



# **Allegations Management Annual Report**

**2024 – 2025**

**Local Authority Designated Officer  
Service**

<b>Organisation</b>	Somerset Council
<b>Title</b>	Allegations Management Annual Report
<b>Author</b>	LADO service
<b>Date</b>	2024 - 2025

### **Local Authority Designated Officer Service**

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service oversees and manages allegations of harm against individuals working with children, whether paid or voluntary. Notifications to the LADO are required if an employee or volunteer:

- Has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
- Behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children

All notifications are sent to Somerset Direct to enable a coordinated approach involving Children's Social Care and the Police, ensuring the safety and welfare of children.

### **What has been achieved?**

The service managed 772 notifications of allegations during 2024/25<sup>1</sup> consisting of <sup>2</sup>:

- 264 allegations of physical abuse (34% of all allegations, 1% less than the previous year).
- 128 allegations of sexual abuse (17% of all allegations, 1% less than the previous year).
- 262 allegations of neglect (in duty of care) / inappropriate behaviour (34% of all allegations, an increase of 5% from last year).
- 118 allegations of emotional abuse (15% of all allegations, 2% less than the previous year).

This compares to 742 notifications reported in 2023/2024.

### **Statutory Timescales**

In 87% of notifications<sup>3</sup>, the statutory timescale of one working day to report concerns to the LADO was met. This is a 1% decrease on last year, whereby 88% of notifications were made within the statutory timescale of one working day.

Comparative data was requested from LADO services both regionally and nationally in relation to this statistic. However, feedback indicates that this data is either not available or not routinely reported on.

There are valid reasons why an allegation might not be reported within one working day, making 100% reporting unlikely. For example, if a child is looked after by the Local Authority, discussing the incident with the child's social worker can provide necessary context before notifying the LADO Service. Another instance may be an organisation which does not consider an incident as meeting the criteria, while a partner agency might disagree and prompt a notification.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 3

### **‘Contacts’ to the LADO service**

In addition to the number of notifications received each year, we have also recorded any ‘contact’ made with the LADO Service. A ‘contact’ is defined as anything other than a notification (ARF) that required the LADO to undertake a piece of work.

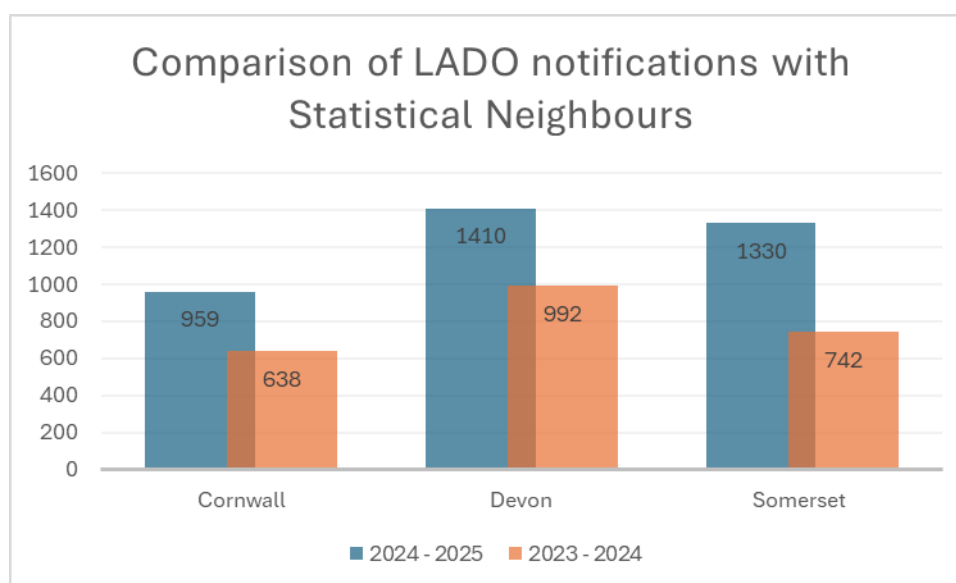
This decision is consistent with other LADO Services across the Southwest and provides a more accurate representation of capacity and demand within the service. The vast majority of contacts consist of Fostering/Adoption and Ofsted/ISI checks.

In total the LADO Service responded to **558** contacts. Combined with the number of notifications, the LADO Service dealt with **1,330** pieces of work during the reporting period.

### **Statistical Neighbour comparison**

The number of notifications and contacts into the LADO service this year has increased to 1330.. According to the Children’s Services Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking Tool (updated 15 May 2025), Devon and Cornwall are statistically similar to Somerset; therefore, their data has been used for comparison. In the year 2024/2025, the Devon LADO service reported receiving 1410 enquiries, which include both contacts and notifications. Cornwall Council's LADO service reported 599 notifications and 360 contacts, amounting to a total of 959 enquiries.

The graph below depicts the number of LADO notifications in Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset over the past two years, indicating a significant increase in LADO contacts across these local authorities. The rise in notifications does not correspond to an increase in individuals posing a risk to children and young people. Rather, it appears to be associated with an enhanced understanding and awareness of the LADO's role due to training and promotion. This more comprehensive recording practice provides a clearer insight into the workload and contributes to the overall increase in reported figures. Additionally, when comparing data with statistical neighbours such as Devon and Cornwall, it is evident that Somerset's increase in notifications aligns with regional trends. This suggests that the rise in notifications is part of a broader pattern across local authorities rather than an isolated occurrence.



### **Number of Notifications by Organisation**

The LADO Service oversees allegations against adults working with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary, who may pose a risk to children and young people. By coordinating with partner agencies, the service ensures thorough investigations to safeguard and promote children's and young people's welfare.

In the 2024/2025 period, educational settings, particularly academies and independent schools, have made the highest number of notifications.

Compared to 2023/2024, the LADO Service has experienced a significant increase of 46 notifications from academies, bringing the total to 141. In contrast, there has been a slight decrease of 6 notifications from independent schools, resulting in a total of 72. Additionally, maintained schools sent 6 fewer notifications than the previous year.

Notifications from residential care settings have significantly decreased to 193 (169 from independent homes and 24 from LA homes), down by 46 from last year. This reduction is likely due to the training and workshops provided by the LADO service,

which has enhanced care home providers' confidence in assessing the LADO criteria.

## **Police**

The LADO service received 6 allegations involving police officers, which accounts for 0.7% of the total. This is a decrease of 3 allegations compared to the previous year. As noted in previous reports, the LADO Service has worked closely with Avon & Somerset Police and its Professional Standards Department (PSD) to consider the low number of allegations reported to the LADO Service in relation to police officers.

Given the large area covered by the A&S Police, and the number of officers regularly engaging with the public, there is a concern about under reporting from this organisation. This may be influenced by several factors. One hypothesis is that allegations are less likely to be made against Police Officers because children and young people have more interaction with other professionals such as teachers. However, this is speculative and would require research to identify specific barriers.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) wrote a letter to the National LADO network in February 2023, to highlight that all forces understand the role of the LADO and the threshold criteria and will make a referral when relevant.

The Somerset LADO service is part of a subgroup of the National LADO Network, focused on enhancing engagement with local police services, particularly in relation to professional standards. The subgroup has developed a protocol for managing allegations against police staff, aiming to ensure that all allegations are handled in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. Key points of the protocol include:

- **Referral Process:** The protocol outlines the steps for referring allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), including the minimum information required and the decision-making process for LADO involvement.

