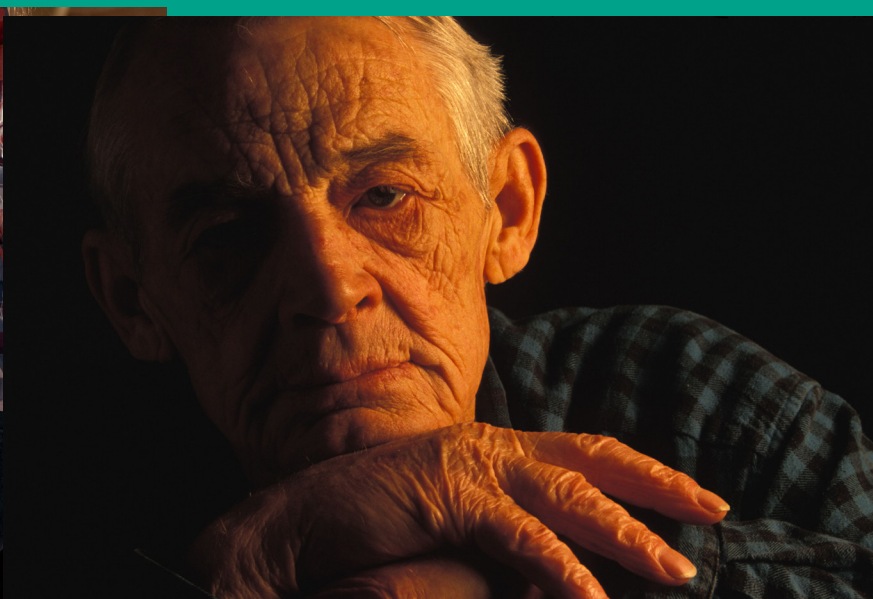


Safeguarding Adults

Annual Report

2020 / 21



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

Safeguarding Adults is a strategic priority for West Berkshire Council and a core activity of Adult Social Care.

2020/2021 has been an unprecedented year. The pandemic brought challenges to the service unparalleled with any previous year or event in our lifetimes. The staff stepped up magnificently and supported all efforts of the Council to provide the necessary support and practical help the residents of West Berkshire needed.

It seems fitting to recognise the extraordinary efforts made by all staff in Adult Social Care, including those in the Safeguarding and DoLS team, during this reporting period and to acknowledge all of those people in West Berkshire who lost their lives to COVID-19.

2020/21 has been a very busy year for the Safeguarding Adults Service in West Berkshire Council. Delivery of the safeguarding function is shared between the operational social care teams, (such as the Locality teams and Hospital Discharge team) and a small safeguarding team that provide a triage and scrutiny function, signing off all investigations and leading on investigations into organisational abuse and out of county placements. They also coordinate the response in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

Periods of lockdown brought their own unique challenges to investigating safeguarding concerns and supporting those facing abuse and neglect during this year. All of Adult Social Care services worked hard to ensure that those most vulnerable and at risk received a safeguarding response and those most at risk due to restrictions were still able to access appropriate support where possible. April through to June were quiet for the team in comparison to previous years. However, as restrictions were relaxed in the summer of 2020 the service noted increased volumes of concerns and enquiries.

Personnel changes during the 2020/21 period have now resulted in a fully staffed team. A new Service Manager took up post in September 2020, a new DoLS Officer took up post in the summer 2020 and a new fixed term post was successfully created during this year to support the DoLS team. This post becomes operational in April 2021 and a successful recruitment campaign in March 2021 ensures the post will be filled mid-April 2021.

As reported in the 2019/20 Annual Report, work progressed to review our safeguarding processes to ensure our recording was efficient and best suited the needs of the service user and teams. New recording forms were developed and launched in April 2020. The forms incorporate clarification on the safeguarding criteria¹, greater focus on our risk assessment approach at two stages, and highlights the need for the use of the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based

¹ ADASS guidance Nov 19: [Making decisions on the duty to carry out Safeguarding Adults enquiries - Suggested framework to support practice, reporting and recording](#)

violence (DASH) risk assessment in domestic abuse cases. Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) remains key and the new recording format has given the option for the safeguarding team to set a review date for the protection plan. The review is used in certain cases where it is considered the risk is likely to continue beyond the initial safeguarding intervention.

Organisational Safeguarding has not presented the same pressures during 2020/21 as it did during previous reporting periods. This was welcomed.

Introduction

Safeguarding is a statutory responsibility for all Local Authorities, is a strategic priority for West Berkshire Council and core activity for Adult Social Care.

This annual report evidences the key measures and trends used to monitor activity for Safeguarding Adults in West Berkshire to ensure risks are being identified and managed appropriately. Utilising the set of indicators and statutory reporting requirements for 2020/21, analysis of performance has developed comprehensively across the year to produce this report.

This report also focuses on the activities of the safeguarding network in West Berkshire during the reporting year.

Networks

The Care Act 2014 required all Local Authorities to form a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to provide the strategic overview and direction of safeguarding, provide governance and quality assurance to the process. This includes the commissioning of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) when a person has died or been significantly harmed and the SAB knows, or suspects, that the death resulted from abuse or neglect.

