

# LADO Quarterly Report

January - March 2024



Walsall Council



Right for Children, Families and Adults





## Introduction

### Profile Of Service

This report sets out the key findings from Walsall's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations and activities using data analysis between 01.01.24 – 31.03.24. The report shall provide an overview of the effectiveness of the role of the LADO in the management and oversight of allegations against adults who work with children within Walsall in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Walsall has one Local Authority Designated Officer who is supported by business support administrators. All enquiries are received by the Local Authority Designated Officer ensuring that confidential and sensitive information is contained and recorded appropriately and only shared on a need-to-know basis, with the approval of the Local Authority Designated Officer within the council.

### Managing Allegations

#### Overview of enquiries and referrals data covering period: 01.01.2024 – 31.03.2024

The term 'contact' in this context means that an online referral was submitted to the service regarding the person in a position of trust.

Statistics	January '24	February '24	March '24
Number of LADO contacts	48	37	25
Number of initial POT meetings held	13	13	05
Number of review POT meetings held	11	24	19
Number of closures	10	08	09

January had the highest number of contacts with a significant drop in the following months. The data evidence that a large portion of contact received in January were from education and early years sectors and may have been attributable to a return to school and nursery following a two-week Christmas break. March was a quieter month with a considerable drop in the number of contacts for residential care and foster care combined.

The conversion rate from the LADO contacts to initial Position of Trust Meetings would indicate that there remains a training need across services to strengthen threshold confidence and competencies. The number of case closures remain static which would evidence consistent review and oversight of case progression.



### Number of Contacts per Setting

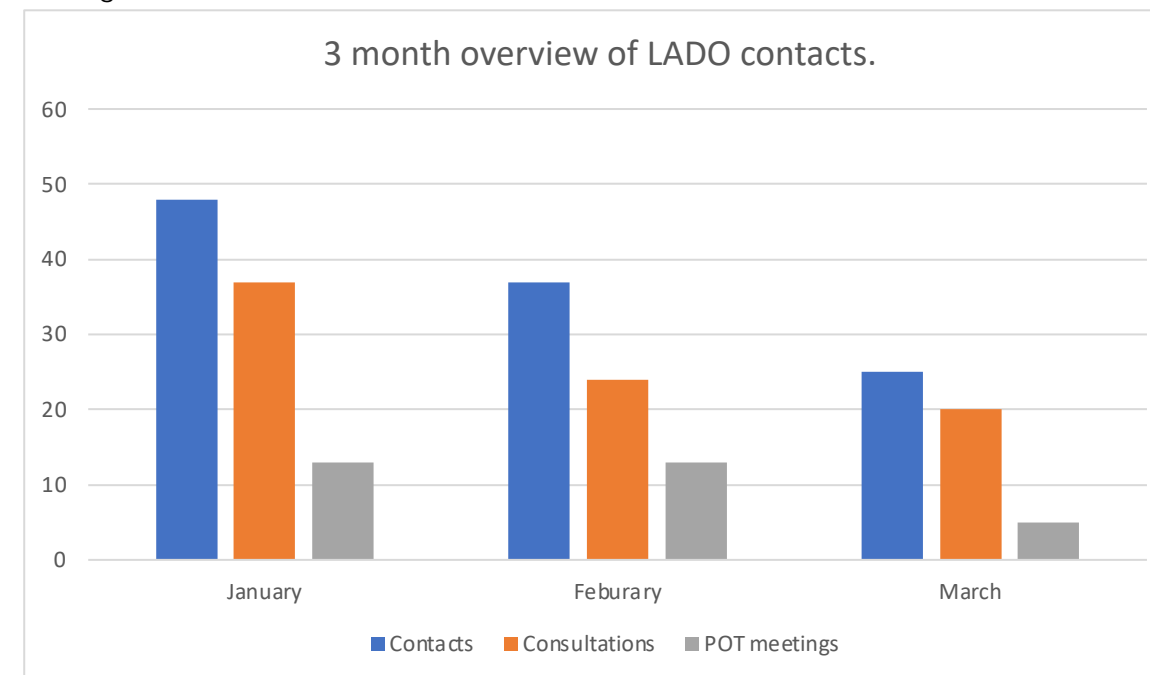
Settings	January '24	February '24	March '24
None specified	2 (not in POT)	0	0
Early Years	4	1	1
Education	19	12	13
Foster Care	4	5	1
Health	2	2	2
Residential	12	13	1
Sport	0	0	3
Social Care	3	3	1
Faith Setting	0	0	0
Transport	0	1	0
Voluntary	0	0	0
Police	0	0	0
Other	2	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>25</b>
Total contacts for the final quarter 2023-2024		110	