- **Investigation and Information Sharing:** It details the process for sharing information with other agencies and the police, as well as the key milestones that need to be communicated to the LADO during an investigation.
- **Outcome and Reporting:** The steps to be taken if no criminal charges are brought against the individual, including the provision of an employer investigation report to the LADO and advice on when a DBS barring referral should be made.

The protocol for managing allegations against police staff is currently under review by selected regional LADO groups, including the South West regional LADO group. Following local review the protocol will be presented to the National LADO Network for further consideration. Subsequently, the NLN will present this to the NPCC for a co-ordinated response and agreement.

Regionally, LADO services working alongside Avon & Somerset Police have formed a group to enhance working relationships with professional standards. This initiative has included a meeting with the manager for professional standards in the Avon and Somerset force area to support coordinated working and information sharing with the LADO service.

Although there are relatively few notifications concerning Police officers, the Somerset LADO Service has excellent engagement with Avon & Somerset Police, particularly with the Lighthouse Safeguarding Unit (LSU). The LSU actively participates in the allegations management process in Somerset by sharing information, reporting incidents/allegations, attending Allegation Management Meetings, providing relevant intelligence, and completing quarterly updates on ongoing Police cases.

Outside of schools and residential homes, the Police have made the most notifications about individuals working with children (outside of their organisation) at **48 notifications** this reporting period. The LADO Service continues to engage with the Police to ensure that their understanding and application of the managing allegations procedure is kept up to date.

## **Social Care**

The LADO Service received 5 (0.6%) allegations against social workers (down from 6 last year). The LADO Service is concerned about the low rate of notifications regarding social workers. This could be due to a need for additional training or the fact that social workers do not typically provide direct care or spend significant time alone with children. Additionally, issues involving social workers may be perceived as complaints about practice rather than allegations of harm.

In response to support training and promotion to Children Social Care staff, the LADO Service has recorded a video and audio presentation that is available on The Learning Centre for all Somerset Council staff to access at their convenience. Additionally, the LADO Service is collaborating with Somerset Council's Learning and Development team to offer two workshops to children's social care staff to enhance their understanding of the allegations management process. These sessions are intended to explain the procedure for managing allegations, including the role of the LADO, the criteria for making a notification, the various investigative processes, and how to make a notification to the LADO service and will run in 2025.

## **Partnership working with Children's Social Care and the Police**

The LADO service collaborates with Children's Social Care and the Police to assess risk and make joint decisions. The LADO service attended 23 strategy meetings this year, showing increased understanding of the role and early recognition of potential for contextual risk. The collaboration with the first response team and assessment teams likely contributed to this improvement. This underscores the importance of effective teamwork and meticulous assessment of risks both within the child's family environment and in external contexts concerning contextual safeguarding.

Where there is no evidence of significant harm to a child or young person the LADO service conducted 28 Allegations Management meetings with the police and employers to support multi-agency decision-making.



When it is assessed that there is no role for Children Social Care or the police, the LADO has convened **78** LADO discussions this year with employers, HR advisors, and governing bodies to assess risk and provide advice.

### **Outcomes from Investigation Processes**

A total of 476 notifications (61%, up 2% from last year) have been assessed as not meeting the LADO criteria (closed as either threshold not met or advice & guidance), and 18 were transferred to another LADO Service.

A total of 278 notifications were assessed as meeting the threshold. This will then trigger one (or all) of the following investigative processes:

1. A police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
2. Children's social care enquiries and/or assessment to ascertain if a child is in need of protection or services;
3. Organisational investigation

Of the cases that were considered to have met the LADO criteria, 88 cases were closed as substantiated (up from 60 last year), which equates to 11% of all notifications received <sup>4</sup>. 47 cases were closed as unsubstantiated (down from 50 last year), which equates to 6% of all notifications received.

This indicates the continued need to support our partner agencies to better understand the managing allegations procedure and the application of the criteria. The LADO Service has sought to achieve this by delivering training sessions to partner agencies across Somerset.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 6

### **Timescales for Conclusion**

In 2015, Working Together to Safeguard Children established time targets for LADO Services to ensure timely resolutions and thorough investigations when criteria are met. These target timescales measure the effectiveness of closing cases promptly.

- A. 80% of cases to be resolved within one month.
- B. 90% to be resolved within three months.
- C. All but the most exceptional cases to be closed within twelve months.

Although these timescales are no longer reported to the Department for Education, the Somerset LADO Service continue to apply the original timescales, along with additional quality assurance processes, to evaluate outcomes and the effectiveness of the service. This approach helps inform team development and promotes best practices.

### **Closure Rates for the LADO service 2024 – 2025**

- A. 69% (536) of cases resolved within one month.
- B. 84% (645) of cases resolved within three months.
- C. 87% (674) of cases resolved within twelve months.

### **Closure rates for the LADO service 2023 – 2024**

- A. 69% of cases resolved within one month.
- B. 78% of cases resolved within three months.
- C. 84% of cases resolved within twelve months.

### **In comparison to the closure rates for the year 2022 – 2023**

- A. 63% of cases resolved within one month.
- B. 77% of cases resolved within three months.
- C. 85% of cases resolved within twelve months.

It is positive that the data shows an increase in closure times under all three metrics for the LADO Service this year. However the LADO service also notes several factors that make meeting these timescale targets challenging, including:

- The disciplinary procedure timelines of many public sector employers make it difficult to conclude a case within one month. Public sector procedures require time to investigate, produce and present a report to senior management/committee/panel of governors, and convene a disciplinary hearing. Therefore, expecting the process to be completed within one month while maintaining quality is not realistic.
- The time required for a case to proceed through the criminal justice system to conclusion.
- Employers waiting for the outcome of a criminal investigation before formally investigating concerns under their disciplinary procedures.
- Practical considerations like the unavailability of individuals for interviews, including witnesses due to shift patterns, holidays, and sickness.
- To improve closure rates, the LADO service holds monthly reflective case monitoring meetings to assess open cases and ensures a thorough review process for all cases handled by the LADO service.

### **Training, Development and Promotion**

Training and development are essential to support partner agencies in complying with reporting timescales. The LADO Service attends briefing sessions with registered managers of residential children's homes and shares updates with the education safeguarding team for dissemination to Designated Safeguarding Leads across Somerset. Furthermore, the managing allegations procedures is covered in the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) child protection and advanced child protection training, which is accessible to Designated Safeguarding Leads, A&S Police, Early Years professionals and Social Workers to educate and promote LADO statutory frameworks and timescales.

To assist partner agencies and organisations, the LADO Service has partnered with the SSCP to deliver four training sessions for education providers regarding how low-level concerns should be managed (as outlined in the statutory guidance – ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2023). An additional session was completed with the designated safeguarding leads from independent schools across Somerset in January 2024. These sessions were well attended and received positive feedback. This has resulted in the LADO Service reviewing the training and offering six sessions in 2024-2025, which will be accessible to Designated Safeguarding Leads from Education, Health, and Social Care providers.