West Berkshire Council is a member of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board; a tri borough Board in partnership with Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council alongside other key stakeholders including, but not exclusively, Thames Valley Police, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust and the local Clinical Commissioning Group. The SAB has produced its own annual report which can be viewed on its website www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk

The SAB Business Strategy 2018/21 outlines priorities that shapes its work. Those priorities were last reviewed and updated in September 2020. Priorities from 2019/20 were carried over to 2020/21 as there were delays in completion due to the pandemic.

Priority 1 - We will continue to work on outstanding actions from the 2019/20 from the following priorities:

- Priority 1 2019/20, We will provide the partnership with the tools and framework to work effectively with people who Self-Neglect
- Priority 2 2019/20, The SAB will work collaboratively with Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and Health and Wellbeing Boards to provide the workforce with the frameworks and tools to work with Vulnerable Adults who are at risk of Domestic Abuse.
- Priority 3 2019/20, We will understand the main risks to our local population in regard to Targeted Exploitation and agree how best to equip the partnership to Safeguard vulnerable people against these risks.
- Priority 4 2019/20, The SAB will understand from key stakeholders, why there has been an increase in organisational safeguarding and seek assurance from commissioners, that there are adequate preventative measures in place that is consistent across the partnership where practical.

Priority 2 – The SAB will seek to understand the impact the pandemic has had on Adult Safeguarding locally.

Priority 3 – The SAB will continue to carry out the business as usual tasks in order to comply with its statutory obligations.

The 2020/21 Business Plan is published on the SAB website:

<http://www.sabberkshirewest.co.uk/media/1472/business-plan-20-21-v10.pdf>

The Safeguarding Adults Board are developing the [business plan for 2021/22](#), which will detail the way in which partner agencies will contribute to delivering agreed priorities, this will be published on SAB website.

Volumes and Performance

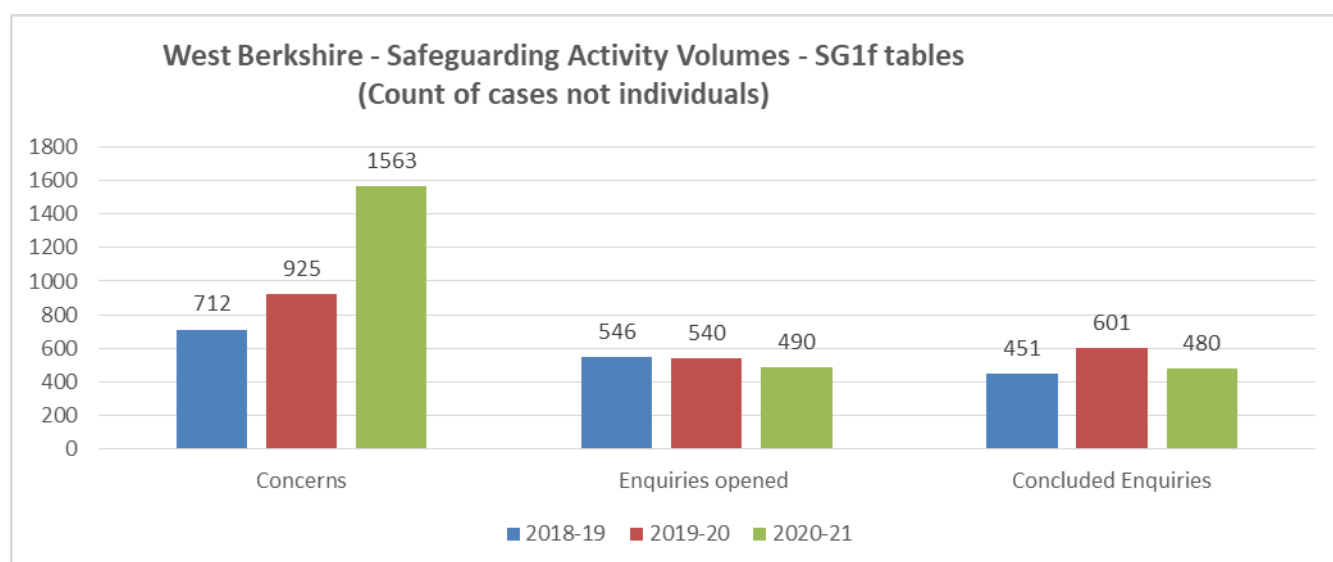
Safeguarding activity

Concerns and S42 Enquiries

As noted above we had undertaken a review of our safeguarding processes to ensure our recording was efficient and best suited the needs of the service user and teams. As part of that review we considered the recording of safeguarding cases. Historically concern documents that ended at triage stage were not reported statutorily. However a decision was made to include these in the volumes reported on a statutory basis to better reflect the volume of those concerns received that met the threshold. This means our reported concerns appear to be significantly higher in 2020/21 than in previous reporting years. They are however more representative of volumes received than previously.