Information below represents the total number of contacts received by the LADO service between 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024. The three highest settings with the most LADO contacts are Education (44) Residential (26) and Foster Care (10). In comparison to the last quarter this has been no change in trend. It is noted that within the review period there were no referrals made by Faith, Police or Voluntary setting; this trend was also reflected within the previous quarter whereby there were no referrals from the Voluntary Sector, only 1 for a Faith setting and 2 for Police.

Total Number By Referral Agency	Jan 2024 - March 2024
Early years	6
Education	44
Faith Settings	0
Foster Care	10
Health	6
Other	5
Police	0
Residential	26
Social Care	7
Sports	3
Transport	1
Voluntary	0
Non specified (Not in a POT)	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>110</b>

Similar to the last quarter, many of the contacts are in respect of the referrer seeking reassurance that they were dealing with the matter appropriately and wanting to evidence to their governing body that they had discussed their concerns with the LADO.

There have been 110 LADO contacts for the quarter. Of which 31 (approximately 28%) progressed to POT meetings, and 79 (approximately 72%) were provided advice and guidance and no further actioned. This would lead us to consider the need to develop further bespoke training which targets specific settings.



### Number of Initial POT Meetings Per Sector

Settings	January 24	February 24	March 24
None specified	0	0	0
Early Years	2	0	1
Education	4	4	1
Foster Care	2	3	0
Health	2	1	2
Residential	1	5	0
Sports	0	0	1
Social Care	1	0	0
Faith Setting	0	0	0
Transport	0	0	0
Voluntary	0	0	0
Police	0	0	0
Other	1 (independent support worker)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>
Total initial POT meetings for the final quarter 2023-2024		31	

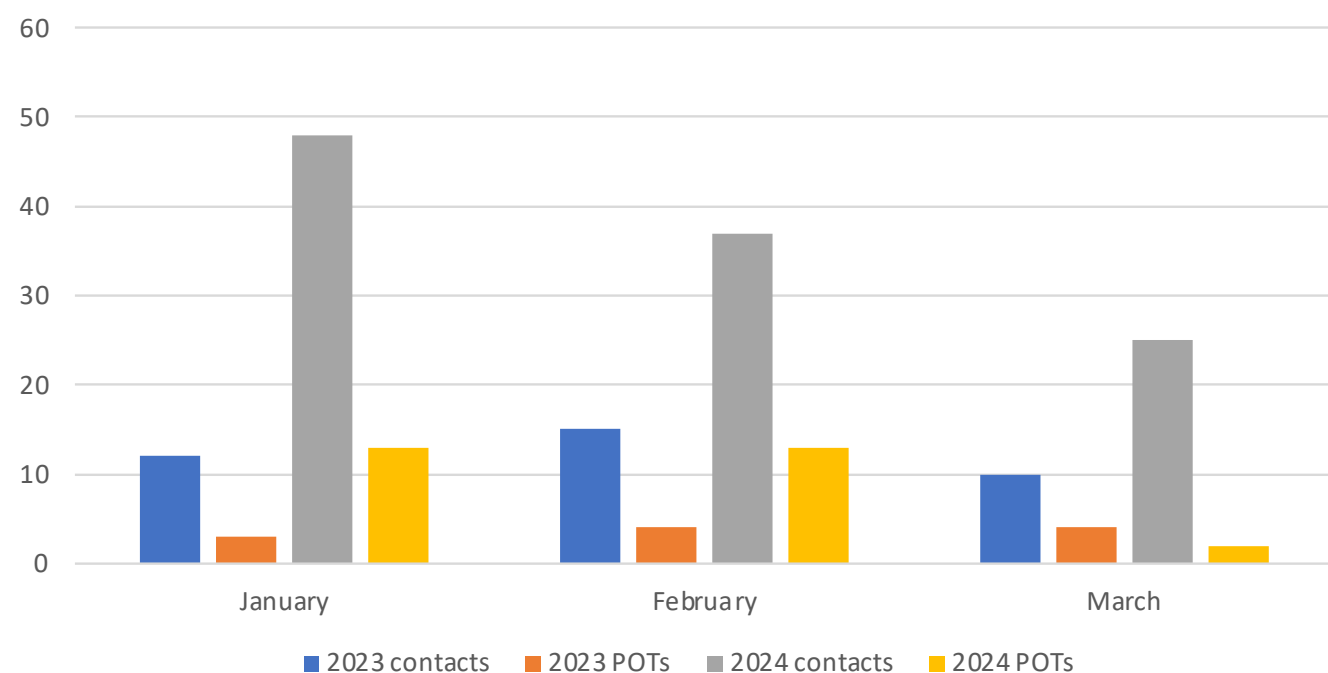
Higher numbers of contacts in January and February are reflected within the increased number of initial POT meetings held in these two months. There is no consistent pattern in relation to sectors over the 3 month period; education and early years being the predominant sector in January, residential care in February and Health in March.

