

Supporting our futures *for* Reading

Adult Social Care  
& Wellbeing



# Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2020 - 2021

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Safeguarding adults at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect is a strategic priority for Reading Borough Council and a core activity of adult social care.

As with many services, the safeguarding service was faced with unprecedented challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and had to adapt to ensure safeguarding delivery was maintained, and the increased risk of hidden harm during periods of extensive isolation and lockdown was addressed.

The year has been challenging with an increase in referral rates, many of which on screening do not concern a safeguarding issue but nonetheless often involve individuals with care and support needs.

Joint working across the partnership throughout the pandemic has been very positive and partners have adapted to new ways of operating during this time.

Our priorities for the coming year are to build on the successes and achievements of 2020/21 and to continue to address the priorities of the West Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

## INTRODUCTION

Adult safeguarding is a core duty of all local authorities, as set out by the Care Act 2014 (sections 42 - 47 and section 68). This includes the duty on local authorities to co-ordinate safeguarding responses and lead a multi-agency local adult safeguarding system that seeks to prevent the abuse and neglect of adults at risk and to deal with it effectively when it does happen. As the legal framework does not dictate how this is achieved safeguarding arrangements vary across local authority areas.

The approach taken by Reading Borough Council (RBC) is twofold:

- RBC hosts the strategic partnership arrangement between Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham and operates as the lead organisation, hosting the joint Safeguarding Adult Board across the 3 areas. The Board team consists of one administrator, a Board Manager and an Independent Chair.
- RBC also has a dedicated operational Safeguarding Adults Team (SAT) who undertake the role of initial triage of concerns and referrals; decision making as to whether the Care Act duties are engaged; signposting where relevant and commencement of safeguarding enquiries where these are indicated. They do not hold cases long term and where service users are already known these are signposted to the relevant teams. The team comprises social workers, senior social workers, administrative staff and a team manager (social worker).

For some time, the safeguarding service has been experiencing significant challenges as referrals and concerns shared with the team have increased over time. This largely relates to the perception of the public and partner agencies as to what constitutes a safeguarding issue. A high volume of information is shared informally with the team which does not relate to a safeguarding concern (in Care Act 2014 terms) but nonetheless often does concern vulnerable adults who may have needs of care and support.

Work will continue to support partners and the wider public to ensure anyone who is vulnerable or in need of services is signposted to the most appropriate agency or pathway as appropriate.

## SAFEGUARDING ACTIVITY

The 2020-21 Safeguarding Adults Collection (SAC) records details about safeguarding activity for adults aged 18 and over in England. It includes demographic information about the adults at risk and the details of the incidents that have been alleged and has been collected since 2015/16.

A summary of the data is:

- In 2020/21 31% of safeguarding concerns (493) received by Reading Borough Council led to a section 42 enquiry – this has reduced compared with 2019/20 data. This data is comparable with our colleagues across West Berkshire.
- In 2020/21 56% (244) of section 42 enquiries reported relate to older people over 65 years – this has shown a slight decrease compared with 2019/20 data.
- More women were the subject of a safeguarding enquiry than males as in previous years; however, however the gap has narrowed to only 4%.
- 80% of section 42 enquires were for individuals whose ethnicity is White. There has been an increase to 20% in section 42 enquires for individuals whose ethnicity is Mixed, Asian, Black or Other. This continues to be the focus of work for all partners in view of the demographic makeup of Reading.
- When all section 42 enquiries concluded, the ethnicity of the individuals involved was known.
- As in previous years the most common type of abuse for concluded section 42 enquires were for Neglect and Acts of Omission. This was followed by Financial or Material abuse, Physical abuse and Psychological abuse
- For most section 42 enquiries the primary support reason was physical support.
- As in previous years, the most common locations where the alleged abuse took place were a person's own home and a care home.
- 84% of service users were asked about the outcomes they desired as part of the Making Safeguarding Personal agenda and engagement of the service user throughout the whole process. This is similar to the previous year.

## Concerns and Enquiries

Table 1 shows the safeguarding activity within Reading over the previous 3 years in terms of concerns raised, enquiries opened and the conversion rates over the same period.

There were 1,589 Safeguarding Concerns received in 2020/21 which is a considerable increase since last year (up 629 over the previous year).

493 safeguarding enquiries (section 42) were opened this year, with a conversion rate from concern to enquiry of 31% which is lower than both the national average (approx. 37%) and the South East average (approx. 39%) for 2019/20. This brings Reading more into line with other West Berkshire authorities and with other current comparator averages such as the South East ADASS Q4 benchmarking (Approx. 30%).