Table 1 – Safeguarding activity for the reporting period 2018/19 – 2020/21

	Concerns	Enquiries opened	Concluded Enquiries	Concern to Enquiry Rate
2018-19	712	546	451	77%
2019-20	925	540	601	58%
2020-21	1563	490	480	31%



For 2020/21:

- 1563 concerns were opened. This is significantly higher than the 925 opened in 2019/20. The increase is directly attributable to the decisions and actions noted above.
- 490 S42 enquiries opened, this represents a 9% decrease compared with 2019/20. The decrease is partly attributable to the fact that organisational safeguarding has not presented any substantive issues in 2020/21.

It should be noted that in addition to concerns reported statutorily, the safeguarding team receive additional notifications where there is immediate clarity that safeguarding thresholds are not met (often social welfare concerns from providers), these are referred on to the relevant Adult Social Care or Mental Health teams to review and take any appropriate action, but are not reported statutorily. In 2020/21 there were 1083 additional notifications received. Therefore a total of 2646 notifications were received and reviewed during the 2020/21 reporting period.

The Care Act 2014 (**Section 42**) requires that each local authority must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry into a concern should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom. These are known as, and reported as, S42 Enquiries

We monitor the % of concerns that subsequently require a S42 enquiry. This is known as the conversion rate. During 2020/21 the conversion rate was calculated to be 31%. This appears on the surface to be a significant drop from 2019/20. However the conversion rate is directly related to the number of concerns, the capture of which for statutory reporting purposes has changed in this reporting year resulting in higher numbers of concerns reported. In addition the reduction in organisational safeguarding concerns during 2020/21 has also had an impact on the conversion rate. Notwithstanding the conversion rate of 31% is more in line with the England average for 2019/20 of 37%.

Concluded Enquiries decreased by 20%, this decrease is attributed to the number of organisational enquiries that were concluded in the 2019/20 reporting year.

Individuals with safeguarding enquiries

Age group and gender

Tables 2 and 3 display the breakdown by age group and gender for individuals who had a S42 safeguarding enquiry opened in the last three years. Please note this data relates to **individuals** only and not repeat enquiries. Therefore these totals will differ from the total number of s42 enquiries opened.

- The majority of enquiries continue to relate to older people - the 65 and over age group accounted for 67% of enquiries in 2020/21. This is a very slight increase of 4% on the previous year.

- The proportion of cases opened for those aged 85+ is broadly in line with the previous year with 26% of cases opened in 2020/21 as compared to 28% opened in 2019/20.
- In line with the national average a greater proportion of safeguarding concerns are received for females. (60%). This is the same % as the 2019/20 year.

Table 2 – Age group of individuals with safeguarding enquiries opened, 2018/19 – 2020/21

Table SG1a Opened s42 Enquiries	Number of individuals by age					
	18-64	65-74	75-84	85+	95+	Total
2018/19 Total	138	57	115	151	35	496
2019/20 Total	163	57	94	105	23	442
2020/21 Total	136	61	106	92	19	414

Table 3 – Gender of individuals with safeguarding enquiries opened, 2018/19– 2020/21

Table SG1b Opened S42 Enquiries	Number of Individuals by gender		
	Male	Female	Total
2018/19	167	329	496
2019/20	178	264	443
2020/21	165	249	414

Primary support reason

Table 4 shows a breakdown of individuals who had a safeguarding enquiry opened by Primary Support Reason (PSR).

Table 4 – Primary support reason for individuals with a safeguarding enquiry opened (SG1c)

Table SG1d Opened S42 Enquiries	Number of Individuals by PSR - Note individuals can have more than one PSR							
	Physical Support	Sensory Support	Support with Memory & Cognition	Learning Disability Support	Mental Health Support	Social Support	No Support Reason	Not Known
2018/19	43%	1%	11%	9%	3%	1%	32%	0%
2019/20	36%	1%	11%	11%	3%	1%	37%	0%
2020/21	42%	0%	14%	12%	5%	1%	25%	0%

2020/21 - S42 enquiries opened for 'No support reason' continues to be relatively high despite a marked drop from the 2019/20 reporting year. Guidance confirms, *"We would expect PSR to be determined through a social care assessment or review and then recorded on the local system. We do not expect local authorities to assess PSRs as part of the safeguarding process and therefore would expect PSR data to be taken from existing information on the local care management system."*

Where an individual was not receiving, nor did they need, any social services support at the time of the safeguarding incident, the PSR will remain unknown. There appears to be a high number of S42 cases that have no support reason as the PSR, indicating a number of safeguarding enquiries opened for individuals not provided support by West Berkshire Council.

The reduction in the WBC figure of No support reason, means that other PSR reasons have increased, with a most notable increase in those with physical support needs bringing the % back in line with 2018/19 % figure recorded.