The LADO Service has completed a video and audio presentation which is published on The Learning Centre for all Somerset Council staff to access at their convenience. In addition the LADO service are in discussion with Somerset Council’s Learning and Development team to provide workshops to children’s social care staff to support wider understanding of the allegations management process. These sessions have been designed to support the understanding of the procedure for managing allegations, including the role of the LADO, the criteria to make a notification and the various investigative processes, as well as how to make a notification to the LADO service.

Bespoke sessions have been provided to partner agencies to develop confidence in using the managing allegations process, this has included the LADO service working closely with Somerset Foundation Trust, Avon & Somerset Police force and commissioning services (16+ providers).

The LADO service has developed information sheets for the SSCP, which partners can access through the SSCP. These sheets provide support and information on Allegations Management. Additionally, a guidance document to help partner agencies reflect on and consider the LADO criteria has been updated and is available on the SSCP Allegations Management webpage.

## **Quality Assurance**

The LADO Service is dedicated to continuous service improvement. To achieve this goal, it has implemented a comprehensive approach that includes conducting dip reviews and gathering feedback from service users. These methods allow the service to thoroughly analyse its current operations, identify strengths and weaknesses, and pinpoint specific areas that require development. By actively engaging with feedback and regularly reviewing its practices, the LADO Service ensures it remains responsive to the needs of service users and maintains high standards of service delivery.

## **Thematic Dip Reviews**

The LADO service has completed five thematic dip reviews this year. The reviews have covered:

1. Thematic review of notifications where the risk is considered to be transferable (six cases reviewed)
2. Notifications open for more than three months (nine cases reviewed)
3. Thematic review of LADO cases not reported in one working day in June 2024 (fourteen cases reviewed)
4. Threshold review of allegations sent to LADO regarding Somerset Council Foster Carers (twenty four cases reviewed)

Dip review analysis has highlighted significant strengths in the LADO Service's response to allegations, the strengths identified across the dip reviews for the year 2024 – 2025 are as follows:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Identified Strengths</b>
Consideration of the Needs of children and young people	Dip reviews evidenced that the welfare needs of the child were considered, highlighting the LADO service's commitment to safeguarding children
Understanding of LADO Threshold	Notifiers demonstrated a clear understanding of the LADO threshold within the managing allegations procedure, reflecting effective training and awareness.
Allegation Details	Audits showed that notifiers provided sufficient details about the incident,

	ensuring all necessary information is available for proper assessment and action.
Clear Concern Justification	Notifications provided clear information on why the notifier is concerned and how criteria have been met, aiding in informed decision-making.
Completion of Necessary Background checks	The LADO Service consistently completed the necessary checks, showing a thorough approach to handling allegations. Consistent checks completed by the LADO service to consider if a criminal offence had been committed against or related to a child or young person, crucial for identifying and addressing potential criminal activities.
Risk Management	Auditors agreed that the LADO service managed the risks effectively, indicating strong risk management practices.
Effective Communication	There is clear evidence of effective communication between the LADO service and stakeholders, ensuring all parties are well-informed and coordinated.
Holistic Assessment	The LADO service conducts holistic assessments, considering the impact on the child and communicating with the team around children and young people.
Advice and Challenge	The LADO provides advice and challenges organisations, scrutinises investigation reports, and communicates effectively in response to allegations.
Risk Assessment and Management	The LADO engages in discussions with social workers, senior managers, and other stakeholders to assess and manage risks, including making DBS barring referrals when necessary.
Consistent Approach	The dip review highlighted a consistent approach to LADO advice and recommendations across the service, with a balanced approach to managing allegations.

These strengths demonstrate the LADO service's commitment to thorough, timely, and effective management of allegations, with a strong focus on child welfare and risk management.

### Areas for Development

Issue	Details	Actions taken
Delay in Reporting Allegations	Need for consistent exploration and challenge when there is a delay in reporting an allegation that meets the LADO criteria	Explore/challenge the notifier regarding the reasons for delay, signpost to relevant training and resources, improve awareness and prompt action among notifiers
Insufficient Information in Notifications	Some notifications did not provide sufficient information to assess the capability of the adult of concern	Enhanced focus during promotional sessions, training, and briefings; ensure notifiers understand the importance of detailed information
Recording Behaviour Outside Professional Role	Consideration to transferable risk	Provide a more comprehensive concluding assessment of risk to inform risk management plans for employers

### Impact

The dip reviews have identified several areas for development, which have been integrated into the LADO Service team action plan. This plan is meticulously monitored on a monthly basis by the LADO Service and Quality Assurance Service manager, ensuring that actions are consistently reviewed and progressed. By sharing this plan with the Quality Assurance Team, the LADO Service contributes to broader service development, fostering a collaborative approach to improvement.

To embed these actions effectively, the LADO Service conducts monthly 'peer reflection meetings.' These meetings serve as a platform for monitoring the progress

of actions, ensuring they are thoroughly integrated into practice. This reflective process is crucial for maintaining accountability and driving continuous improvement.

Furthermore, the LADO Service prioritises team development through structured supervision. LADOs receive monthly individual supervision and participate in monthly group supervision sessions. These sessions support reflection and shared learning within the wider Quality Assurance Service team, promoting a culture of continuous professional development and collective problem-solving.

### **South West Regional LADO Group Peer Reviews**

The Somerset LADO Service is an esteemed member of the regional LADO group, which includes Devon, Dorset, Wiltshire, Swindon, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), Bristol, Gloucestershire, Plymouth, Torbay, and Cornwall.

This group is dedicated to the continuous review and reflection on LADO processes and practices across the South West. It facilitates reflective case discussions and conducts annual peer case audits to ensure high standards are maintained. In March 2025, a peer audit was conducted in collaboration with the LADO Services in Bristol. The findings from these audits underscored areas of strength that align with the thematic dip reviews previously completed by the Somerset LADO Service emphasising child focused practice in the following areas:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Identified Strength</b>
Timely Response	The LADO Service promptly responds to referrals and undertakes necessary actions.
Record Checks	Comprehensive checks of LADO records are conducted.
Chronology	A detailed chronology regarding the concern is created.
Collaborative working	Evidence of collaborative working with partner agencies such as Education Safeguarding, Police, Children's Social Care and Ofsted.



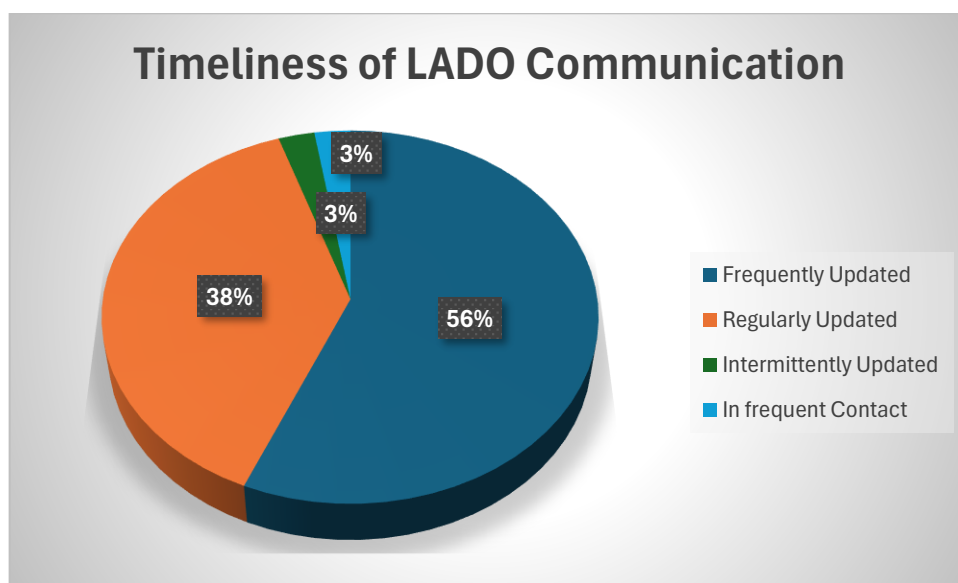
Risk Assessment	Clear assessment of risk for each concern, with rationale provided for those meeting the LADO threshold and those identified as conduct issues.
Decision Making	The LADO makes informed decisions regarding actions required to gather further details and consider next steps.
Challenge	Evidence of appropriate challenge to settings/partner agencies regarding risk.
Creative and Proportional Approach	The LADO worked creatively and proportionally in dealing with a complex case regarding non recent allegations.