There were 435 individuals who had a s42 enquiry opened during 2020/21 which is a decrease of 27 over the year. It shows that whilst Concerns have risen sharply this year the number of individuals starting an enquiry has decreased by a smaller proportion over the previous year.

**Table 1 – Safeguarding Activity for the past 3 Years since 2018/19**

Year	Safeguarding Concerns received	Safeguarding s42 Enquiries Started	Individuals who had Safeguarding s42 Enquiry Started	Conversion rate of Concern to s42 Enquiry
2018/19	1109	549	458	50%
2019/20	960	543	462	57%
2020/21	1589	493	435	31%

## Source of Safeguarding Concerns

As Figure 1 shows the largest percentage of safeguarding concerns for 2020/21 were referred from Health staff (41.7%) and the Police (21.7%). Social Care Staff whilst still making up 18.5% of the total has fallen over the year. The Social Care category encompasses both local authority staff such as Social Workers and Care Managers as well as independent sector workers such as Residential / Nursing Care and Day Care staff. The Health category relates to both Primary and Secondary Health staff as well as Mental Health workers.

**Figure 1 - Safeguarding Concerns by Referral Source - 2020/21**

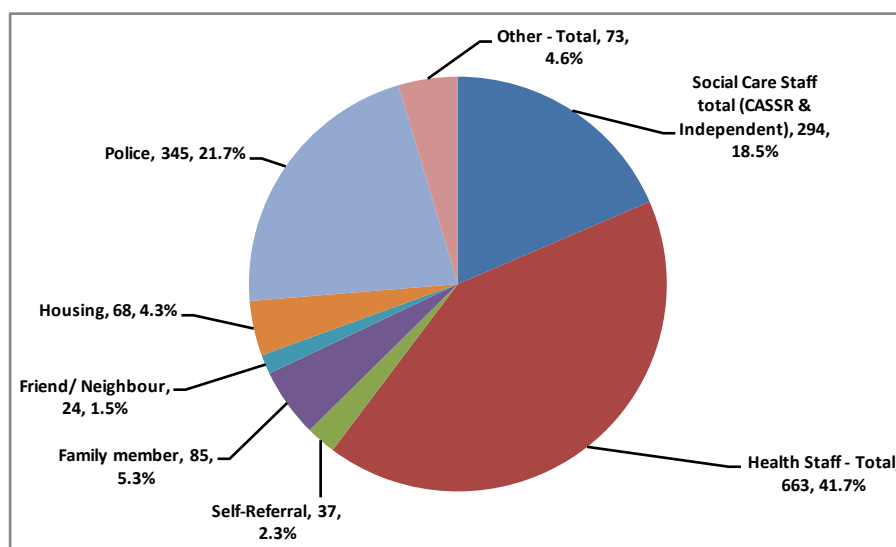


Table 2 shows the breakdown of the number of safeguarding concerns by referral source over the past 2 years since 2019/20.

The biggest decrease as mentioned earlier can be found in Social Care where whilst actual numbers coming in have only decreased over the year by 16, this proportionately now makes this group 18.5% of the overall total (down from 32.3% in 2019/20). Most of this decrease has been due to less referrals being made from Social Worker / Care Managers where numbers have fallen from 84 to 49 which is a 5.7% fall overall.

The numbers of referrals coming in from Health Staff have increased sharply from 287 to 663 since 2019/20. Proportionately it now makes up 41.7% of the overall total (up from 29.9% in

2019/20). The biggest rise in numbers has come in the 'Primary / Community Health' group where referrals have risen over the year by 13.9% when looking at the proportion overall.

Other Sources of Referral over the year have increased by 3.2% this year and now make up 35.2% of the overall total. As a proportion of those in this category by far the biggest rise has been in the Police where the overall proportion has risen by 13% to now make up 21.7% of the overall total (up from 8.8%) which is due to a lot more referrals being received during the Covid-19 pandemic over the last year.

Also due to the lockdowns the numbers of referrals from out in the community have fallen by about 9% with the biggest drop being seen in those referrals from family members (down 6.7%) since 2019/20.