Case details for concluded enquiries

Type of alleged abuse

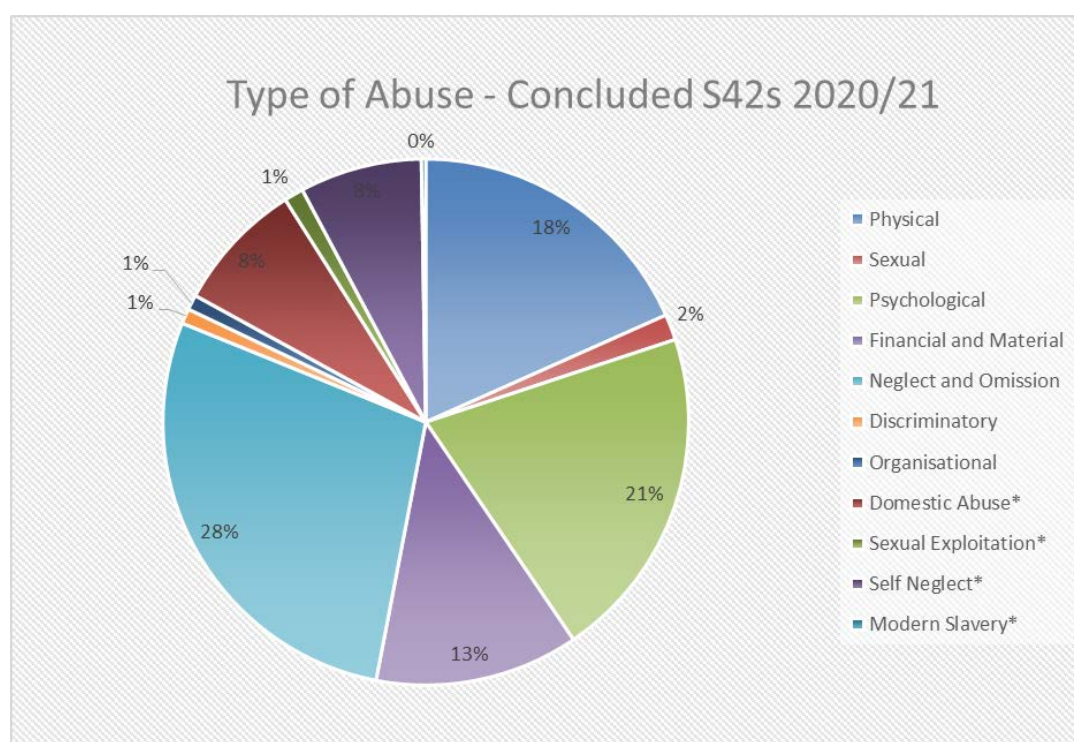
Table 5 shows concluded enquiries by type of alleged abuse in the last three years.

The most common types of abuse for 2020/21 remains neglect and acts of omission at 28% which is entirely consistent with previous reporting years. Organisational abuse has reduced to 1% from 9% in 2019/20 as expected following the conclusion of organisational abuse enquiries ongoing during the previous reporting years

Table 5 – Concluded enquiries by type of abuse

Type of Abuse	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
Physical	122	18%	147	16%	139	18%
Sexual	15	2%	24	3%	12	2%
Psychological	131	20%	152	17%	156	21%
Financial and Material	93	14%	119	13%	95	13%
Neglect and Omission	154	23%	252	28%	213	28%
Discriminatory	2	0%	3	0%	7	1%
Organisational	66	10%	83	9%	7	1%
Domestic Abuse*	37	6%	67	7%	61	8%
Sexual Exploitation*	1	0%	5	1%	9	1%
Self Neglect*	39	6%	52	6%	57	8%
Modern Slavery*	2	0%	2	0%	2	0%

Graph 1 - Type of abuse 2020/21 by concluded enquiries



Location of alleged abuse

This year has seen a significant increase in the location of abuse being a person's own home. This may be directly attributable to the pandemic that saw periods of national lockdown which confined people to their homes with the most vulnerable shielding in their homes for much of the year.

A decrease in the percentage of cases located in care homes may also be attributable to the pandemic. Care homes closed their doors to non-essential visitors reducing the number of people able to observe activities and practice and were focused on managing the immediate health needs of their residents.

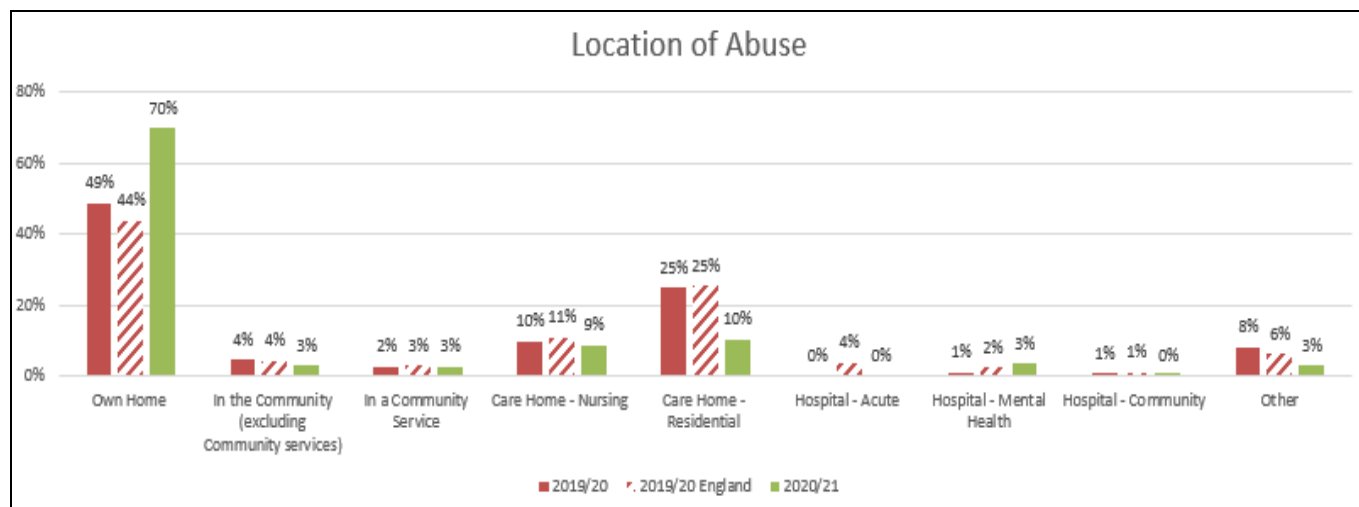
However, it is notable that percentages of location of abuse in 2020/21 are more closely aligned to the percentages recorded in 2018/19 when changes to the locations of abuse in 2019/20 were attributed to the opening of multiple organisational abuse enquiries in a care home.

