

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
23 AUGUST 2021**

DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the progress and performance of the Designated Officer, April 2020 to March 2021 and to highlight the required actions for April 2021 to March 2022.

Summary

2. In line with national guidance, the Designated Officer function is to ensure that:
 - a) Advice and guidance are provided to partner agencies and staff where an allegation is made against a person who works with children (paid or voluntary capacity).
 - b) The Designated Officer will facilitate and oversee this process. The Designated Officer does not investigate. Investigation is the role of the employer or the police where a criminal offence has been committed.
 - c) An agreed outcome of the investigation is established.
 - d) Allegations are appropriately managed by employers to protect not only the welfare of children but also staff.
 - e) Support actions are taken without delay to protect children.
 - f) All learning is effectively disseminated.
3. All organisations working with children in Darlington are required to have policies and procedures in place on what their organisation should do when an allegation is made against an employee/volunteer who has contact with children. These policies and procedures should be in line with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership multi-agency procedures.
4. The allegation can be in connection with:
 - a) employment
 - b) voluntary activity
 - c) work placement

- d) the individual's own children
- e) related to the community or private life of a partner, member of the family or other household member.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that:
- a) The contents of the report and the work undertaken during 2021/22 and the priorities of the Designated Officer service for 2021/22 be noted.
 - b) The annual report be agreed.
 - c) All agencies consider how to promote the role of the Designated Officer within their own organisation.

James Stroyan
Group Director of People

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Marian Garland: Extension 6451

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Wellbeing	The work of the Designated Officer can have a positive impact on the health and well-being of children and young people
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	All Children and Young People
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	Not a key decision
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision
Corporate Plan	This report has no implications for the Corporate Plan
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Designated Officer Annual Report 2020/21

Managing Allegations and Concerns against Staff, Carers or Volunteers

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Designated Officer Annual Report 2020/21

Managing Allegations and Concerns against Staff, Carers or Volunteers

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members of Scrutiny on the progress and performance of the Designated Officer (DO) service, (previously known as the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO) between April 2020 and March 2021 and to highlight the required actions for April 2021 to March 2022.

2.0 Introduction / National Context

- 2.1 The framework for the management of allegations of abuse is set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children \(July 2018\)](#) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges \(September 2018\)](#).

In line with the guidance, the Designated Officer function is required to ensure that:

- advice and guidance are provided to partner agencies and staff
 - any allegation made against a person who works with children in either a paid or a voluntary capacity is investigated. The Designated Officer will facilitate and oversee this process to conclusion. The Designated Officer does not investigate. That is the role of the employer or if a criminal allegation, the police
 - Designated Officer meetings are chaired effectively, and an agreed outcome of the investigation is established
 - allegations are appropriately managed by employers to protect not only the welfare of children but also staff
 - support actions are taken without delay to protect children
 - learning from Designated Officer referrals is effectively disseminated
- 2.2 All organisations within Darlington are required to have clear policies and procedures in place which outline how and what their organisation should do when an allegation is made against an employee/volunteer who has contact with children. These policies and procedures should be in line with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership procedures.
- 2.3 The criteria for a Designated Officer referral is when a person is alleged to have:
- behaved in a way that has harmed or may harm a child

- has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she may pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

The allegation can be in connection with employment / voluntary activity / work placement, regarding individual's own children or related to the community or private life of a partner / member of the family / household member.

3.0 Local Arrangements

3.1 Darlington Borough Council currently has one Designated Officer who is based with the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit and has undertaken the role since November 2019. The current Designated Officer has a dual role and is also a Policy Development Officer within the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit.

3.2 Clear arrangements are in place to ensure robust oversight and monitoring of the Designated Officer function. This has been provided through supervision with the Assistant Director of Adult Services to ensure that policies are applied consistently and fairly and that all enquiries are progressed in a timely manner.

4.0 Cross Boundary Issues

4.1 Where a child from the Darlington Local Authority area makes an allegation in a setting or placement which is outside the Darlington Borough Council jurisdiction, the lead responsibility for action lies with the local authority for the area where the alleged abuse occurred. In 2020/21 the Designated Officer was notified of 5 allegations concerning Darlington children placed in other Local Authorities.

4.2 In these circumstances, the Designated Officer and where appropriate, the child's Social Worker, will liaise with the relevant local authority and agree a joint strategy.

4.3 Checks should be made as to whether there are any other children in the placement. If so, the child's Social Worker and manager must be informed, and the Designated Officer should consult them about the action required.

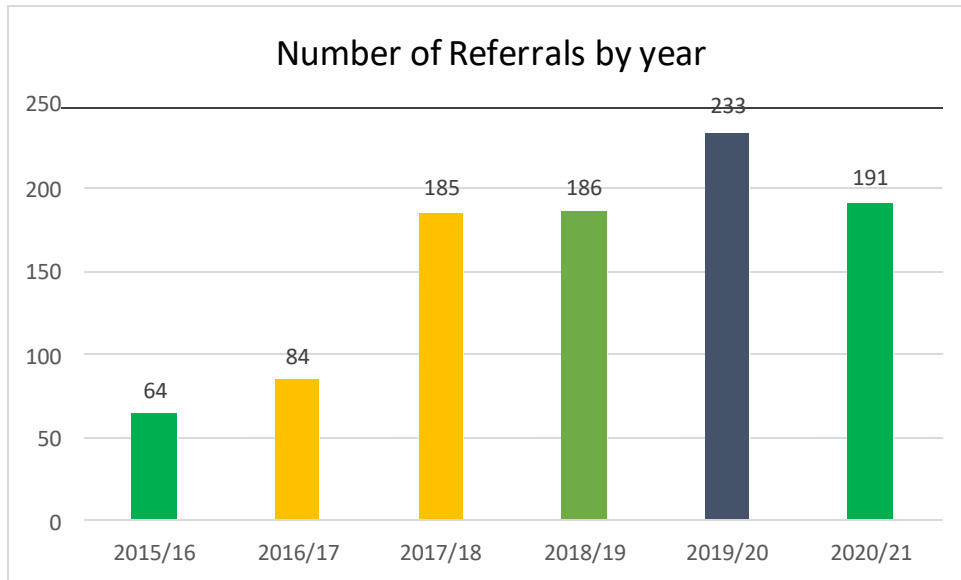
4.4 Interviews of children from Darlington Local Authority areas will usually be undertaken by their own local children's social care services in conjunction with the police as appropriate.

