings subject to allegations 2020/2021



Early Years	20%
Sports	4%
Education	31%
Health	6%
Fostering and residential	20%
Transport	5%
Other	14%

Last year's LADO annual report raised a concern about a rise in fostering and residential settings being subject to allegations. The hypothesis mooted was that this was a result of the increased stressors on children and carers during the lockdown period with the caveat to look at this over this reporting year.

As seen from this year's data Table 6 a) and 6 b), this has decreased and is a consistent finding in Kingston and Richmond and broadly in line with pre pandemic data.

This adds weight to the hypothesis raised last year regarding the specific stressors and impact upon residential settings, staff and young people during the lockdown periods. Further there has been continued effective collaboration with the fostering service over the past reporting year, including the development of the e-Learning module as part of new foster carers' induction period. This year's figures do not raise any significant concern for LADO regarding this sector.

As reflected in the data and consistent within both operational areas, the education sector remains the largest setting subject to allegations with the increase reflecting the full reopening of schools from July 2021.

Windsor and Maidenhead

Table 7. Windsor and Maidenhead LADO referrals

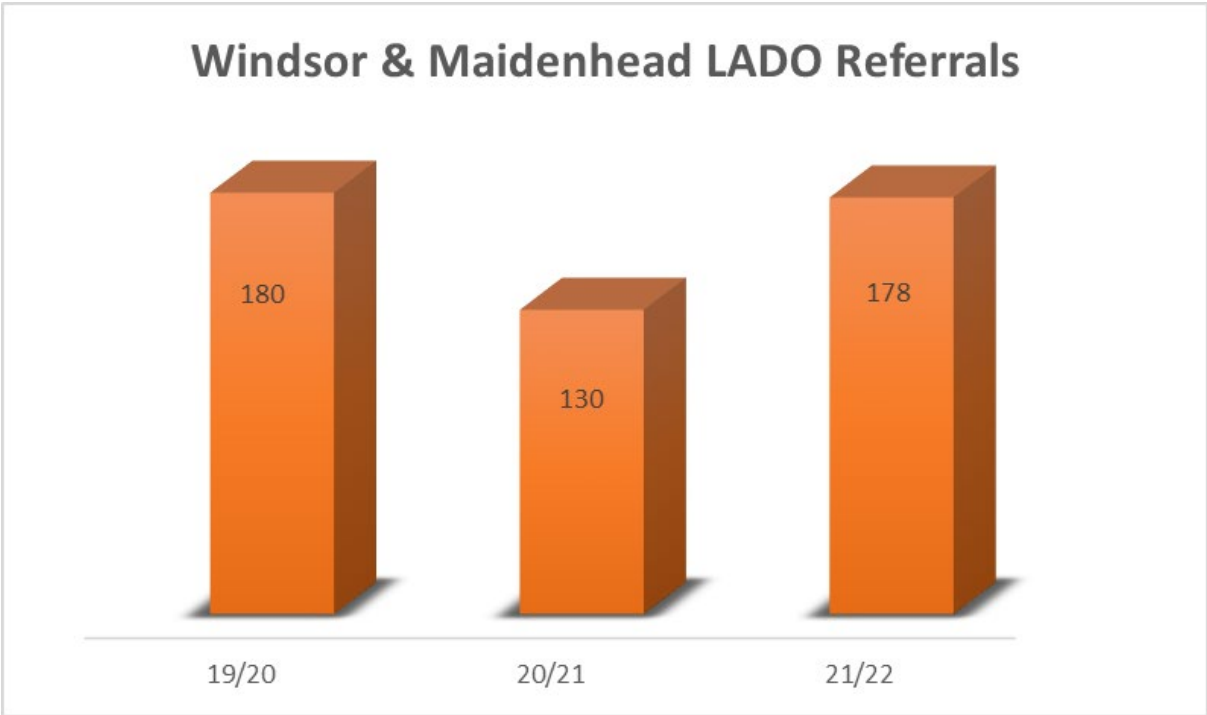
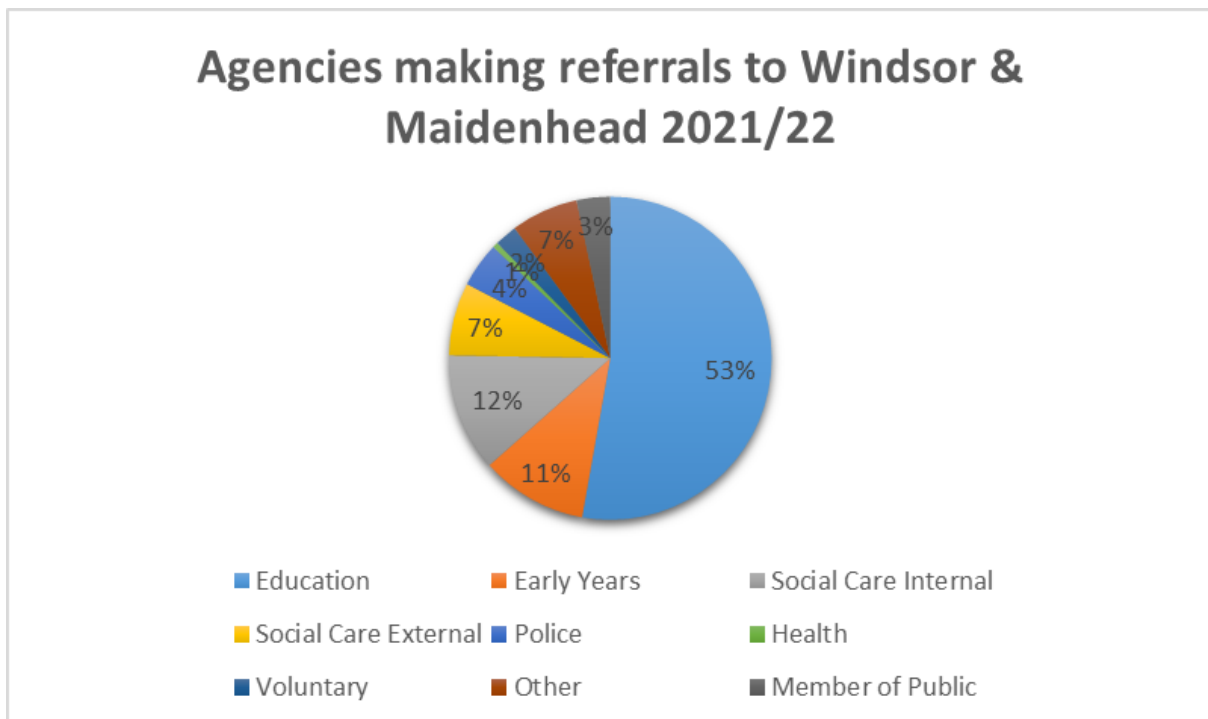


Table 7 illustrates a 36% increase in referrals to LADO.