It will be interesting to see if the shift in location of abuse is reflected in the England average data for 2020/21, expected sometime in the autumn of 2021.

Table 6 – Location of abuse by concluded enquiries

Location of Abuse	2018/19	2019/20	2019/20 England	2020/21
Own Home	67%	49%	44%	70%
In the Community (excluding Community services)	3%	4%	4%	3%
In a Community Service	7%	2%	3%	3%
Care Home - Nursing	6%	10%	11%	9%
Care Home - Residential	9%	25%	25%	10%
Hospital - Acute	0%	0%	4%	0%
Hospital - Mental Health	2%	1%	2%	3%
Hospital - Community	0%	1%	1%	0%
Other	7%	8%	6%	3%

2020-21 by concluded enquiries



A person's own home consistently remains the place in which an abusive incident is more likely to occur. This demonstrates the continued need to raise awareness of safeguarding amongst all sectors of society and improving mechanisms to report those incidents.

Source of risk

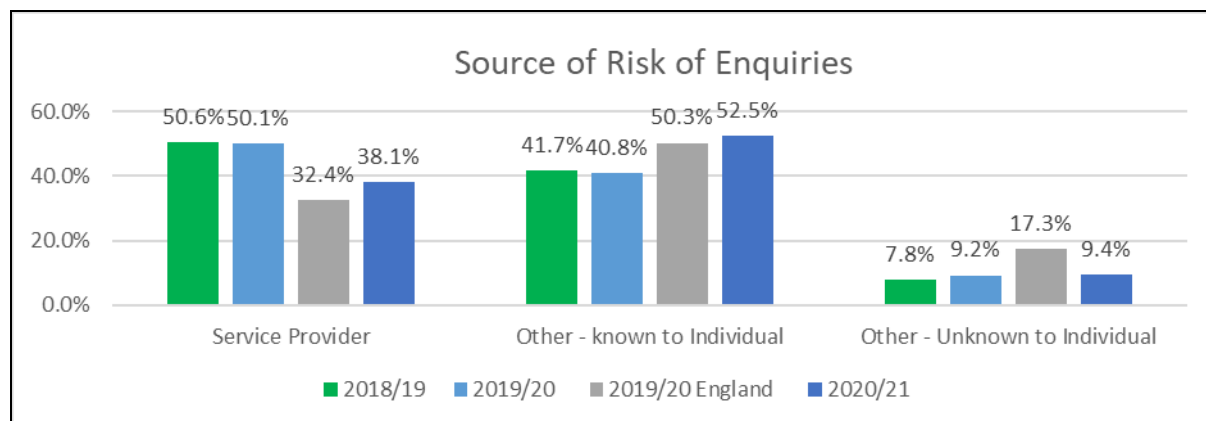
Graph 3 relates to the source of risk for concluded enquiries.

The majority of concluded Safeguarding enquiries involved a source of risk known to the individual, only 9% were 'unknown' and this mirrors the 2019/20 % reported source of risk. It is noted however that it is lower than the England average of 17%.

In 38% of cases the source of risk was a 'service provider'. The service provider support category refers to any individual or organisation paid, contracted or commissioned to provide social care. This is a decrease from previous years and more closely aligned to the England average of 32%.

In West Berkshire we have previously had a high proportion of safeguarding referrals that are self-reported by the providers. It is likely the pandemic has significantly contributed to the decline in self-reporting where the focus within services was directed to delivering services in a COVID secure way during the most testing times of the pandemic. Self-reporting links into a wider intelligence matrix for the providers across our area and is directly linked to the training offered and working with providers around transparency and accountability. The higher than England average during 2019/20 can also be attributed as above to the organisational safeguarding enquiries during this timeframe which have not been replicated in the 20/21 reporting year. We will be monitoring the source of risk during 2021/22 to establish any shift back to previous reporting patterns.

Graph 3 – Concluded enquiries by source of risk



Risk Assessment Outcomes, Action taken and result

Graph 4 indicates risk outcomes in concluded enquiries.