4.5 Where the referral relates to a child from another local authority temporarily placed in an establishment located within the Darlington Local Authority area, the Designated Officer should liaise with the child's home authority about the roles and responsibilities in carrying out this procedure. In 2020/21 the Designated Officer received 44 allegations concerning children from other local authority areas either temporarily placed in an establishment in Darlington or receiving education in Darlington.

5.0 Contact made with the Designated Officer

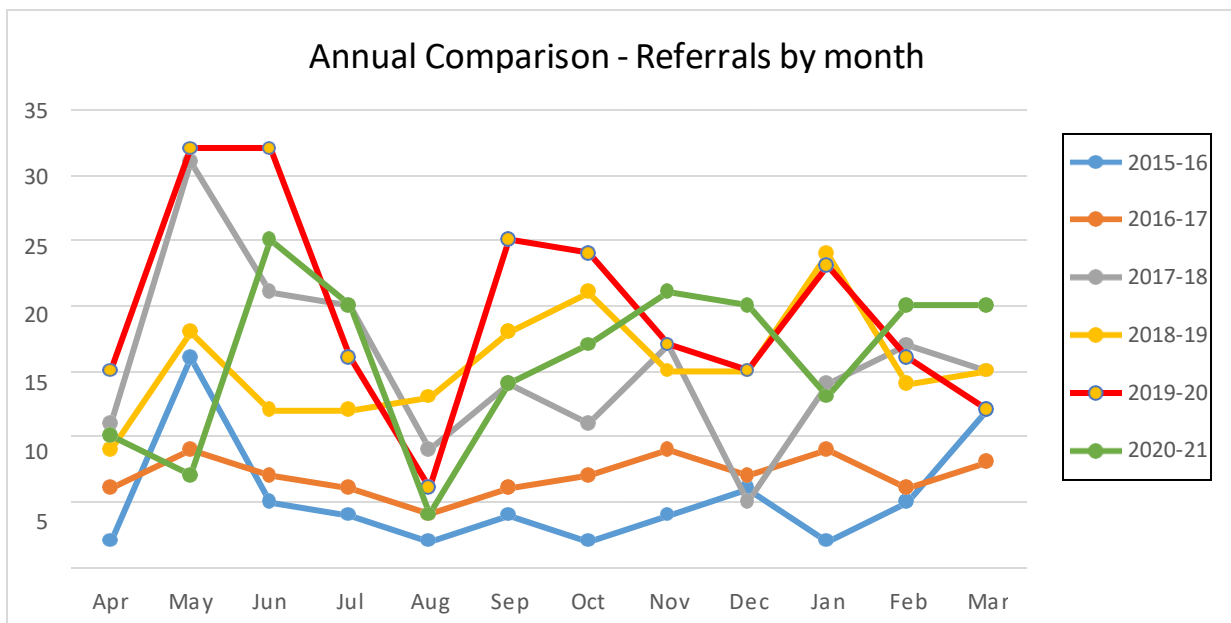
- 5.1** In 2020/21 the Designated Officer service received a total of 191 contacts in respect of allegations. This represents an 18% decrease on the number of contacts received in 2019/20. Of the total number of contacts received, 32 progressed to an Initial Evaluation Meeting (IEM), (all of which were conducted via Microsoft Teams), amounting to 17% of all contacts, which is a slight decrease on the figures last year. This demonstrates that despite the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, the response of the Designated Officer and partner agencies in terms of holding Initial Evaluation Meetings (IEM) and conducting enquiries in respect of reported allegations has remained consistent throughout the reporting period, with a similar percentage of allegations being subject to an IEM as in previous years. The remaining 159 contacts were either dealt with by means of telephone discussion with the employer, (particularly during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic) and were subsequently monitored by the Designated Officer or did not meet the threshold for intervention.
- 5.2** Initial Evaluation Meetings take place when information sharing is beneficial between agencies involved, for example, Designated Safeguarding Leads within the referring organisation, Human Resources, Police and Children's Services. This can be after a Strategy meeting held by Children's Services or it may be a standalone meeting. In some circumstances, it is appropriate to share information via telephone without the need of convening an Initial Evaluation Meeting, for example; when the allegation is not of a serious nature, there is no involvement with other agencies or there is limited information to share with the employer. These allegations are still monitored by the Designated Officer and during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, two allegations were dealt with by means of a telephone discussion with the employer.

CHART 1



5.3 The figures in **Chart 1** show that the rate of contacts in 2020/21 decreased by 18% (a total of 42 contacts) in comparison to the previous reporting year. This is in contrast with previous years, which have consistently shown year on year increases in the rate of contacts. The decrease in 2020/21 is a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects of the national lockdown which commenced in March 2019, immediately before the start of the reporting year. This can be seen in **Chart 2** which provides a month by month breakdown of the rate of contacts and an annual comparison.