In comparison to the same period in 2023; there were 37 contacts for the quarter. Of which 17 (almost 46%) went to POT meetings and 20 (54%) were provided advice and guidance and no further actioned.

There is a significant increase in contacts and POT meetings held in January to end March 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. It is anticipated the increase in contacts within this period, in part, is due to a change in reporting and recording of contacts as the current process has been streamlined. Referrals are all processed via the LADO portal and recorded on the electronic system, as such all requests for advice and guidance / consideration to LADO threshold are now recorded.

There has been an increase in the number of POT meetings held from the same quarter in 2023 to 2024 in comparison there has been an increase in health, education and residential professionals and a slight decline in foster carers with other sectors remaining much the same.

Jan - March 2023 and 2024 comparison



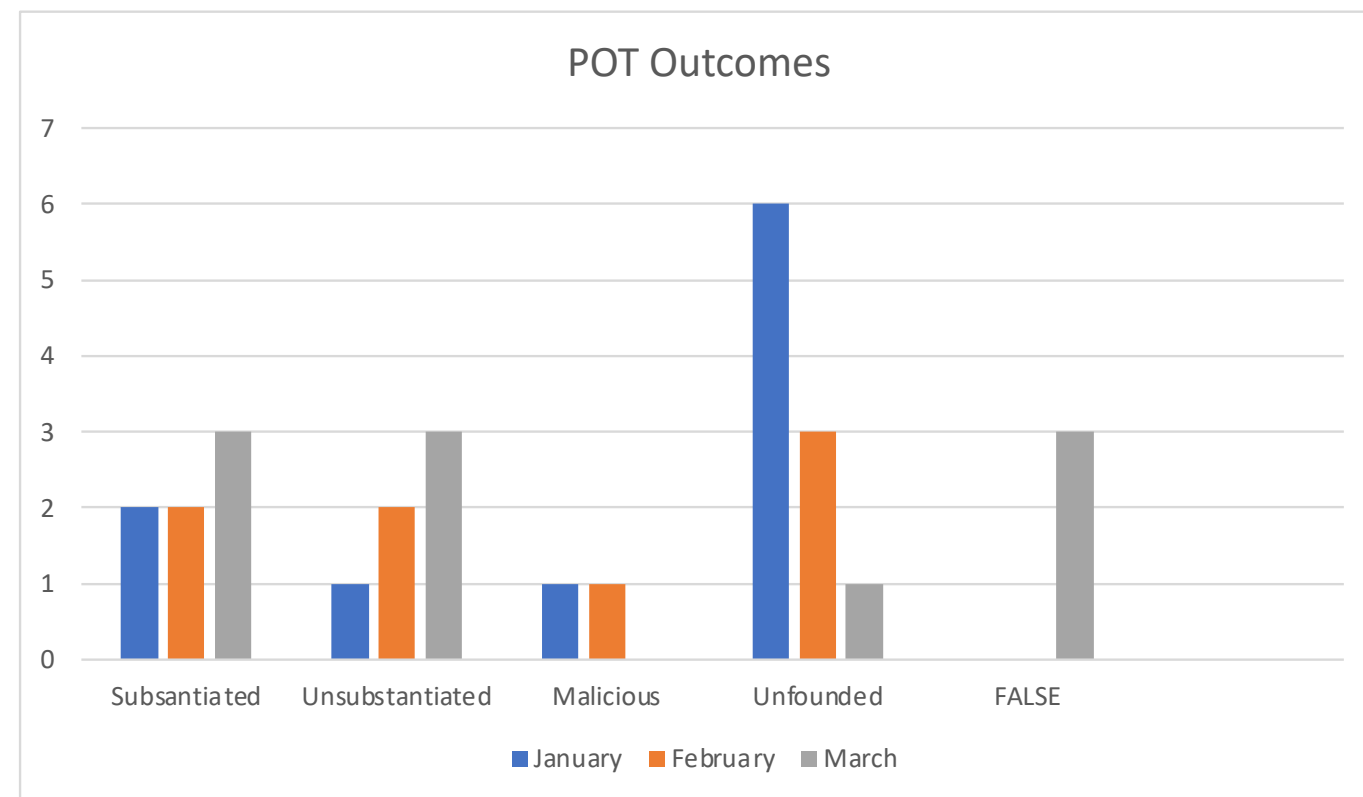
## Outcome of Investigations

This section discusses the outcomes of the investigations concluded in the quarter. LADO meetings provide an outcome at the final meeting. These outcomes options are provided in "Keeping Children Safe in Education". The outcomes are judged on 'balance of probabilities' threshold rather than 'beyond reasonable doubt' threshold.

During the period 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024 there were 27 Position of Trust investigations which were concluded. The outcomes are recorded as:

Outcome	Meaning	Number and percentages
Substantiated	There is sufficient identifiable evidence to prove the allegation	7 (26%)
Unsubstantiated	There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation; the term therefore does not imply guilt or innocence	6 (22%)
Unfounded	There is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made. It may also 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	10 (37%)
Malicious	There is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act deceive and the allegation is false	2 (7.5%)
False	There is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation	2 (7.5%)