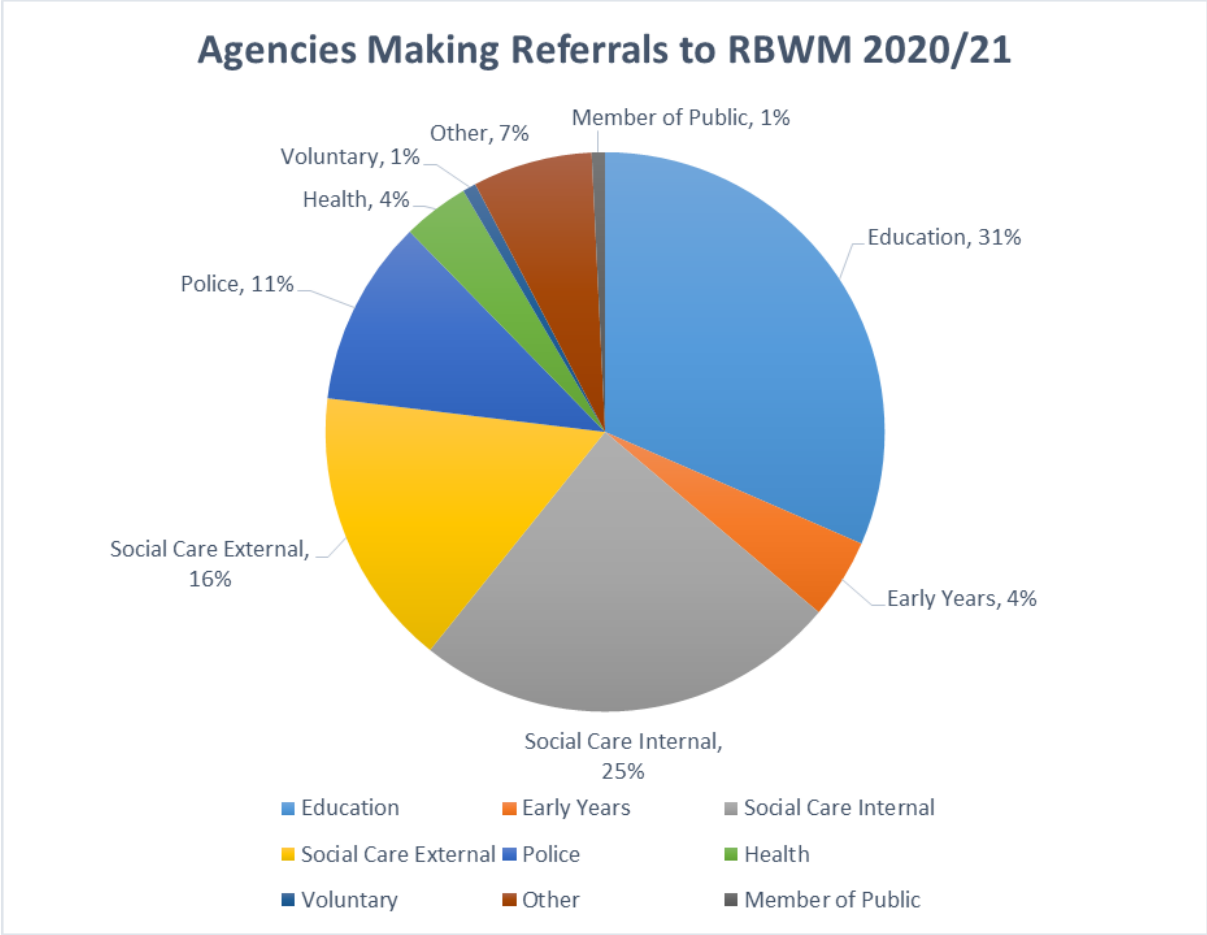
2019/20 Referrals	180
2020/21 Referrals	130
2021/22 Referrals	178

Table 7 a) Windsor and Maidenhead - referrals to LADO 2021/2022



Education	53%
Early Years	11%
Social Care Internal	12%
Social Care External	7%
Police	4%
Health	1%
Voluntary	2%
Other	7%
Member of Public	3%

Table 7 b) Windsor and Maidenhead - referrals to LADO 2020/2021



Education	31%
Early Years	4%
Social Care Internal	25%
Social Care External	16%
Police	11%
Health	4%
Voluntary	1%
Other	7%
Member of Public	1%

This is the third year data for Windsor and Maidenhead has been collated following the creation of the AfC LADO service with Kingston and Richmond in January 2019. In looking at the data, Windsor and Maidenhead data is comparable with Ops 1. There is an increase in referrals not only from last year but also in relation to the pre pandemic reporting year.

The highest number of referrals to the LADO service were from education. This is an increase on last year, partly due to the reopening of schools. This level of referrals remains on par with data for operational area 1, though given the lower volume of referrals last year the percentage increase for Windsor and Maidenhead is larger in comparison with operational area 1.