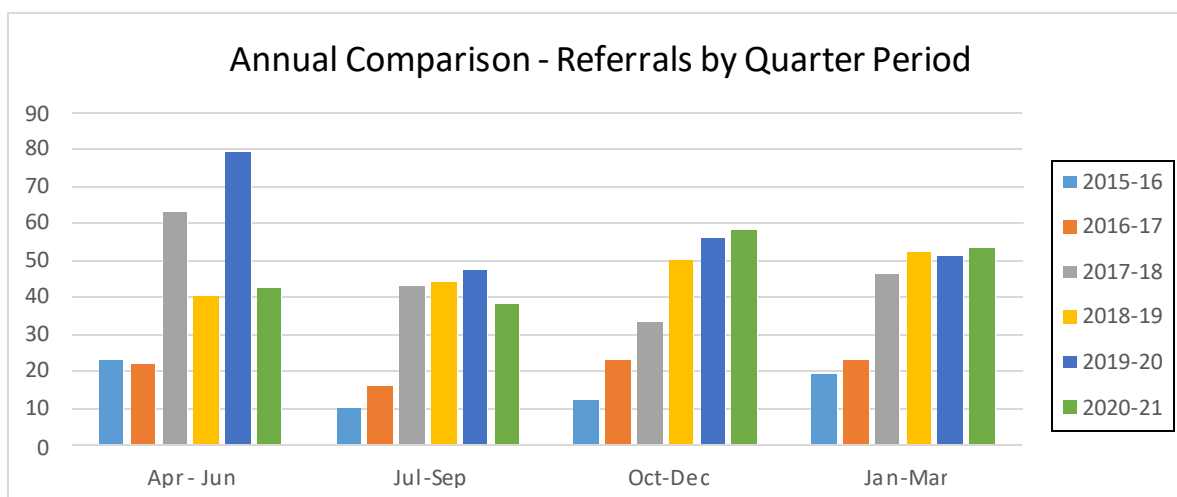
CHART 2



5.4 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic throughout 2020/21 is evident in the annual comparison of monthly contacts. Analysis shows that there was a significant decrease in the rate of contacts in April and May 2020, which coincides with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the first lockdown. In previous years the Education sector has consistently been the largest ‘source of referral group’ and largest ‘allegations by staffing group’. Although all schools in Darlington remained open, in April and May 2020, there was a significant reduction in the numbers of pupils attending school, which partly explains the significant decrease in contacts. There was also a decrease in the number of employees attending the workplace across all agencies. The rate of contacts increased significantly in June 2020 (25 contacts), almost back to the level of the June 2019 (32 contacts). The likely explanation is more students started to return to school and college from 1st June 2020 (28% of referrals in June were connected to Education) and the fact that the first lockdown ended in June 2020.

5.5 The majority of contacts with the Designated Officer relate to schools. The number of contacts tends to fall significantly in the month of August during the summer break.

CHART 3



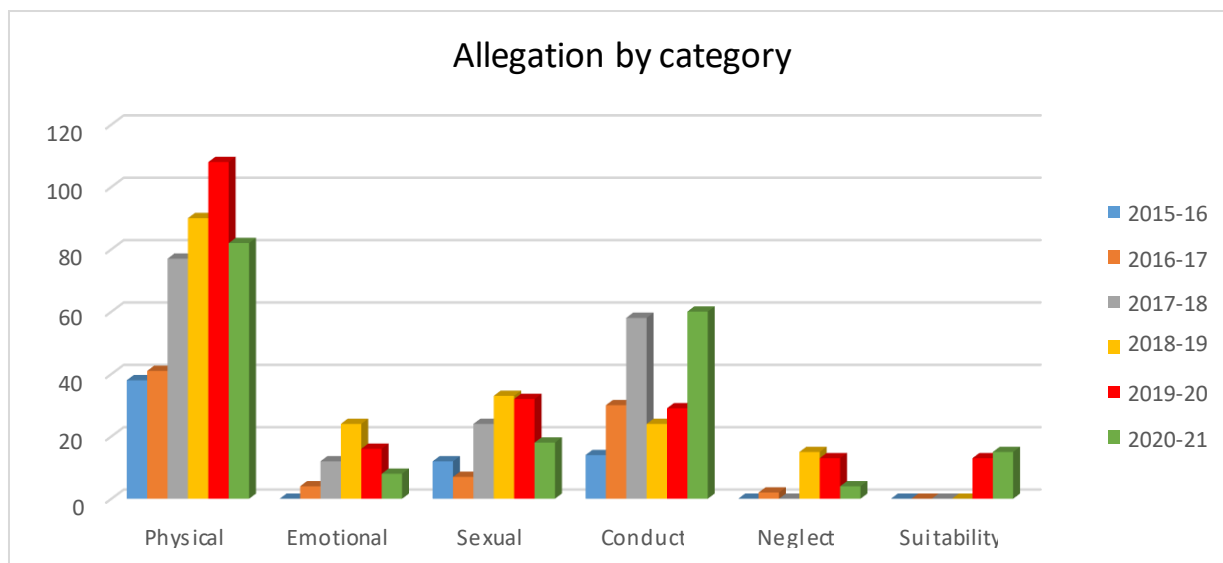
5.6 The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are also demonstrated in **Chart 3**, which provides an annual comparison of the rate of contacts by quarter and shows a 47% decrease in contacts during Quarter 1 in comparison to the previous year. Quarter 2 also shows a 19% decrease in the rate of contacts to the Designated Officer in comparison to the previous year. The majority of pupils had returned to school in Quarter 2, but social distancing was still required, and this may have impacted on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in schools.