POT Outcomes

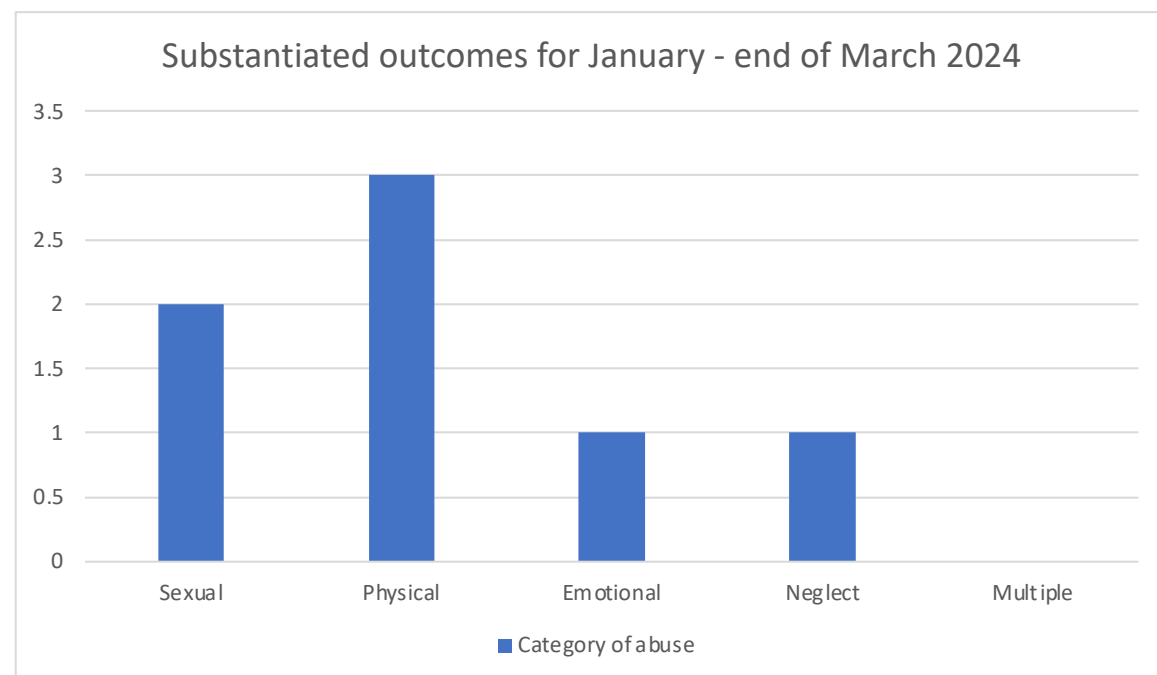


## Primary Alleged Abuse Category

The 27 POT cases that have taken concluded this quarter can be broken down into the following categories of harm:

Category	January	February	March
Sexual	5	5	0
Physical	3	1	8
Neglect	0	1	1
Emotional	1	1	0
Multiple	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

The 7 substantiated outcomes are as follows:



Physical harm remains to be the dominant category there is a higher portion of referrals linked to foster carers, education and residential setting where there is a hands on approach to assist the children. The substantiated physical harm this quarter relate to residential support workers and an education support worker all of whom have been dismissed and referred to DBS. The substantiated sexual abuse both relate to education staff and again were referred to DBS and the TRA. The substantiated emotional abuse relates to a residential support worker who has been dismissed