**Table 2 - Safeguarding Concerns by Referral Source over past 2 Years since 2019/20**

	Referrals	2019/20	2020/21
Social Care Staff	<b>Social Care Staff total (CASSR &amp; Independent)</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>294</b>
	Domiciliary Staff	81	75
	Residential/ Nursing Care Staff	68	86
	Day Care Staff	0	0
	Social Worker/ Care Manager	84	49
	Self-Directed Care Staff	0	1
	Other	77	83
Health Staff	<b>Health Staff - Total</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>663</b>
	Primary/ Community Health Staff	83	358
	Secondary Health Staff	159	226
	Mental Health Staff	45	79
Other sources of referral	<b>Other Sources of Referral - Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>559</b>
	Self-Referral	41	37
	Family member	115	85
	Friend/ Neighbour	22	24
	Other service user	0	0
	Care Quality Commission	3	4
	Housing	45	68
	Education/ Training/ Workplace Establishment	3	1
	Police	84	345
	Other	50	68
	<b>Total</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1589</b>

## Individuals with Safeguarding Enquiries

### Age Group and Gender

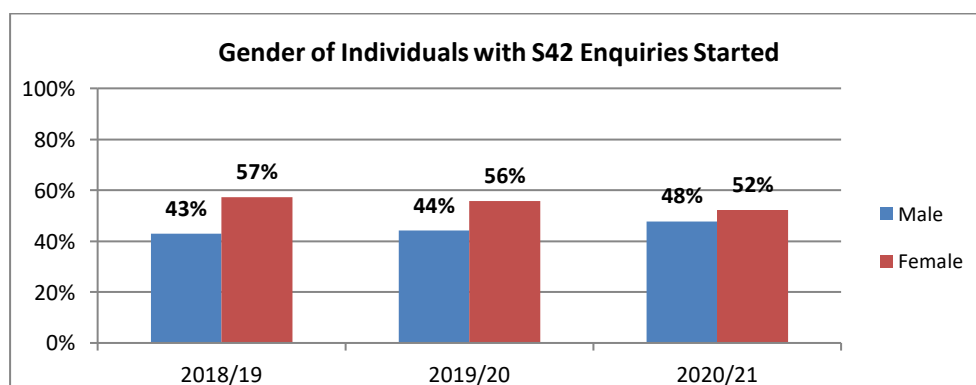
Table 3 shows the breakdown by age group for individuals who had a safeguarding enquiry started in the last 3 years. Most enquiries continue to relate to the 65 and over age group which accounted for 56% of enquiries in 2020/21 which is slightly lower than last year (was at 58% for 2019/20). Between the ages of 65 and 84 the older the individual becomes the more enquiries are raised. Overall most age groups have stayed consistent over the past year.

**Table 3 – Age Group of Individuals with Safeguarding s42 Enquiries over past 3 Years since 2018/19**

Age band	2018-19	% of total	2019-20	% of total	2020-21	% of total
18-64	191	42%	194	42%	191	44%
65-74	66	14%	67	15%	68	16%
75-84	91	20%	99	21%	82	19%
85-94	93	20%	86	19%	76	17%
95+	17	4%	16	3%	18	4%
Age unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Grand total	458		462		435	

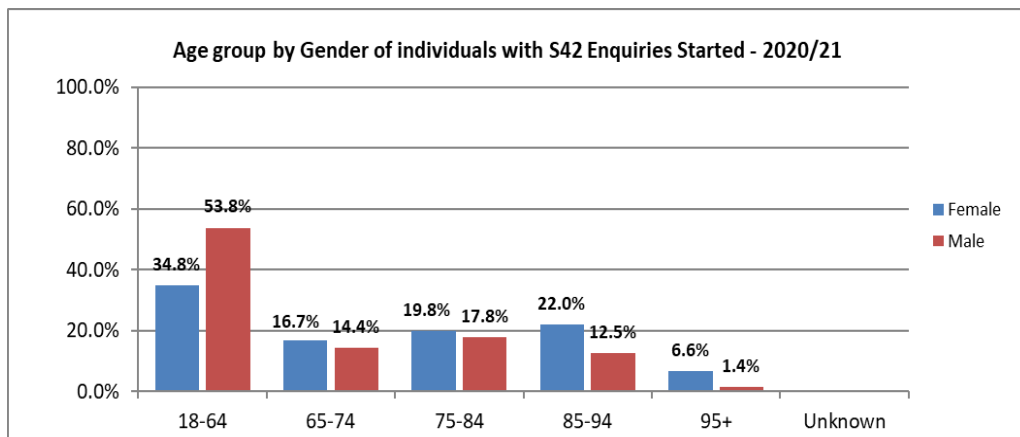
In terms of the gender breakdown there are still more females with enquiries than males (52% compared to 48% for 2020/21) although the gap between the two has narrowed significantly over the past 3 years.