5.7 Figures for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 are slightly higher than those of the previous reporting year, despite the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic was ongoing and there was a second lockdown during Quarter 4. This is possibly explained by the fact that during the second lockdown (Quarter 4), a higher percentage of pupils attended school than during the first lockdown. Also in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4, there was an increase in contacts to the Designated Officer in respect of ‘conduct,’ some of which referred to

incidents which had occurred in the private lives of employees and involved issues such as mental health, self-harm, alcohol abuse and child abuse. There has been an overall increase in contacts relating to such incidents in 2020/21 and this may be a consequence of the adverse effects of the pandemic on the wellbeing of the population, which has been recognised as a national issue.

6.0 Categories of Concern

CHART 4



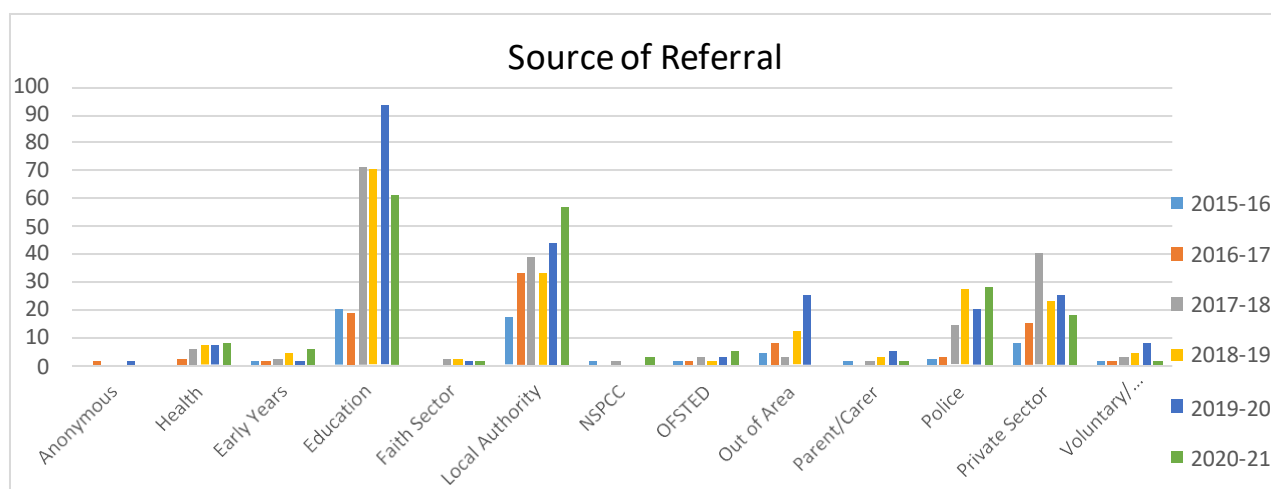
- 6.1** Of the 191 contacts in 2020/21, the main category for referral was allegations of physical abuse. This is in line with the data from previous years.
- 6.2** In 2020/21, 82 (42%) contacts were in relation to physical abuse which represents a decrease of 24% on last year's figures within this category. This is partly explained by the decrease in allegations of physical assault within education settings as a result of the restrictions of the pandemic and lockdowns when pupil attendance in schools has been much lower. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of allegations relating to the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in schools, which are included in this category (see paragraph 8.5).
- 6.3** Allegations under the category 'conduct' have seen a significant increase accounting for 60 (31% of total) contacts to the Designated Officer in 2020/21.

This represents a significant increase of 106% of contacts recorded under this category, in comparison to the previous reporting year. Contacts recorded within this category relate to behaviours which do not easily fit into the four main categories. A total of 32 (55%) contacts recorded as 'conduct' were in relation to incidents which occurred in the private lives of individuals and did not occur within the workplace.

- 6.4** A total of 15 contacts have been recorded under the category of 'suitability'. This category amounts to 8% of the total and a 15% increase in contacts under this category compared to last year. This category usually relates to issues in an employee's personal life, such as mental ill-health or 'association' with an offender, or association with proscribed organisations, which may affect their suitability to work with children. Some of these incidents related to mental health and alcohol abuse and self-harm or association with a partner who has committed sexual offences. Again, the increase is potentially a consequence of the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the wellbeing of the population, and improved reporting from Children's Social Care to the Designated Officer in allegations where a parent's employment involves working with children.
- 6.5** There were 18 contacts regarding allegations of sexual abuse in 2020/21. This is 9% of all contacts and represents a 44% decrease in contacts under this category compared to last year.
- 6.6** There were 4 contacts regarding allegations of neglect in 2020/21. This is 3% of all contacts and represents a 69% decrease in contacts under this category in comparison with last year.
- 6.7** There has also been 50% decrease in the number of contacts regarding emotional abuse in comparison to the rate of contacts in the previous reporting year, with a total of 8 recorded in 2020/21. Emotional abuse contacts represented 4% of all referrals to Designated Officer.
- 6.8** The remaining recorded allegations have not been categorised because they are recorded for information purposes, for example, in support of employers seeking advice and reassurance but requiring a record of the referral to the Designated Officer to satisfy governance requirements or providing additional information about a case which has already been investigated.
- 6.9** A total of 80 contacts to the Designated Officer in 2020/21 were related to incidents which have occurred in the private lives of individuals (as opposed to the workplace), which is 42% of the total contacts and is an increase on previous reporting years (though the incidence has not been previously reported in annual reports). These incidents mainly relate to alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, mental health problems and allegations of child abuse and neglect within the family and were predominantly reported in quarters 3 and 4. Such allegations can be complex in terms of disclosure and resolution and may require review meetings.