### Service User Feedback

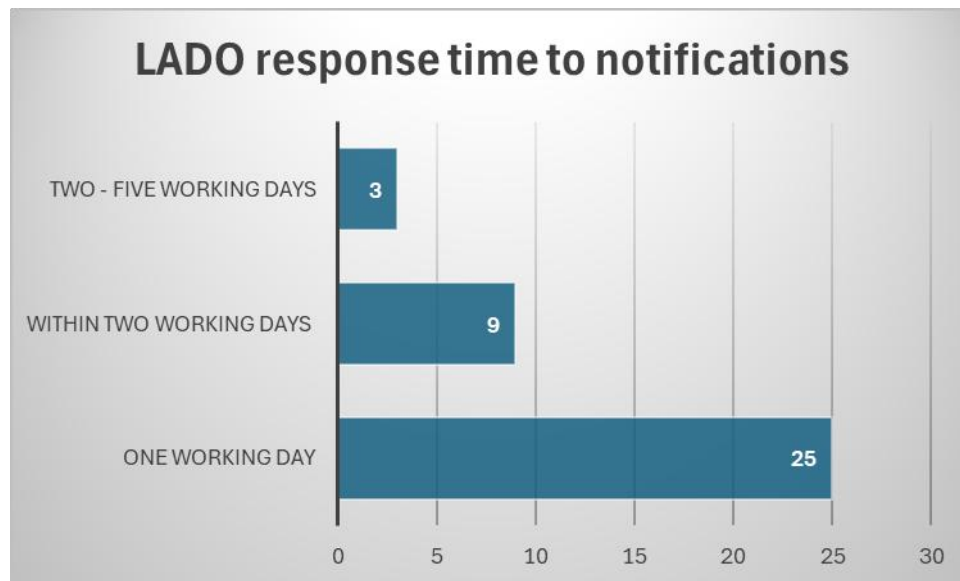
This year the LADO Service gathered solicited feedback from thirty nine notifying organisations.

### Areas of Strength

- Feedback across the year identified that 100% of service users agreed that the LADO Service provided helpful advice.
- 94% of service users felt that they were frequently updated by the LADO Service during the investigation process, this is an increase from 86% last year.



- The LADO service aims to respond to all notifications that meet the LADO criteria within one working day. If a notification is sent in for advice and guidance, the LADO service aim to respond within five working days. The feedback from service users evidences the timelines of response from the LADO service in Somerset, 68% of service users were contacted within one working day. 24% of service users contacted within two working days and 8% were contacted within 5 working days.



- Service users demonstrated that their understanding of the LADO service came primarily from the SSCP website, and the training delivered by the SSCP, which has been consistent feedback received over the past year. This is a positive reflection of the promotional training the LADO service has completed over the past year with the SSCP.
- 100% of service users commented that they felt confident, or very confident, in their understanding of the managing allegations procedures, which is an increase from 97% in the previous year.

- 100% of service users reported that the quality of the LADO service was excellent or very good.

Feedback is a crucial component in shaping the LADO service team action and development plan. The feedback gathered this year demonstrates that the LADO service is highly effective in providing support, maintaining strong communication, enhancing understanding through training, and delivering a high-quality service. The positive feedback indicates that the service is well-regarded and trusted by its users, contributing to its ongoing success and development.

### Areas for Development

Actions identified from the service user feedback are systematically developed into actionable items and incorporated into the LADO Service team action plan. These actions are subsequently reviewed and monitored on a monthly basis to ensure continuous improvement and accountability. Actions that have been taken forward by the team include:

Area for improvement	Actions completed
Improving Communication	Ensure consistent and timely updates to notifiers throughout the investigation process. Address any issues with communication channels, such as phone availability, to facilitate easier contact with the LADO Service.
Enhancing Training and Awareness	Continue to focus on providing comprehensive training and promotional activities to partner agencies. Emphasize the importance of detailed information in notifications to improve the quality of assessments.
Maintaining High Standards	Focus on maintaining the high quality of service and addressing any feedback promptly. Regularly review and update practices to ensure they meet the needs of service users.

### **Qualitative Feedback**

*“Somerset have an excellent LADO service - LADO provided a bespoke session with SFT HR colleagues which was super helpful”*

*“LADO response is consistently prompt, clear and extremely helpful”*

*“I felt very well supported throughout the process both through email information and phone calls made”*

*“Having access to reflective external advice gives peace of mind”*

*“I always find Stacey and Anthony pragmatic, they both understand our context that we are working in and always offer good advice. They are both approachable, supportive but also challenge assumption which is very much appreciated”*

### **Feedback from Training Provided by the LADO Service**

The LADO Service received feedback via the SSCP from six training sessions completed with designated safeguarding leads from education, health and care home providers across Somerset.

- Feedback indicates that 100% of attendees rated the trainers' knowledge as excellent
- 100% of attendees reported they felt confident to apply the learning in their workplace.

- 96% of attendees reported they felt more knowledgeable the allegations management process after attending the sessions
- 96% of attendees at the training sessions delivered by the LADO Service felt that the training met their expectations.

**Qualitative feedback** “What is one thing that was most helpful about this training?”

*Really useful and informative training, very helpful in identifying the appropriate action to take. Also good to have reassurance about professional judgement and very useful to discuss in break-out rooms. Comfort in knowing people are encountering similar situations and thinking each situation through logically.*

*It was helpful and put into context that not everything needs to be escalated to the LADO. We do need to reflect, breathe, apply common sense and not panic.*

*The trainers were really good, very knowledgeable and I feel more confident with dealing with concerns*

*Being given the guidance document, this is now printed off and to hand should I need it.*

**Areas for Development**

Some participants noted that the first half of the training included basic safeguarding information, which was perceived as less useful for Safeguarding Leads who anticipated higher-level content.

The case studies were deemed too vague, making it challenging for participants to determine definitive decisions on which path to take.

Some participants suggested extending the session duration to further explore scenarios and ask additional questions.

**To address these areas, the LADO service has set actions:**

- Regular reviews of scenarios are conducted to ensure they provide sufficient detail for thorough exploration.
- The LADO service will assess slides to consider time management for the sessions.
- The LADO service continually reviews the training content to ensure a balance between sharing information and guidance, providing an understanding of contextual safeguarding while enabling participants to complete scenario-based work to enhance confidence and understanding.