**Figure 2 – Gender of individuals with safeguarding enquiries over past 3 years**



When looking at age and gender together for 2020/21 the number of females with enquiries is larger and increases in comparison to Males in every age group over the age of 65. It is especially high comparatively in the 85-94 (Females – 22% and Males – 12.5%) and the 95+ age groups (Females – 6.6% and Males – 1.4%). For Males there is a larger proportion in the 18-64 group which makes up 53.8% of that total whereas the proportion is only 34.8% for the females in that group. This is shown below in Figure 3.

**Figure 3 – Age group and gender of individuals with safeguarding s42 enquiries**



**Ethnicity**

80% of individuals involved in s42 enquiries for 2020/21 who identified themselves as of a white ethnicity with the next biggest groups being those who identified themselves as black or black British (8%) and Asian or asian british (ethnicity 6.7%).

Figure 4 shows the ethnicity breakdown.

**Figure 4 – Ethnicity of individuals involved in started safeguarding enquiries**

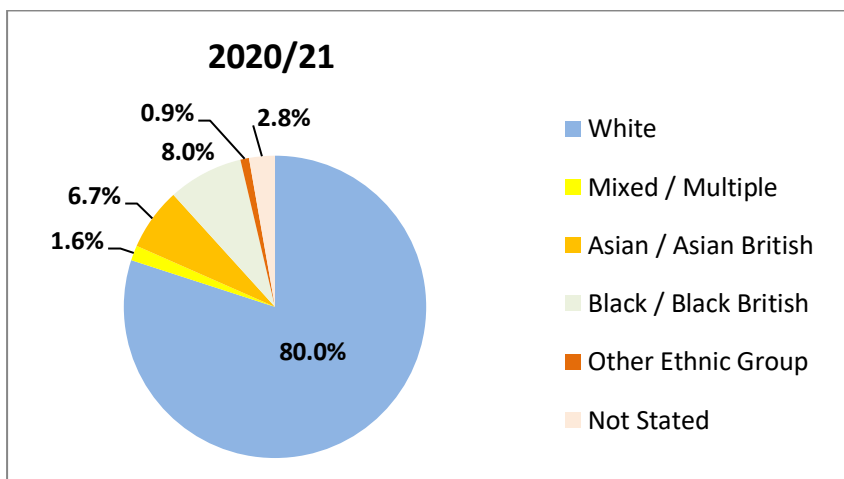


Table 4 shows the ethnicity split for the whole population of Reading compared to England based on the ONS Census 2011 data along with the % of s42 Enquiries for 2019/20 compared to 2020/21. Any Enquiries where the ethnicity was not stated have been excluded from this data in order to be able to compare all the breakdowns accurately.



**Table 4 – Ethnicity of Reading Population / Safeguarding s42 Enquiries over 2 Years since 2019/20**

Ethnic group	% of whole Reading population (ONS Census 2011 data) *	% of whole England population (ONS Census 2011 data) *	% of Safeguarding s42 Enquiries 2019/20	% of Safeguarding s42 Enquiries 2020/21
White	74.8%	85.6%	85.2%	82.3%
Mixed	3.9%	2.3%	2.2%	1.7%
Asian or Asian	12.6%	7.0%	4.7%	6.9%
Black or Black	7.7%	3.4%	7.2%	8.3%
Other Ethnic group	1.0%	1.7%	0.7%	0.9%

The numbers above suggest individuals with a white ethnicity are more likely to be referred to safeguarding. Their proportions are much higher than for the whole Reading population although they are now lower than the England population from the 2011 census data.

It also especially shows that those individuals of an asian or asian british ethnicity are less likely to be engaged in the process especially at a local level even though the proportion for this group has risen for this year and is more in line with the national census figure. Once again, the 'Black or Black British' ethnicity group is more comparable to the local picture and is higher than that at a national level.