7.0 Source of Referrals by Profession / Employment setting

CHART 5



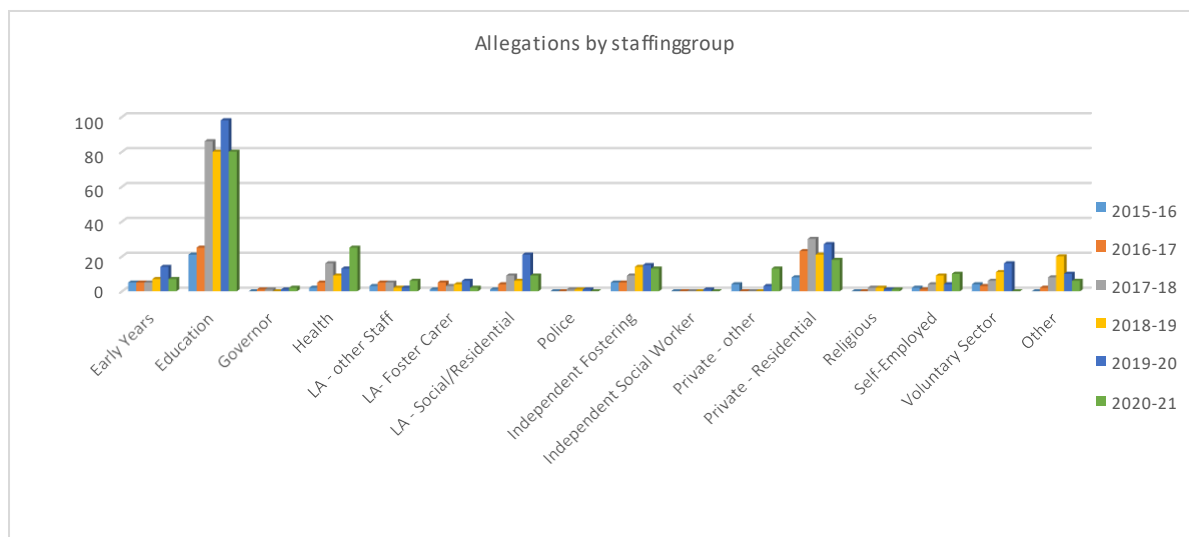
7.1 As can be seen in **Chart 5** Education settings in 2020/21 continues to be the largest referring group, accounting for 61 (32%) of the 191 contacts with the Designated Officer. The majority of referrals from and involving schools were as a result of allegations of physical abuse and correspond to the analysis of ‘category of concern’ data, showing that physical abuse is the most common category of allegation reported to the Designated Officer. It should be noted that the total number of allegations relating to education establishments in the ‘allegations by staff group’ is slightly higher at 80 and this is because some of the allegations involving an employee in education were referred to the Designated Officer by other agencies.

7.2 Referrals have continued to be received from a wide range of professions and organisations. In 2020/21, there were a total of 57 contacts to the Designated Officer by a Local Authority, the majority of which originated from Darlington Borough Council. This represents a 32% increase on the previous reporting year and is possibly a result of the new safeguarding arrangements within Children’s Social Care at Darlington and the creation of the Children’s Initial Advice Team, which has improved the process of referral to the Designated Officer. It is also once again possibly a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the potential increase in safeguarding referrals to Children’s Social Care of incidents involving domestic abuse and parental mental health concerns, or other categories of abuse which are referred to the Designated Officer if a parent or carer works with children.

8.0 Allegations by Staff Group

8.1 **Chart 6** shows that referrals are made across a wide range of roles and settings, whether paid staff or volunteers, as outlined in the national guidelines.

CHART 6



8.2 As expected and in accordance with previous years, the largest number of allegations by staffing groups is Education, accounting for 80 referrals which is 42% of all allegations referred to the Designated Officer in 2020/21. This is despite schools operating under restrictions for a significant part of the reporting period because of the pandemic, and contacts regarding allegations against employees within education having fallen 18% in comparison with the previous reporting period.

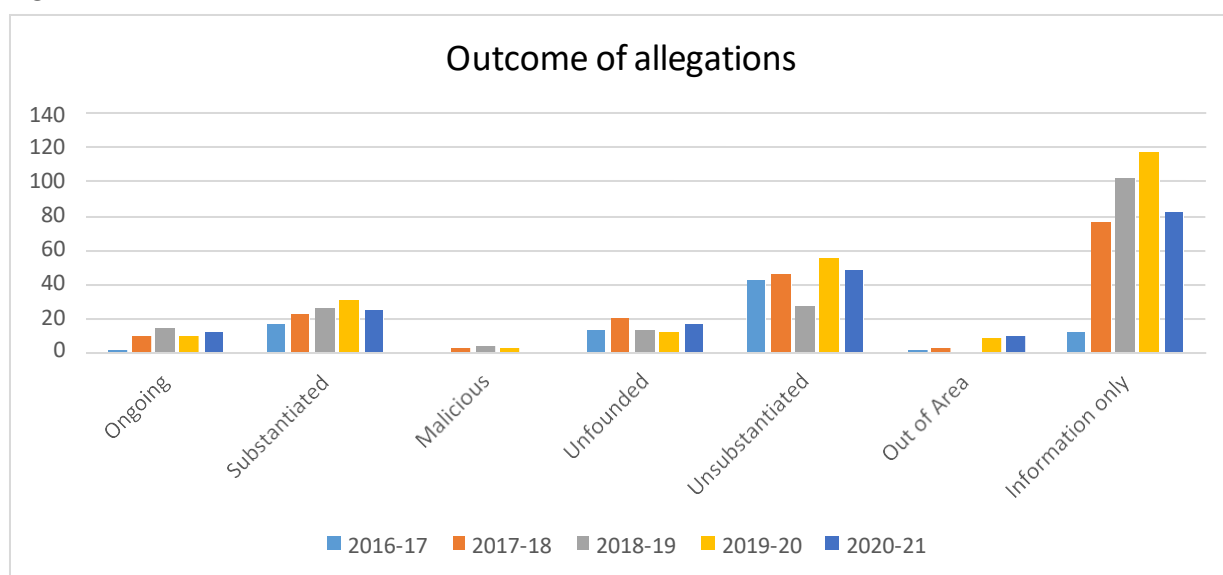
8.3 During 2020/21, of the 80 contacts relating to allegations about employees in education settings, 23 (29%) were regarding employees from primary schools; 16 (20%) from secondary schools; 5 (6%) from Further Education settings; 1 (1%) referred to an agency teacher and 1 (1%) from a residential establishment with attached education provision. A total of 33 (41%) were from schools which provide a service for children with Special Educational Needs (both primary and secondary age groups).