**Impact of training provided by the LADO service**

In January 2025, the LADO Service reviewed the impact of SSCP workshops on low-level concerns. Since October 2023, the LADO Service have conducted eight workshops for education, health, and care providers. The review assessed the effectiveness of notifications made to the LADO service by those who attended.

**Findings**

**Workshop Participation:** A total of eighty-five organisations attended the workshops.

**ARF Submissions:** Following the workshops, thirty-two organisations submitted a total of one hundred and six Allegations Referral Forms (ARFs).

85% of organisations either submitted compliant ARFs or did not submit any ARFs post-workshop, indicating a positive impact of the training.

**Strength of Submissions:** 65% of ARFs submitted post-training were appropriate, suggesting effective training outcomes.

## **Areas for Improvement**

A total of one hundred and six ARFs were submitted, with thirty seven not meeting the LADO criteria, representing 35% of all submissions after an organisation attended a workshop. The ARFs failing to meet the criteria came from thirteen of the eighty five organisations that participated in the workshops.

It is necessary to support these thirteen organisations, which include three care home providers, one alternative provider, and nine education settings.

The LADO service have committed to reviewing each of the nine educational settings in the first quarter of 2025-2026 to determine whether any additional ARFs submitted fail to meet the LADO threshold. If this is the case, additional training or support will be considered for each setting.

The LADO service will attend the next peninsula QA subgroup meeting with commissioning services, Ofsted, and South West LADOs to discuss further training for care home providers, enhancing confidence in managing practices and staff conduct.

## **Impact**

The training workshops conducted by the LADO service have had a significant positive impact on the organizations that attended.

Overall, the workshops have led to a high rate of compliance and appropriate submissions, demonstrating their effectiveness in improving the management of low-level concerns.

Based on the outcome of this report the LADO Service has committed to provide four additional workshops in 2025-2026 to continue supporting safeguarding leads across the partnership.

## **Impact of Quality Assurance**

Regular and consistent quality assurance through dip reviews and feedback enables the LADO Service to evidence the positive impact it has on safeguarding children and young people. The evidence highlights the importance of timely responses, efficient advice, and effective partnership working, thereby supporting organizations in prioritizing the needs and safety of children in their decision-making processes. Identified areas for development are rigorously addressed and translated into actionable, time-bound, and measurable objectives. These objectives are systematically reviewed and commented upon each quarter within the LADO team action plan, ensuring accountability and the ability to track progress over time.

The insights gained from quality assurance have significantly informed the training and promotional activities undertaken by the LADO team over the past year. These initiatives aim to raise awareness of the managing allegations procedure, clarify the remit of the LADO Service, and elucidate the collaborative efforts with partner agencies to enhance their understanding of the process.

Quality assurance has been pivotal in enabling the LADO Service to critically reflect on its performance and overall effectiveness. This reflective practice has allowed the LADO Service to consider systemic development and learning opportunities for partner agencies, fostering robust safeguarding cultures within organisations. The LADO Service has integrated these insights into training sessions to enhance organisations' understanding of safer recruitment processes and to positively impact the protection of children and young people from contextual safeguarding risks.

## **Ofsted**

The strengths of the service were commented on in the most recent Children's Services inspection in July 2022 and published within the report on 21 September 2022:



*“The local authority designated officers provide a timely and robust response when there are allegations against professionals. They are capable and experienced, and recent additional capacity has helped to strengthen the service further.”*

### **South West Regional LADO Group/ National LADO Network**

The LADO Service has engaged with both local and national LADO networks to review the draft LADO handbook and provide insights into how this guidance can be integrated at local, regional, and national levels.

The South West Regional LADO group and the NLN is a shared platform for learning and development across the south west aimed at ensuring consistent practice, threshold decision making, and reflection.

The Somerset LADO Service have aligned with our regional partners and implemented LCS recording (electronic record keeping), improving oversight and data management for all notifications. This practice enables accurate review and analysis of patterns and themes.

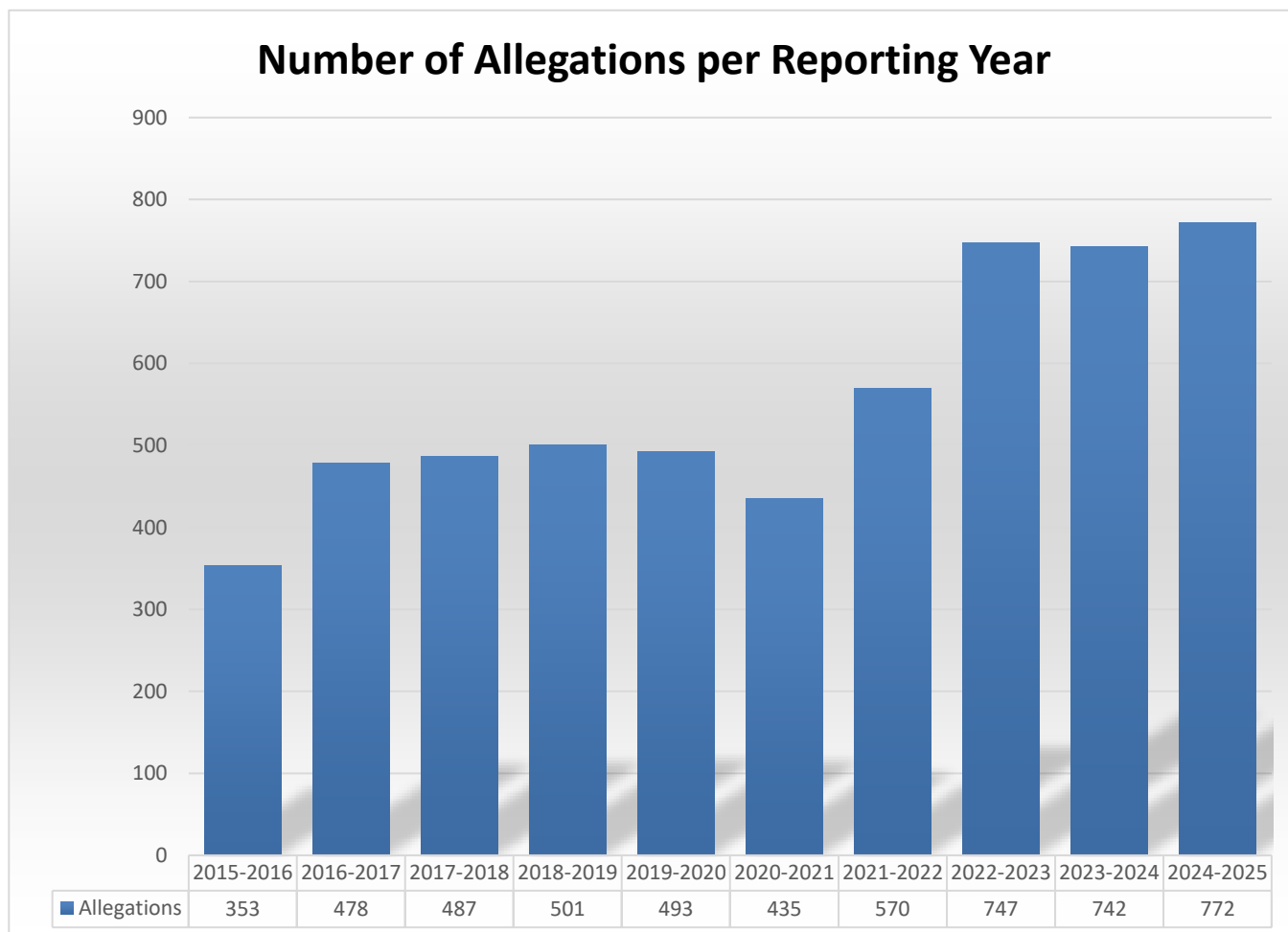
Though the LADO handbook remains under consultation, Somerset and the South West Regional LADO group are using the draft guidance as good practice to ensure effective work alignment with the handbook.