and referred to DBS and the substantiated neglect outcome refers to an education worker. This professional continues to work with support and a risk assessment in place.

## Timeliness of LADO Referrals

There is no specific legislation that states how long it should take for referrals to be dealt with however Keeping Children Safe in School guidance recommends the following:

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

But all the most exceptional cases are resolved within 12 months

Time scales of conducting investigations from receiving the initial referral to the final POT meetings where a conclusion is reached is as followed:

From Jan- Mar 24 there were 27 LADO closures:

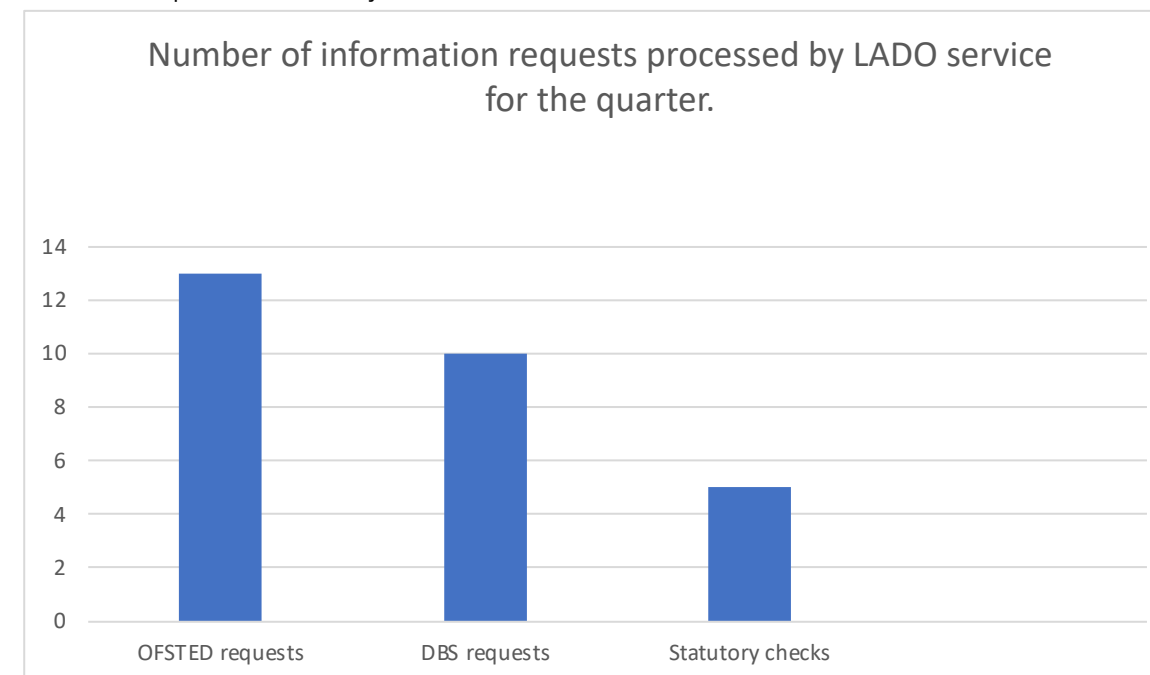
- 22.2% (6) were closed within one month.
- 44.4% (12) were closed within two months.
- 74.1% (20) were closed within three months.
- 92.6% (25) were closed within one year.
- 2 cases were closed which had been open longer than 12 months.