8.4 There were a total of 39 allegations (49%) in the category of physical abuse relating to the education sector; this is a 26% reduction in comparison with 2019/20. This figure correlates with the presenting referrals from education, often involving Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) being used within educational settings, for example, Team Teach, which is an approved management model for dealing with children and young people who are posing a risk to themselves or others.

- 8.5** The rate of allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in education settings has been closely monitored by the Designated Officer throughout this reporting period. There were 21 allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) across the education sector in 2020/21, which accounts for 54% of all allegations under the category 'Physical' in education settings. This is a significant reduction in the number of allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in schools in comparison with the previous reporting year. One school which has an intake of pupils who are unable to have mainstream education because of Special Educational Needs and challenging behaviour, has seen a 75% reduction in allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) across the reporting period. The overall reduction in the incidence of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) across the education sector may be a consequence of fewer pupils attending school during the lockdowns and the requirement for social distancing in schools. However, it is important to note that schools for children with Special Educational Needs remained open throughout both lockdowns. Some pupils with Special Educational Needs, vulnerable children and children of key workers were able to attend school throughout the lockdowns and it is possible that work undertaken by the Designated Officer and Local Authority with one setting in early 2020 has positively impacted on the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI), thereby reducing the number of allegations within the category Physical across the sector. The Designated Officer will continue to monitor the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in schools throughout 2021/22.
- 8.6** The number of contacts regarding Independent Foster Carers has decreased slightly with 13 allegations being referred during 2019/20. There have been 2 contacts relating to Darlington Borough Council Foster Carers during the recording period, a decrease on last year's figures.
- 8.7** The Designated Officer continues to work closely with the Service Manager for the Fostering Team (Darlington Borough Council), following a decision in 2018 that all referrals about foster carers (including Independent Fostering Agencies) would be shared with the Service Manager. This enables the Service Manager to keep a close check on those agencies where the standards of care fall below what is expected of an accredited provider of services. When appropriate, this information is shared with the Commissioning Team.

9.0 Outcome of Allegations

CHART 7



9.1 In relation to the 24 substantiated allegations, 5 employees were dismissed (21%), 1 was deregistered (4%), 6 resigned from their position (25%), 1 allegation resulted in a conviction (4%) and 11 staff members were reinstated (46%) with management advice/written warnings.

9.2 There were 48 unsubstantiated outcomes and of these, 2 staff were re-instated (4%) and 43 resulted in no further action (89%), 1 staff member was dismissed (2%) and 2 staff members resigned (4%).

9.3 There were 16 allegations deemed to be 'unfounded', of these 2 staff were re- instated (12%) and in respect of 14 allegations no further action was taken (88%).

9.4 No allegations were recorded under the category 'malicious'. This outcome is not used by the Designated Officer unless there is overwhelming evidence that the allegation was based on deliberate falsehoods

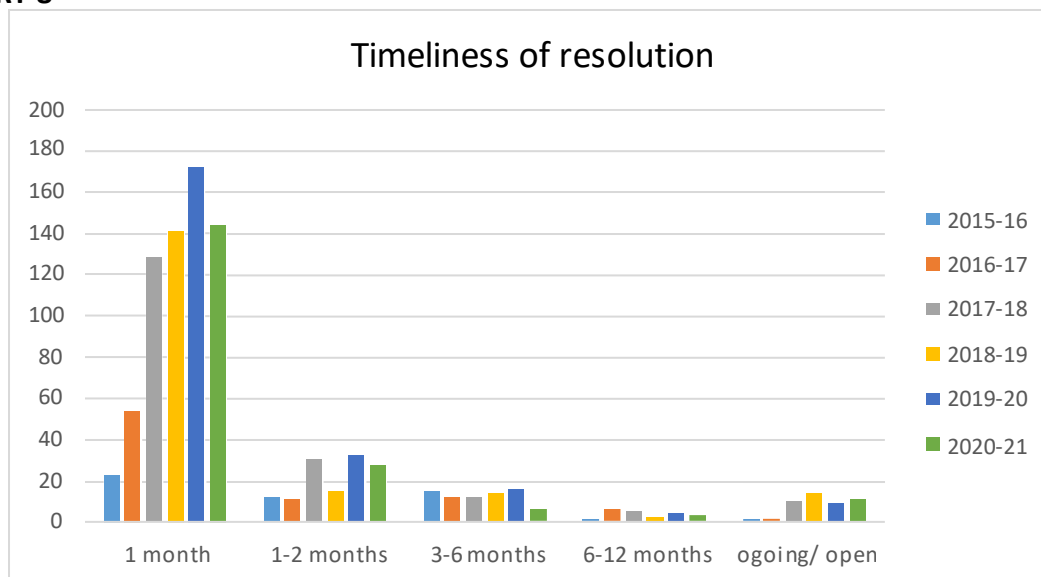
9.5 In this reporting period, 82 allegations were recorded for 'information only'. This includes allegations which are 'out of area' (sometimes this fact is only established after initial enquiries have been carried out by the Designated Officer), which are reported to the Designated Officer but are subsequently found not to be in the remit of the Designated Officer procedures and result in advice being given and enquiries which are transferred to the Safeguarding Adult Manager, as they are better dealt with under the Managing Allegations Procedures in accordance with the Care Act 2014. Some allegations can fall within the remit of both the Designated Officer and the Safeguarding Adult Manager, for example, agency employees or employees with two roles. In such enquiries the Designated Officer works closely with the Safeguarding Adult Manager and a joint meeting may take place.