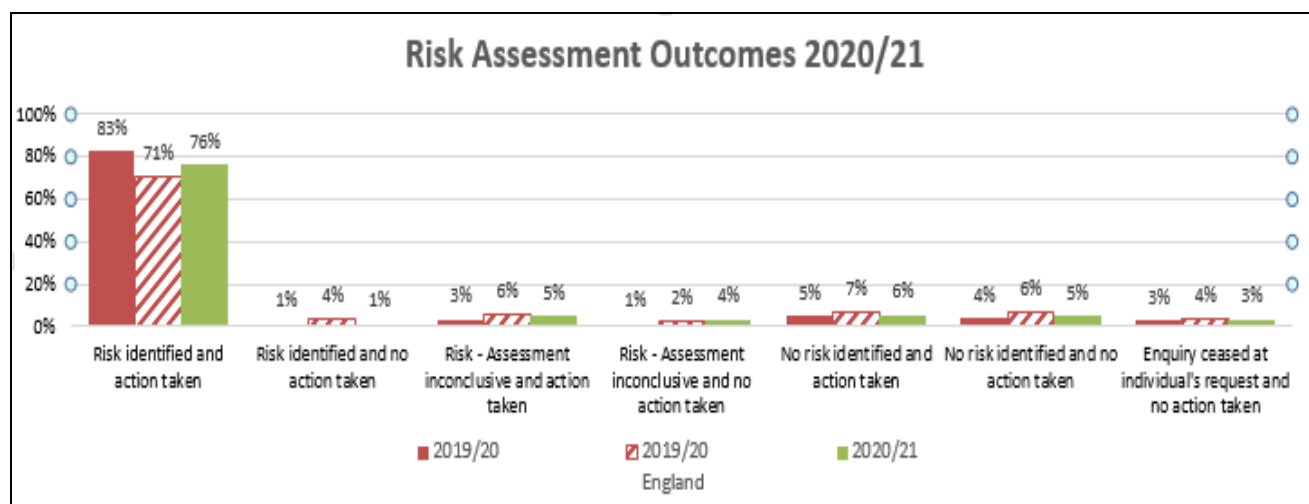
Management of risk data is drawn from the 480 concluded enquiries.

Positively, where a risk was identified, action was taken in the majority of cases (76%), this is slightly higher than the England average 2019/20 at 71% but remains lower than the 2019/20 % of 83%. It should be noted that 11% of cases closed, where either the risk was inconclusive or no risk was identified, actions were taken to better support the person at the centre of the safeguarding enquiry.

Risk identified but no action taken accounts for just 1% of cases; there are times where an individual can refuse support / intervention and have the capacity to make such decisions.

For the remaining cases, the risk assessment was inconclusive, there was no risk identified or the enquiry ceased at the individuals request.

Graph 4 – Concluded enquiries by risk outcomes

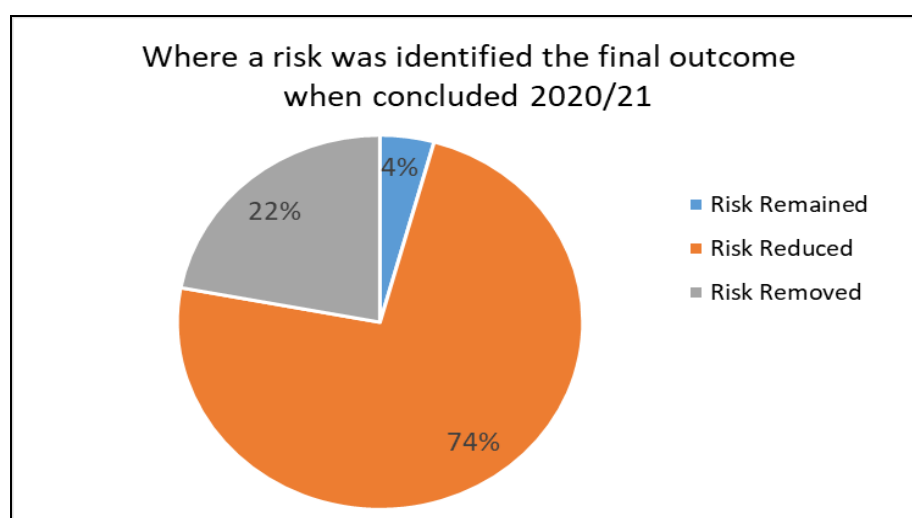


Outcome of concluded case where a risk was identified

Graph 5 shows the final outcome where a risk was identified. (Relates to 372 concluded enquiries)

Positively, risk was removed for 22% of cases and reduced for a further 74% of cases. Risk remains for only 4% of cases. It is acknowledged that there are some situations where an adult makes decisions that we don't necessarily agree with, but where they have capacity to make such decisions this needs to be respected. This remains comparable with previous years.