### **Next Steps**

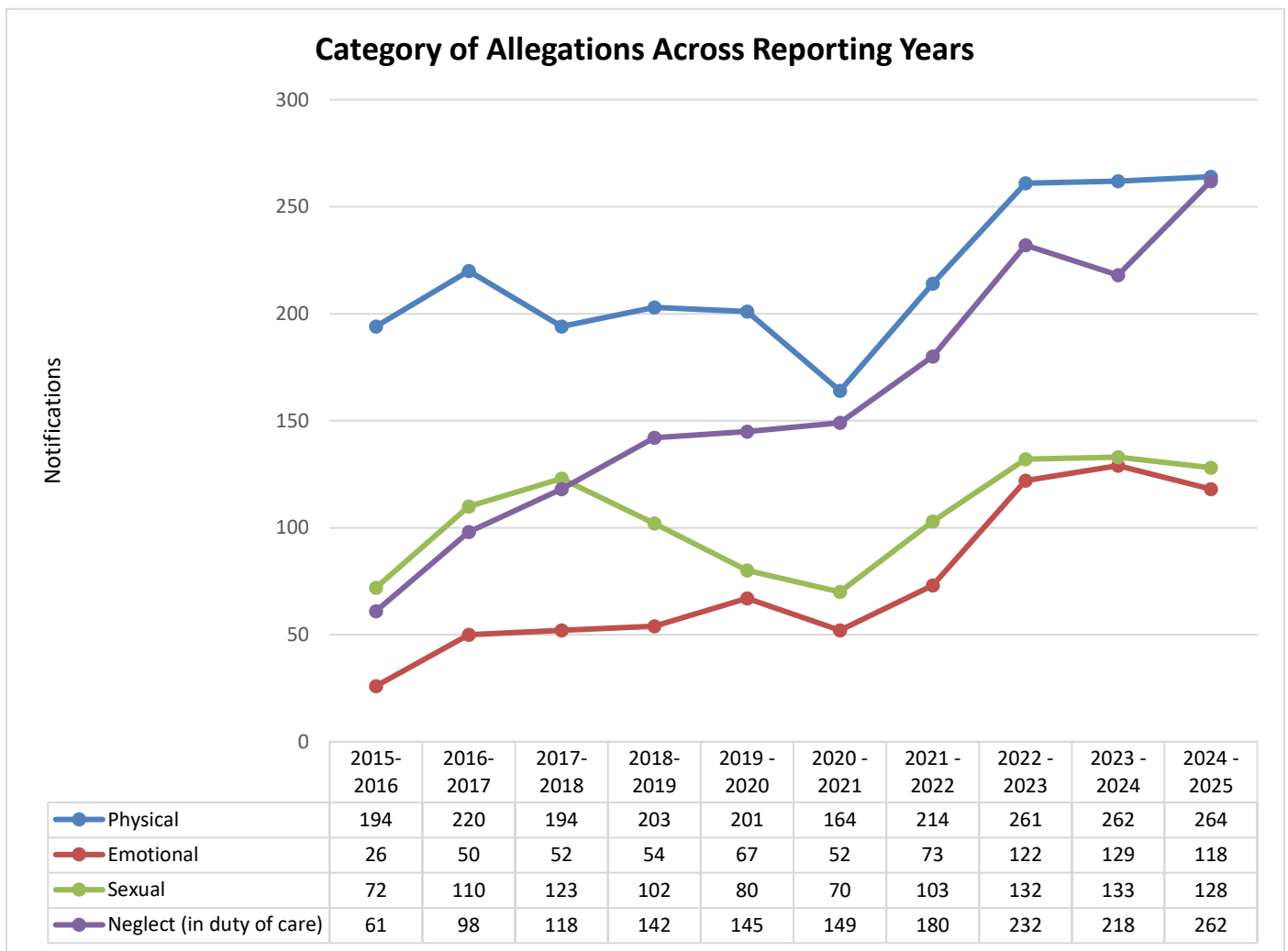
<b>Service development</b>	<b>Action plan for 2025 – 2026</b>
Working with the Police	<p>The LADO service will continue to foster relationships with professional standards and maintain meetings with LADOs from the five local authorities under Avon and Somerset Police to determine support and training provisions for the force.</p> <p>The NLN working group is drafting a protocol for police collaboration, to be reviewed by all LADOs and agreed upon with the NPCC for future implementation.</p>
Training Sessions	<p>In collaboration with the SSCP, the LADO service plans to deliver four training sessions for education, health, and care home providers in Somerset regarding Allegation Management. These sessions will run from April 2025 – March 2026, comprising two virtual and two face-to-face sessions.</p> <p>Two workshops will be provided to staff across Children and Young Peoples services to enhance knowledge and understanding of the allegations management process.</p>
Quality Assurance	<p>The LADO service will continue to focus on reviewing the quality of the service to evidence areas of strength and identify areas for service development.</p> <p>The LADO service will ask for Child Protection Chairs and Independent Reviewing Officers to complete verbal feedback twice a year with service users as part of the LADO quality assurance process.</p> <p>Peer audits have been arranged by the Somerset LADO service with the South West regional LADO group. These audits will continue to inform LADO Service Development in Somerset and across the South West.</p>