9.6 At the time of writing, a total of 11 allegations (5%) remain open. These are either ongoing police investigations, complex internal disciplinary investigations, or

investigations which are awaiting the outcome of a court case or an appeal.

9.7 Performance

CHART 8



9.8 The Designated Officer continues to work to the professional standards set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010, even though there is no longer a timescale for completion of enquiries stipulated in the updated versions of the legislation. The performance of the Designated Officer is measured and monitored through supervision between the Assistant Director of Adult Services and the Designated Officer.

9.9 It is important to manage allegations within timescales to ensure that investigations are dealt with promptly, firstly to ensure that children are protected from employees who may pose a risk of harm, but also to ensure a fair and consistent process for employees (who should be supported by the employer throughout the process). Oversight and management of allegations within timescales helps employers to conduct investigations and disciplinary proceedings lawfully and expeditiously, enabling employees to be either reinstated, disciplined or dismissed at the earliest opportunity thereby minimising disruption to the employer and employee.

10.0 There is currently no requirement in legislation for enquires to meet timescales. However, local targets are set in line with an earlier version of Working Together (2010) in that:

- 80% of allegations are resolved within one month
- 90% within are resolved within three months

10.1 Allegations are resolved in a timely manner with 144 (75%) of total being resolved in one month, and this is consistent with the previous year's performance data. Resolution timescales can be impeded by the complexity of allegations involving ongoing criminal investigations and internal investigations where the employee has declared themselves unfit for work, therefore delaying disciplinary action.

10.2 A total of 87% of allegations were resolved within 3 months and 93% within 6 months. And 95% within 6 months. The remaining allegations were ongoing and not finalised at the end of this reporting period, all involve ongoing complex allegations and criminal or internal disciplinary investigations. At the time of writing the report, a total of 11 (5%) of investigations were still active.

10.3 The Designated Officer tracks all open enquiries on a 4 weekly basis to ensure that updates on outcomes of investigations are received and to enable enquiries to be closed in a timely manner. However, it should be noted once a police investigation is involved or a case is referred to an employer for disciplinary procedures to be followed, the Designated Officer is reliant on external process which impact on resolution timescales.

11.0 Freedom of Information Requests

11.1 During 2020/21, the Designated Officer service has continued to take the lead with regards to Freedom of Information Requests with regards to allegations made about employees or volunteers working with children. Over the 12 months reporting period, 2 Freedom of Information requests and 2 Subject Access requests were processed.

12.0 Service Improvements & Developments 2019/20

12.1 See Appendix 1.

13.0 Designated Officer Service Priorities and Plan 2021/22

13.1 In 2021/22, the Designated Officer service plans to continue to promote awareness of the service across a range of professions to ensure that appropriate referrals are coming in and to break down any barriers to agencies seeking the advice and support of the Designated Officer service. The role of the Designated Officer and the responsibilities of employers are included in multi-agency safeguarding training.

13.2 The Designated Officer service will continue to be crucial to frontline practice to safeguard children in Darlington. Working in partnership with the Designated Officer and sharing information effectively ensures that children are protected from people who pose a risk of harm and promotes good practice and challenges unsafe practice. Recent data suggests that work carried out by the Designated Officer with education settings has resulted in a reduction in the number of allegations resulting from the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) and this will continue to be monitored by the Designated Officer. The Designated Officer continues to work with the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Trainer and the Education Safeguarding Officer to raise awareness of the role of the Designated Officer and the Managing Allegations Procedures to promote good practice and safeguard children.

13.3 The service also wants to improve the quality of the performance information gathered and to maximise the efficiency of the service using electronic recording systems. It is anticipated that in 2021/22, the recording of referrals to the Designated Officer service will be integrated within the casework system Liquid Logic. This will enable Children's Services to improve data matching where appropriate. This has been deferred from 2020/21 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions.

13.4 In 2020/21, the Designated Officer service has identified 4 key priorities (Appendix 2) which are pivotal to the on-going development of the service.

14.0 Recommendations

14.1 To note the contents of the report and the work undertaken during 2020/21 and to acknowledge the priorities of the Designated Officer service for 2021/22.

14.2 To share the Annual Report with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership and Members who will be asked to:

- agree this Annual Report
- consider how they will continue to promote the role of the DO within their own organisation.

