

**Appendix A  
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Report**

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Parenting Board
<b>Date:</b>	28 March 2023
<b>Title:</b>	<b>National Review – Children with disabilities and complex health needs placed in residential settings – Addendum Report</b>
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children’s Services

**Contact name:** Kieran Lyons

**Tel:** 0370 779 1052

**Email:** Kieran.lyons@hants.gov.uk

**Purpose of this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an addendum report to the response already provided, to the request from the Child Safeguarding Review Panel to the Director of Children’s Services (DCS), to review the placements of children in care placed in children’s homes jointly registered with independent special schools.
2. This report seeks to provide the summary of the outcomes of that review in respect of action: That the host authority Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for each individual establishment reviews all information on any LADO referrals, complaints and concerns over the last 3 years relating to the workforce in such establishments to ensure these have been appropriately actioned.

**Recommendations from the review**

3. The inductions and training package for LADO will be reviewed to ensure that consideration of the voice of the child and the impact of their disability is comprehensively covered.
4. The findings of this review will be discussed in LADO team meetings and as part of reflective supervision sessions.
5. The LADO will review their training offer for the 9 establishments.

**Executive Summary**

6. This report will detail the work undertaken by the LADO service as requested by the Safeguarding Review Panel, that the DCS review the placements of

children in care placed in children's homes jointly registered with independent schools.

7. Two additional LADOs were employed to undertake this work and reviewed over 400 pieces of work comprising of allegations and LADO support and advice requests. The quality of the LADO work was of a good standard there were no instances where a child was felt to be unsafe or had not been made safe as part of the investigation. The LADO response was found to be timely with excellent quality advice provided to the establishment. In some pieces of work, it was found that the reporting/recording of the child's voice could have been stronger, and that the consideration of the child's disability could have enhanced investigations, therefore this requires improvement going forward.

## **Methodology**

8. A total of 440 cases across 9 establishments were reviewed by the Local Authority for a three-year period from the 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2022.
9. Of those 440 cases, 134 met the threshold for LADO (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) and 306 were reviewed under support and guidance.
10. The review was undertaken by two externally recruited LADOs which provided a level of independent scrutiny for the service.
11. The 9 establishments reviewed were:
  - Clay Hill School
  - Compass Community School
  - Coxlease
  - Fairways
  - Hill House
  - New Forest Care
  - The Loddon
  - Southlands
  - Tadley Court

## **Findings for LADO threshold**

12. Hampshire LADO Threshold is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and includes:
  - Behaved in a way that has harmed/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 they may pose a risk of harm to children (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020).
13. Of the 134 cases that were reviewed, it was found that overall, cases were managed by LADO in a robust manner, ensuring that they were progressed with appropriate timescales and in line with LADO guidance. Cases found to be outside timescales due to agency investigation or HR procedures, were tracked effectively and followed up at timely intervals.
  14. It was evident that the LADO challenged agencies in terms of the practices and timescales in reaching outcomes. For example, in one case (8662) parents alleged that the school was not following the child's Behavioural Support Plan or risk assessment; LADO contacted the school to ensure that that the school referred to the service and took appropriate actions in relation to the allegations. The service will review the training offer to these establishments to ensure it is as comprehensive as it can be.
  15. In terms of safeguarding children there was robust evidence to indicate close working between LADO and child safeguarding and protection teams (external and internal) and services. Evidence of this included discussions with social workers within Hampshire and from other local authorities, attendance at allegation meetings, professional meetings, and attendance at S47 strategy discussions.
  16. As would be expected when auditing so many cases, the reviewers did find a couple of areas the service could learn from. These were:
    - In a small number of cases, the views and the voice of the child could have been stronger and better evidenced on the records.
    - That the consideration of the child's disability could have enhanced some investigations and ensured a more holistic picture of the child in a few cases.
  17. It is clear from this review that 70% of the total LADO contact was in relation to seeking advice, guidance, and support. In all cases, advice provided by the LADO was deemed to be professional, proportionate and balanced with appropriate outcomes. Cases were escalated with agencies if they were deemed to meet LADO threshold for intervention.

### **Areas of good practice**

- There was a timely response to contact and referrals.
- Cases were escalated for safeguarding and child protection purposes as required.
- There is good use of the escalation process to senior management for oversight and direction, as necessary.
- There is clear communication between LADO, establishments, and agencies.
- There is a good response to less serious concerns.

## **Areas for Improvement**

- In a small number of cases, the views and the voice of the child could have been stronger and better evidenced on the records.
- That the consideration of the child's disability could have enhanced some investigations and ensured a more holistic picture of the child in a few cases.

## **Conclusions**

18. There were no significant concerns found in respect of LADO and the service it provided to the 9 establishments during the review period.
19. Timeliness of response to contacts and referrals was found to be a major strength by the service, ensuring that children residing in the establishments are safeguarded and protected at the earliest opportunity.
20. The LADO response to what may have been deemed less serious concerns and/or information and advice, were escalated quickly ensuring agencies responded appropriately to safeguard the child. This includes escalation to senior managers in local authorities for oversight and direction.
21. As you would expect in such a review, we have identified some learning points which we will address as part of our continuous improvement of the service. In a few pieces of work, it was found that the reporting/recording of the child's voice could have been stronger, and auditors also thought that there were a few cases where greater consideration of the child's disability could have enhanced investigations. Actions are already being taken to ensure these points are included in the induction and training packages of our LADO's and the findings of the audits will be discussed in team meetings for further reflection.

## **Recommendations**

22. The inductions and training package for LADO will be reviewed to ensure that consideration of the voice of the child and the impact of their disability is comprehensively covered.
23. The findings of this review will be discussed in LADO team meetings and as part of reflective supervision sessions.
24. The LADO will review their training offer for the 9 establishments.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy, and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

Document

Location

None