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

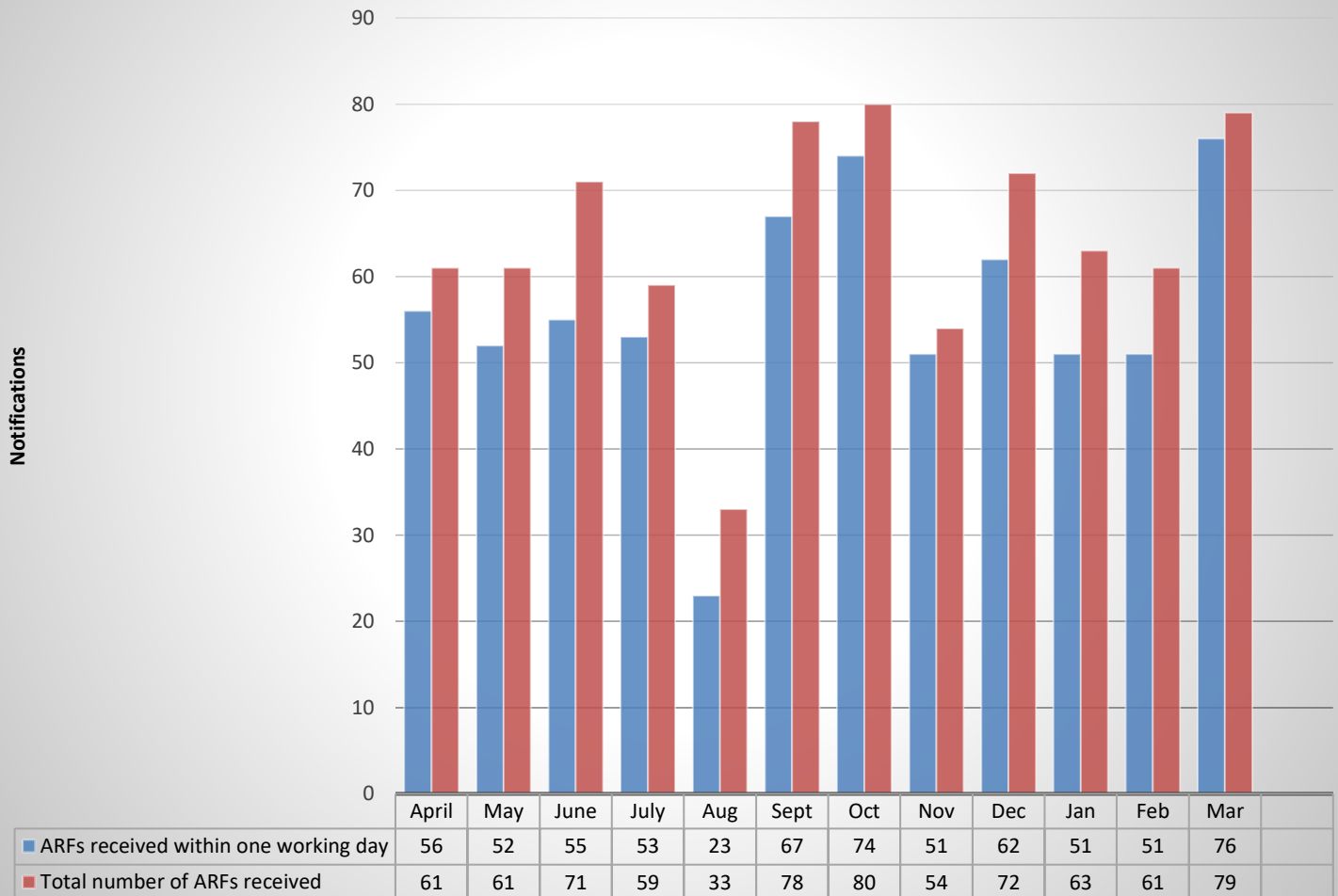


## Appendix 2



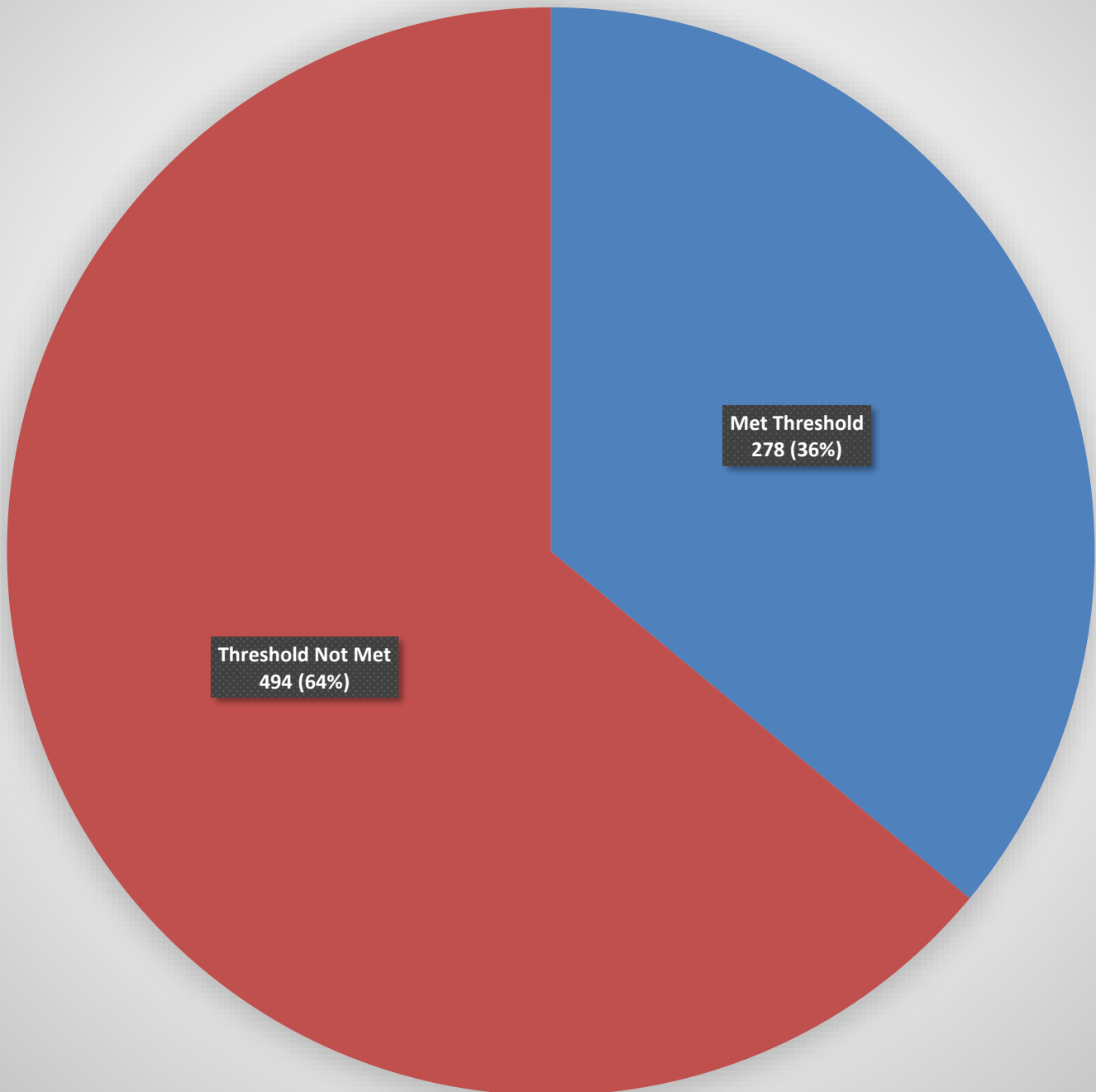
## Appendix 3

## Notifications Received Within One Working Day in Comparison to the Total Number Received Each Month



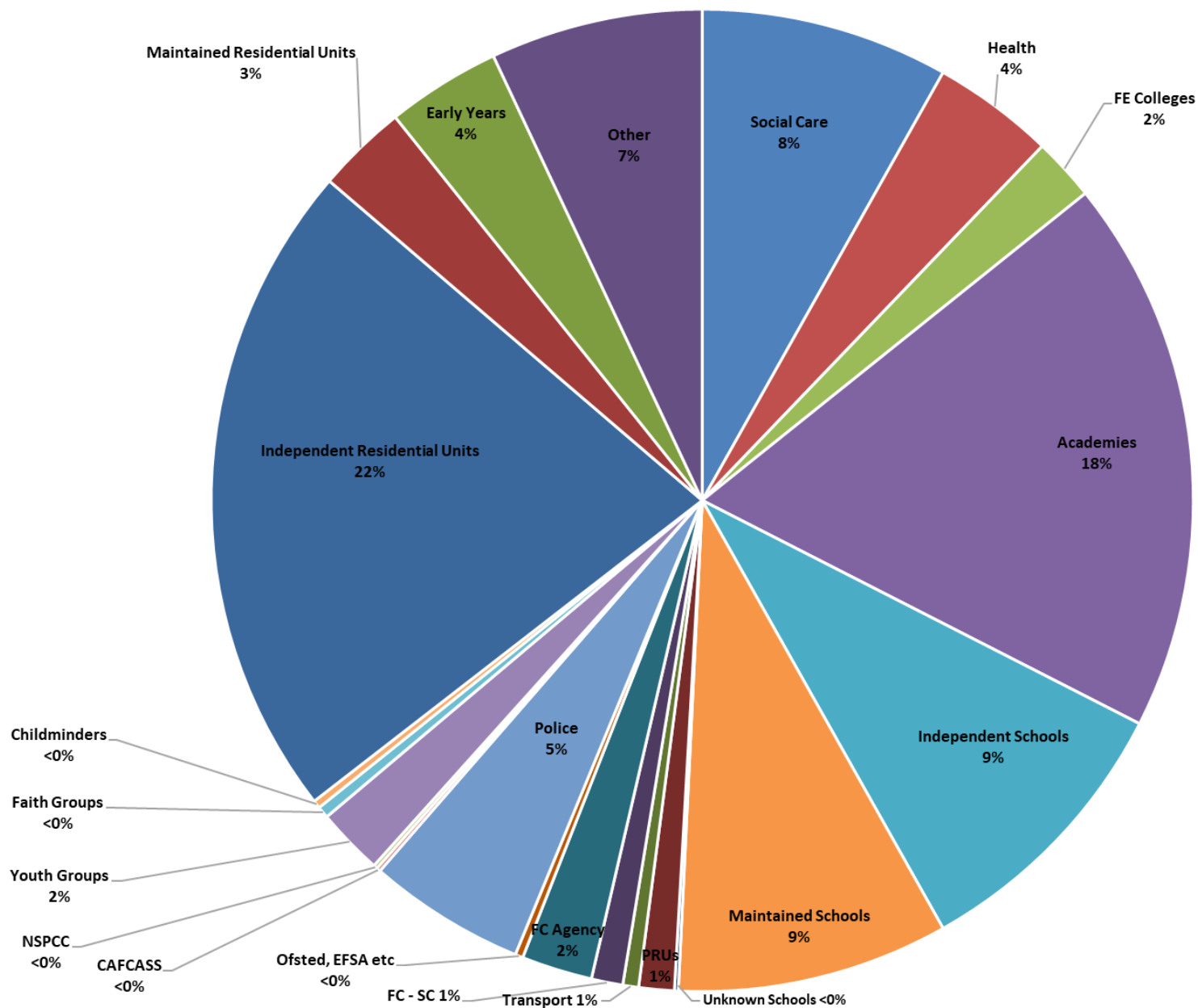