## Additional Responsibilities Of LADO Service

In addition to contacts made via the online referral system there are further requests for information made via the LADO service. These include:

- Requests from OFSTED for information on registered children's homes and contact with the LADO. These are requested prior to unannounced and announced inspections.
- DBS requests – in relation to DBS checks and DBS referrals.
- Complaints raised to OFSTED and passed to LADO for a response / information gathering.
- Statutory check requests from Fostering Agencies in relation to checks for fostering applicants.

These require the LADO to log requests with the Information Rights Team, source the required information and respond in a timely manner.



## Service Reflection and Targets

The LADO service is developing into a more robust service and becoming a consistent point of contact for employers for generic advice as well as more serious concerns. As of 12.02.24 all referrals and enquiries are progressed via the LADO portal which is accessible on the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership website which ensure a consistent approach for all referrals.

During this quarter:

- The LADO leaflet has been designed and the Spring edition approved for circulation to all partners.
- The Annual LADO Report has been completed for 2022-23
- The design of a feedback consultation form/link for the LADO service is currently under development.



- The development of a LADO Dashboard is underway with the first phase accessible in relation to data on LADO contacts.
- Consultation with services has commenced in relation to targeted training.
- Mosaic forms have been adapted and developed further to streamline the LADO process and record more accurately.

## Summary

The new online referral form and business administration support have become embedded within the service and are now working effectively. Contacts are being acknowledged and processed consistently within 24 business hours, which is at a much improved rate in comparison to the same quarter last year.

The creation of a Dashboard is an exciting addition to the service as this will allow for more efficient and effective data analysis moving forward. In turn adding value through smarter working and the ability to analyse trends and patterns and target development and training accordingly.

The LADO's ability to undertake training across sectors has been limited however good communication has remained with partner agencies. An additional temporary LADO post has been agreed and once in post this will allow the LADO capacity to deliver on the training offer and roll this out this year.

LADO has started to build working relationships with the Walsall Safeguarding Partnership which strengthened the links, it is aimed that within 2023/24 these working relationship with further strengthen with the aid of the proposed LADO training offer. Particular focus shall be given to Faith, Voluntary and police organisations as it is noted that there have been no referrals from these services as such we need to consider if there is a training need.

## Recommendations and Actions for Next Quarter

Action	Who by	Time Scales
To devise a leaflet for professionals to access in order to gain an understanding of the LADO threshold	LADO	June 2024
Adapt and update the current internal forms to ensure that all the necessary information is captured in LADO referrals and POT Meetings	Principal IRO / LADO	July 2024
Ratification of the process for managing complaints and LADO decision challenges	Head of Service	September 2024
Support partnership working between LADO and adults safeguarding including people in a position of trust (PiPOT)	LADO	June 2024
Provide training around managing allegations by developing closer working relationships with Walsall Safeguarding Partnership and Practice Development team to facilitate briefing's for new starters and wider target audience in the community.	LADO	July 2024
Strengthening links with charity sector and sports and leisure sector within Walsall	LADO	August 2024
Supporting education services to understand and implement a consistent threshold when considering referral to LADO	LADO and Safeguarding Coordinator and Early years	Ongoing
Quality Assurance with File Audits of LADO cases – evaluating processes and decision making. Considering consistency in decision making	Principal IRO	August 2024