15.0 References

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018
- Guidance for staff facing an allegation 2014

16.0 Author

Marian Garland
Designated Officer
Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit
Date: 21st May 2021

Appendix 1

Service Improvements & Developments 2020/21

Actions were identified for development of the Designated Officer function during 2019/20 which would further improve the performance of the service. The progress against these actions is highlighted below.

	Action	Lead	Timescale	Update
1	To ensure the induction of a newly appointed DO is successful and the appointee is retained	AD	Jan 2022	Review of the role and function to ensure the Designated Officer role is in the appropriate service area
2	The Designated Officer will monitor the rate of allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in schools for pupils with SEN and identify themes and take action where appropriate.	DO	Ongoing	The DO holds regular meetings with one provider regarding allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) (as a means of monitoring the rate of allegations) and has regular conversations with head teachers in the schools for children with SEN. In 2020/21 there was a significant reduction in the number of allegations of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in the education sector.
3	DO will continue to raise awareness of the DO role via a range of media throughout the coming year	DO	Completed	All relevant information re the DO service has been posted on the revised Darlington Safeguarding Partnership website (July 2020). Websites and literature to have the name and contact details of the DO. All agencies will have correct details of DO. DO information will be easily accessible and relevant referrals made.
4	DO will continue to engage with the Safeguarding Multi Agency Trainer and Safeguarding Education	DO	March 2022	This is an on-going process and a top priority.

	Officer in relation to continual roll out of designated training to improve practice and reduce referrals across all organisations			
5	DO to liaise with police in relation to any historical allegations that may come as a result of the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.	DO	Ongoing	The DO has an agreed strategy in place referring any notifications of historical sexual abuse from the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. There has been one referral from the IICSA via the NSPCC.
6	The DO will continue to maintain accurate records of referrals, decision making and outcomes; monitor date and identify any themes that emerge and feed these themes into training	DO	Ongoing	Records are reviewed monthly to ensure that they are accurate and up to date. Regular conversations take place between the DO and the principals of the schools for children with Special Educational Needs to monitor allegations about the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI).
7	DO to attend all pre-agreed regional DO meetings to ensure that Darlington's views and opinions are represented. DO to attend National Annual DO Conference.	DO	Ongoing	The DO attends quarterly regional DO meetings or receives an update by e mail.
8	DO will continue to develop recording practice with system developments for future reports	DO	Ongoing	This was a priority for 2019/20 but has been delayed because of the pandemic. The DO has liaised with the Liquid Logic (LL) team and devised an appropriate recording system within LL and it is anticipated that recording be integrated within Liquid Logic in 2021.

9	To develop a safer recruitment guidance to offer further support and guidance to settings	DO and HR	Completed	The Safe Recruitment guidance is available on Darlington Borough Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy.
10	Review the format of DO initial evaluation meetings template for inclusion in Liquid Logic.	DO and LL	Ongoing	The DO has liaised with the LL team and has devised a form for inclusion within the LL recording system. This is ongoing.
11	The DO will provide feedback on National DO standards and seek approval from DSP and legal services	DO	Ongoing	The National Standards are not yet completed. There is an ongoing discussion as to whether a National Guidance will be appropriate for such a wide diversity of Local Authorities.
12	The DO will review and update the procedure for Managing Allegations and concerns against staff, carers or volunteers and seek approval via the DSCB Practice and Development and Procedures sub-group.	DO	Completed	The procedures were reviewed in July 2019 within the framework of the DSP Learning and Development sub-group, the procedures have been updated to reflect the changes to legislation – Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
13	To review and up-date the guidance for staff facing an allegation	DO	Completed	This guidance was reviewed in July 2019 within the framework of the DSP Learning and Development sub-group but will be kept under review.

Designated Officer Service Priority Plan 2021/22**Priority 1: Training and Awareness Raising in respect of the Designated Officer role and local procedures**

Action	Planned outcome	Lead	Timescale
DO will continue to engage with the Safeguarding Multi Agency Trainer and Safeguarding Education Officer in relation to continual roll out of designated training and will hold awareness raising sessions with employers as requested.	Increased awareness amongst employers of the DO procedures and their responsibilities in reporting allegations to the DO and improved transparency in reporting allegations. This will potentially increase the number of referrals to the DO service and will improve safeguarding outcomes for children.	DO	March 2022

Priority 2: To monitor and address the prevalence of allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in SEN Education settings in Darlington

Action	Planned Outcome	Lead	Timescale
Monitor the rate of allegations involving the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) in SEN education settings in Darlington in respect of repeat allegations.	To work with Head Teachers and Safeguarding Leads to ensure that the DO is informed when such an allegation is made by a pupil/parent and that staff are using Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) appropriately and that any breaches of Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) guidelines are dealt with appropriately schools with a view to reducing the annual number of allegations of	DO	March 2022

	Restrictive Physical Intervention (RPI) within this category. This work is ongoing.		
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Priority 3: DO database/recording to be integrated within Liquid Logic

Action	Planned Outcome	Lead	Timescale
In conjunction with the Liquid Logic team devise an appropriate DO casework recording system within Liquid Logic.	Improved recording and enhanced searching capacity for the DO and improved data matching for Children’s Services where appropriate. Performance Indicators to be available on Liquid Logic which will feed figures into the DO Annual report.	DO/LL team	September 2021

Priority 4: The future of the Designated Officer service in Darlington to be agreed and a decision made as to where the service will be placed within the Local Authority

Action	Planned Outcome	Lead	Timescale
A decision to be made as to where the Designated Officer would be best placed within the Local Authority with regards to workload and taking into consideration resilience for abstraction.	A decision regarding where the DO role should be placed.	Assistant Director	September 2021