## Appendix 4

### Comparison of Notifications That Met/Did Not Meet the Threshold



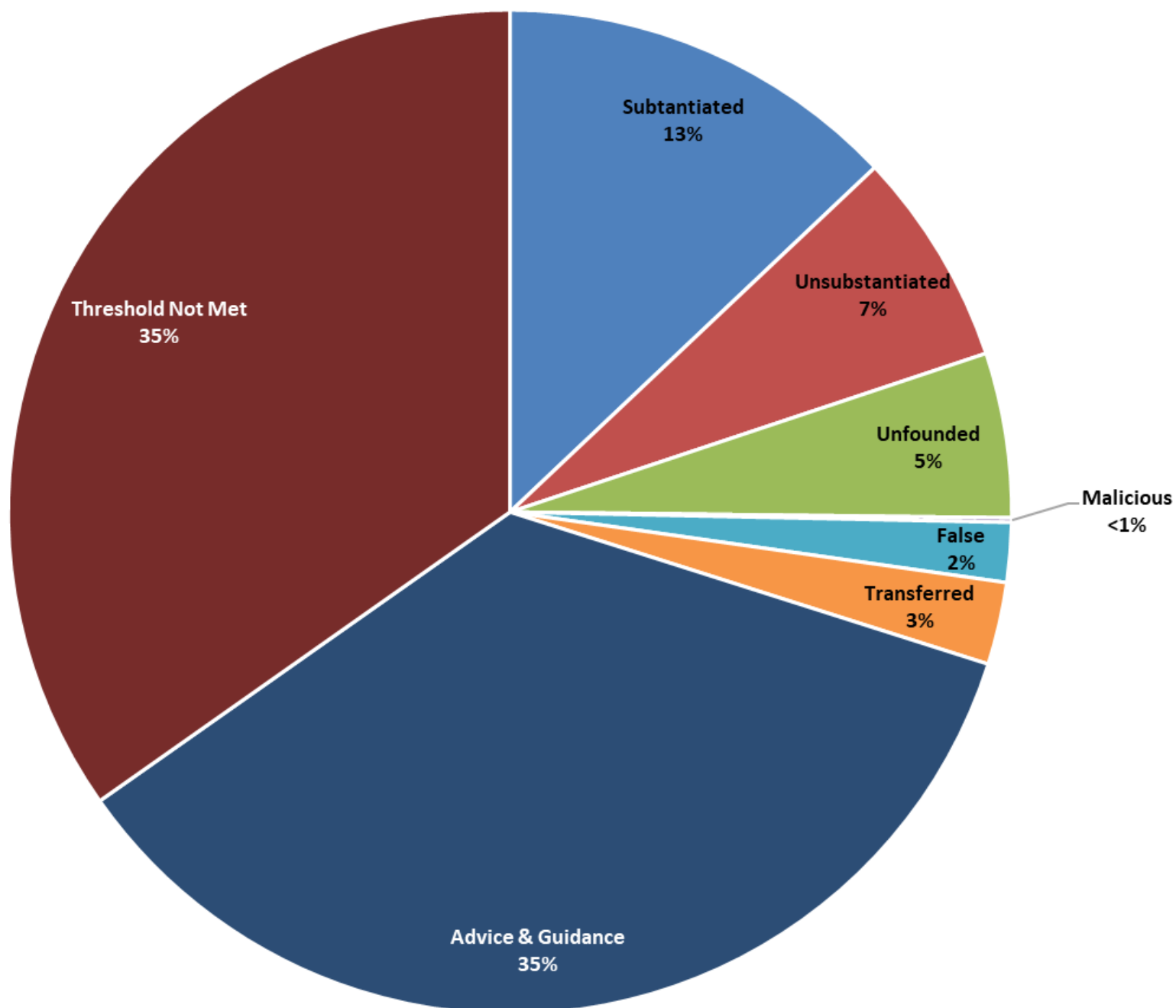
## Appendix 5

Number of Notifications by Organisation



## Appendix 6

## Notification Outcomes





**Document Notification**

Approval	Name	Date
Quality Assurance Service Manager: Safeguarding, Fostering Review and Allegations Management	Jade Hill	23/06/2025