There is an increase also in referrals to LADO from early years providers, my view is that this demonstrates the effectiveness of the continued efforts in raising the LADO profile and training offered throughout this year.

In comparison to last year's data, the referrals from social care colleagues, external and internal, has reduced. This is to be expected, considering that during the height of the pandemic most contact with concerns for children and young people would have been through children's social care front door as schools and other settings did not fully open up until July 2021. It is not considered to be a concern in comparison with operational area 1, this seems consistent. Given the smaller number analysed last year, increases within that sector were also more marked.

The LADO Service has made a concerted effort to build upon and establish working relationships with the MASH team and social work teams within Windsor and Maidenhead. Having delivered briefings to individual teams, regular LADO representation at the Operational Senior Management, Head of Service meetings with the Director of children's social care has all helped to ensure that AfC LADO provides an effective and responsive service.

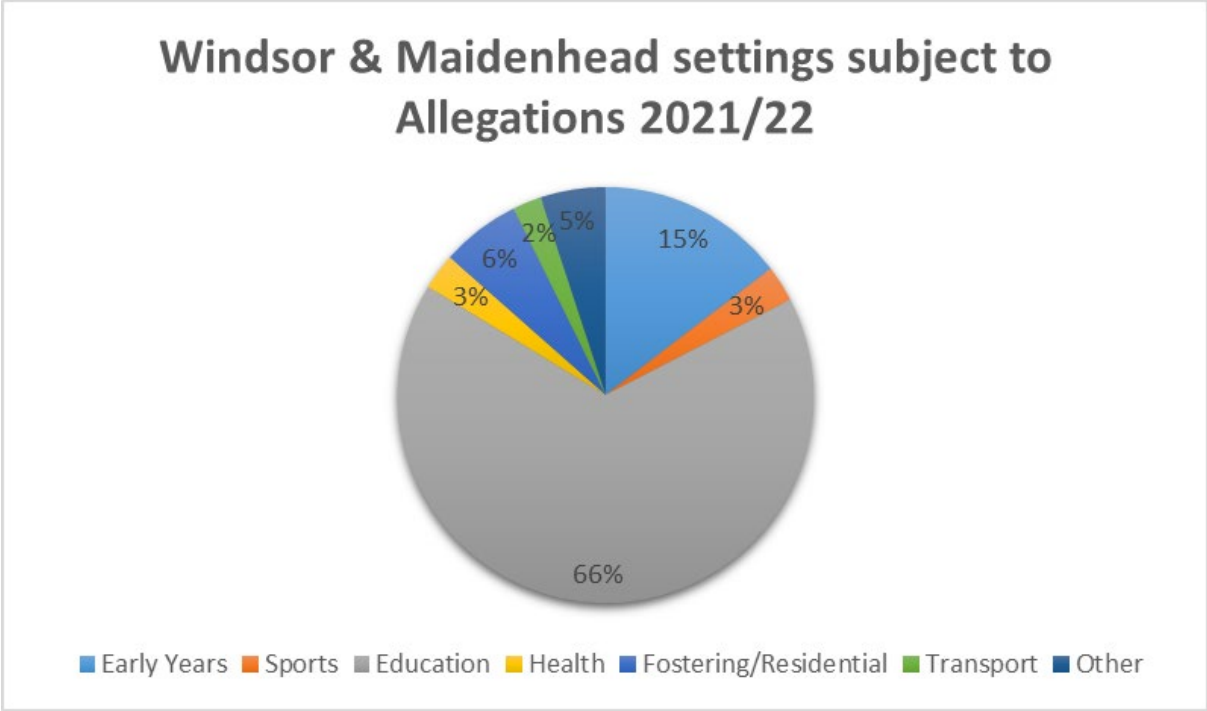
The police will often make a LADO referral if they have investigated a criminal offence, and they realise through their own investigation that the alleged perpetrator works with children, or can have access to children through volunteering. As seen from the data, the referral rate to LADO from the police has also decreased in comparison to last year. Again this could be due to the police continuing to remain operational during 2020/2021 compared to other referral sectors which were not operating and therefore contact with children was limited.