Graph 5 – Concluded enquiries by result, 2020/21

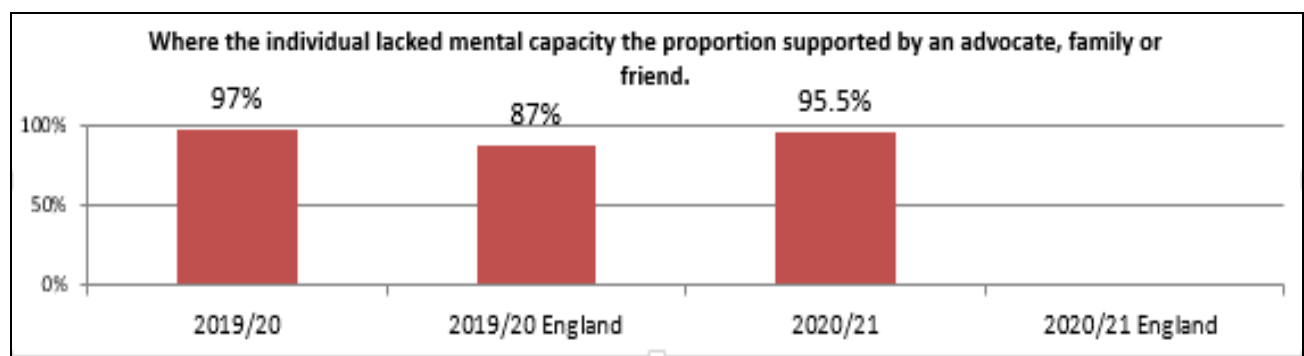


Mental Capacity and Advocacy

In order to achieve good outcomes for individuals subject to a S42 enquiry, it is important to hear their voice. There is a statutory requirement to ensure all adults subject to a S42 safeguarding enquiry who lack capacity are provided support by an independent advocate or appropriate other (family or friend)

In 2020/21, where the individual lacked mental capacity, **95.5%** were supported by an advocate, family or friend. It should be noted the national average for providing advocates in England, recorded for 2019/20, was 87%. The national average for England in 2020/21 is not yet available.

This represents a slight drop on the 2019/20 year of 97%. Each of the cases for whom an advocate should have been provided was rigorously reviewed. Advocacy services were impacted by the pandemic with a noted reduction in capacity and ability to undertake face to face visits. Amongst the 4.5% of cases who required an independent advocate but did not receive an advocacy service, a small proportion were affected by the impact on advocacy services with some unable to engage in advocacy provided through media other than face to face.



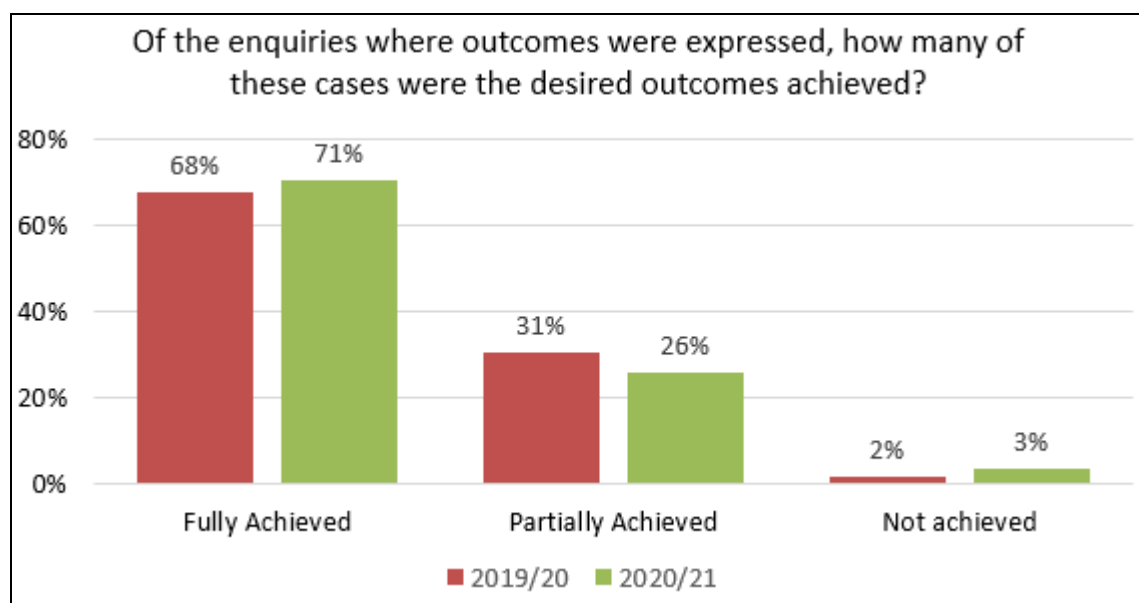
Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is a national initiative to improve the experiences and outcomes for adults involved in a safeguarding enquiry.

This initiative was adopted by the Government and enshrined in the Care Act 2014. By definition, a personal response to a safeguarding incident will mean different things to different people. Therefore obtaining data for outcomes will always present challenges. In 2020/21, 87% of all clients for whom there was a concluded case were asked about the outcomes they desired (either directly or through an advocate).

Of those who were asked and expressed a desired outcome, 71% were able to achieve those outcomes fully, with a further 26% partially achieved. This is comparable to the 2019/20 year.

Graph 7 – Concluded enquiries by expressed outcomes achieved.



Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is an amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and applies in England and Wales only. The Mental Capacity Act allows restraint and restrictions to be used – but only if they are in a person's best interests.