There were a total of 13 Initial allegations against staff and volunteer meetings held by LADO in Windsor and Maidenhead in 2020/2021 compared to six the previous year. This increase may be reflective of the higher volume of referrals from education colleagues.

This year's data shows a decrease in the number of referrals from our health partners which is in line with the trend seen in Kingston and Richmond. However, referral rates from this sector was noted within the 2019/2020 report as a concern, while there has been increased efforts to raise the LADO profile with our health partners this year.

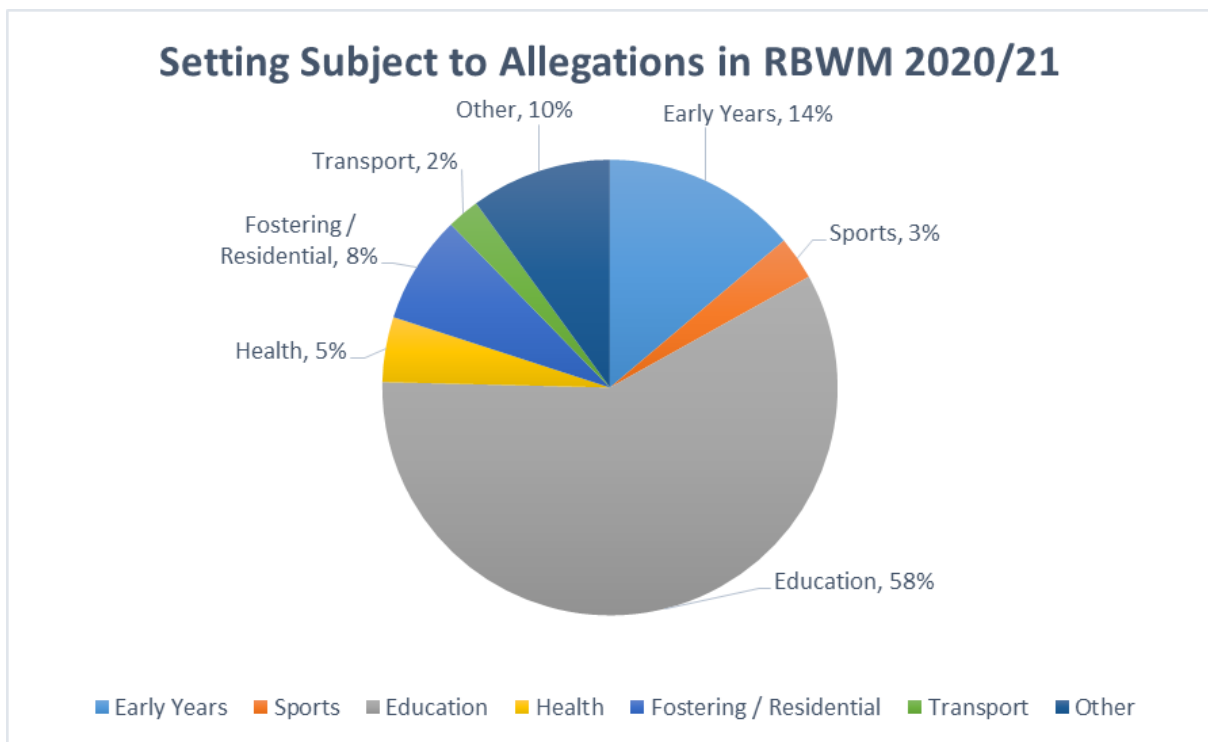
It is considered that the AfC LADO Service needs to further progress with efforts to raise its profile amongst the adult social care and health sector, namely Optalis. This has been included within priorities for the service for next year.

Table 8.a) Windsor and Maidenhead - settings subject to allegations 2021/2022



Early Years	15%
Sports	3%
Education	66%
Health	3%
Fostering and residential	6%
Transport	2%
Other	5%

Table 8.b) Windsor and Maidenhead - settings subject to allegations 2021/2022



Early Years	14%
Sports	3%
Education	58%
Health	5%
Fostering and residential	8%
Transport	2%
Other	10%

When looking at the settings subject to allegations in Table 9 a), it is clear that the largest sector subject to allegations is the education sector. The other settings subject to allegations remain relatively consistent to the previous years' data.

This increase may also reflect the rise in suitability or personal life concerns as illustrated in Table 1) Windsor and Maidenhead. Data for this criteria shows an increase, not only within the pandemic reporting year, but within the figures reported pre pandemic.

The education sector is the largest referrer to the LADO Service, as well as being the setting where most allegations are reported to take place. The latest teacher wellbeing index suggests that teachers are feeling under more stress and that the impact of the pandemic has had significant effect. 77% of teachers report that they have experienced symptoms of poor mental health, 72% report feelings of stress (rising to 84% for senior leaders) and 54% report having considered leaving the sector. Therefore, there is real concern that transferable stress which may escalate risk within the work setting.

Given that the data for Windsor and Maidenhead is over a three year period, it will be important that this data be further scrutinised over the next reporting year. Equivalence in data will be able to offer further analysis, and consider whether there are themes or concerns identified for the sector which need to be explored and appropriate support offered.

The AfC LADO Service has raised its profile considerably over the last year and has worked closely with the Associate Director for Education. LADO has also offered support where the issues may lend weight to a complaint rather than an allegation, and LADO has offered extensive advice to designated safeguarding leads in Windsor and Maidenhead in responding to peer on peer abuse also.

The AfC LADO Service can be considered to be now firmly established within Windsor and Maidenhead.

A Windsor and Maidenhead headteacher's comments attests to this.

The LADO Service has seen considerable improvement over the years in which I have worked in Windsor and Maidenhead. Making contact with the LADO is easier than in the past and the advice given is as helpful as it is wise. Our institution trusts the LADO service and is not at all hesitant in seeking clarification on concerns. The result of this dialogue is a more confident and reflective organisation which is constantly improving its own systems to better safeguard children and to promote safer working practices. Our interactions with the LADO have led to an excellent partnership which we truly value.

Service priorities 2022/2023

- To continue the annual delivery of LADO training and awareness raising to partners as well as attendance at AfC team meetings and other multi-agency forums. Targeted training to be delivered to Kingston social work teams, Adolescent Safeguarding Team and both operational areas transport teams.
- Implement the integrated children's services Liquid Logic LADO module across operational area 1.
- Establish MASH, SPA and LADO quarterly meetings.
- Refresh LADO Information leaflet to reflect fourth criteria.
- Operational area 2 - extend LADO trainings and briefings to adult care sector - Optalis.
- LADO to establish quarterly meetings with Early Years Service in Windsor and Maidenhead - ongoing and to be reviewed mid-year.
- For the LADO to continue to work with the Local Safeguarding Partnerships to further develop networks with local faith groups, to encourage more reporting of allegations within this sector.
- Children's and young people's information leaflet to be finalised.
- Update AfC non-recent abuse protocol and sign off by the senior leadership team.

The LADO recommends that the information and details provided within this report is noted and that partners ensure that their respective services are aware of the LADO function and if not, arrange for the LADO to attend key forums within their various departments and organisations.

References

Inspection of Richmond's local authority children's services 31 January to 4 February 2022

files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50179543

Covid 19 Response - Spring 2021 summary

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary>

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/performance-tracker-2021/children-social-care>

Teacher Wellbeing Index 2021

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

Private Nanny Leaflet

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YKzy-RRmXlr3WmNmUi-3fbHUIS12LCdO>