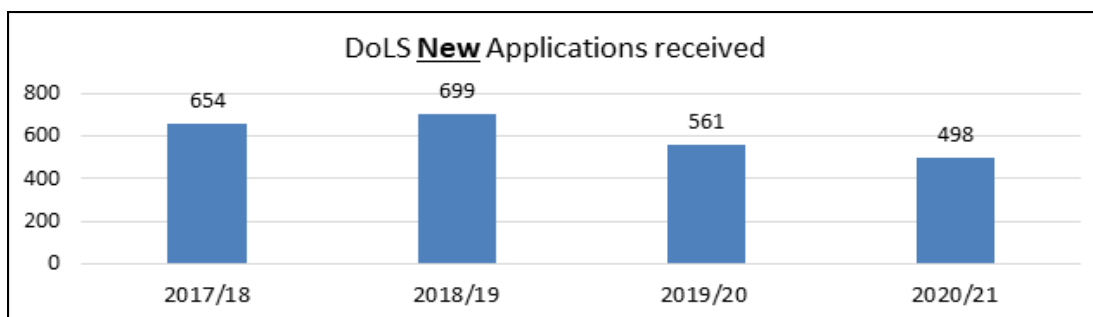
Extra safeguards are needed if the restrictions and restraint used will deprive a person of their liberty. These are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

DoLS authorisations must be applied for by care homes, nursing homes or hospitals (The Managing Authority) where they believe a person is living in circumstances that amount to a deprivation of liberty and that person lacks the capacity to consent to their care, treatment and accommodation, in order to prevent them from coming to harm. They apply to the Local Authority (The Supervisory Body) whose role is to arrange for the person's circumstances to be assessed in order to determine whether to grant or refuse an authorisation for those circumstances. Those living in other settings must have their deprivation considered by the Court of Protection.

The graph below shows volume of applications.

498 new applications in the 2020/21, represents a decrease of 11% (561 applications in 19/20). The decrease can be accounted for by the carry forward of a backlog of applications pending assessment and authorisation from the 2019/20 reporting year and an increase in the number of care home vacant bed spaces (predominantly as a result of the pandemic) across the District.

Graph 8 – Total number of new DoLS applications received in 2020/21



As at the 31.03.21, the status of applications is reported.

The number of 'pending' applications that we are reporting for 2020/21 is lower than in the 2019/20 reporting year. Of the 498 new applications received in 2020/21:-

- 49%, 245 applications are Pending
- 34%, 168 application are Not Granted
- 17%, 85 applications have been Granted

This is an improvement on the status of new applications received during the reporting year 2019/20 when, as at 31.03.2020, 529 total applications were reported of which 382 were still pending assessment and decision.

Only 36 cases from the 2019/20 backlog were carried forward into the 2021/22 reporting year. It should be noted all 36 were in the process of assessment and authorisation as at 31.03.21.

Alongside a number of other local authorities we continue to use an adapted version of the ADASS prioritisation tool on receiving DoLS referrals, this does mean that some referrals which are not identified as high priority may be awaiting assessment when their circumstances change.

From March 2020, measures were being taken by homes and hospitals in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. Visits were significantly restricted and this meant assessments were undertaken virtually in most cases. This had an impact on the ability of the service to properly arrange assessments and ultimately authorisations throughout the year as restrictions were lifted then imposed again as the infection rates increased. Homes were able to be more flexible with visits from professionals as the vaccination programme took effect and they had been able to create safer visiting spaces that were COVID compliant. Notwithstanding all the challenges, the size of the backlog carried through into 2021/22 was lower than the backlog previously carried over in 2020/21.

The Future

The Safeguarding Service is working closely with our colleagues across Adult Social Care and with the Care Quality team to meet the needs of the population and their safeguarding responsibilities.

We will continue to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, working with our colleagues across the service and wider community to ensure we protect the most vulnerable and at risk of abuse. We will also work closely with colleagues in recovery from the pandemic.

Audits continue to be completed of at least 10% of S42 Enquiries and the feedback from these will continue to feed into the training and support provided to other Adult Social Care staff. It is hoped that standards of Enquiries will improve as a result of this.

It is hoped that the introduction of a more formal approach to risk management in 2020/21 with our partners and the members of the Safeguarding Adults Board will enable us to prevent more safeguarding incidents from occurring. The impact of this has been less evident in the 2020/21 reporting year as a result of the pandemic which created the most extraordinary working environment for health and social care professionals.

Going forward the service is planning to work more closely with the Building Communities Together team and our Police colleagues particularly supporting the implementation of the Violence Reduction programme and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. We will also work with our colleagues in Public Protection, Trading Standards, Blue Light Services and other agencies to enable the service to continue to concentrate on prevention as well as completing reactive work. This will include continuing to work alongside our Care Quality Team to support providers prior to them being found to be having safeguarding and care quality issues.

The safeguarding team signed up to the 'Safe Places' scheme in 2019/20 and had planned to launch this in 2020 with the assistance of the safeguarding service user forum. This scheme works with local businesses to ensure staff working there will be able to support someone who is feeling vulnerable or scared and the premises will be identifiable to a vulnerable adult by displaying the safe places logo. The launch was put on hold as a result of the pandemic and whilst the Safe Places scheme was in place it had little impact, as many of those places designated as 'safe' were forced to close for much of the reporting year. The launch will be revisited in 2021/22.