### **Primary Support Reason**

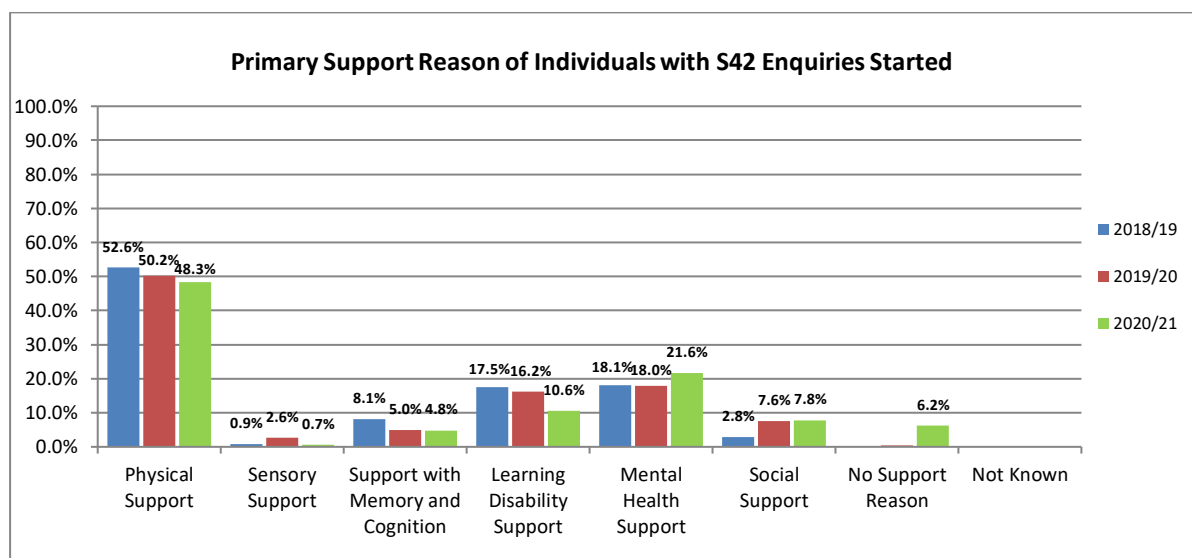
This is the classification that helps understand the reasons why people need support from a Local Authority. Data collection at a national level uses these categories.

Figure 5 shows the breakdown of individuals who had a safeguarding enquiry started by Primary Support Reason (PSR). The largest number of individuals in 2020/21 had a PSR of 'Physical Support' (48.3%) which has seen a decrease in its proportion of 1.9% over the year.

Learning Disability Support has fallen sharply this year by 5.6% (from 16.2% in 2019/20 to 10.6% in 2020/21) whereas the Mental Health Support group has risen by 3.6% (up from 18% in 2019/20 to 21.6% in 2020/21).

For 2020/21 the number of those individuals with No Support Reason has increased by 6.2% due to more robust and accurate recording within the authority.

**Figure 5 – Primary Support Reason for Individuals with Safeguarding s42 Enquiry over past 3 years**



## Case Details for Concluded S42 Enquiries

### Type of Alleged Abuse

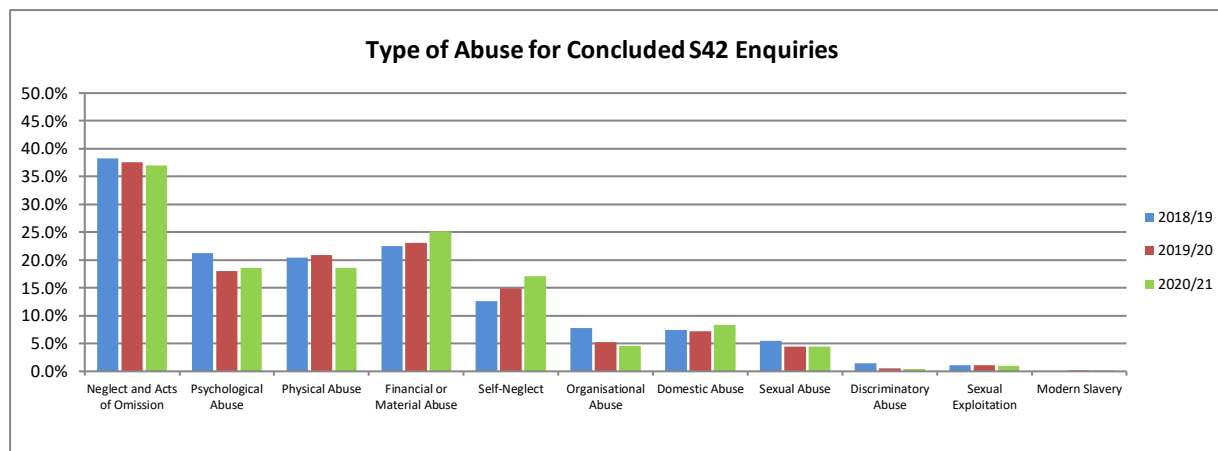
Table 5 and Figure 6 show concluded enquiries by type of alleged abuse over the last three years. An additional 4 abuse types (\*) were added in the 2015/16 return.

The most common types of abuse for 2020/21 were for Neglect and Acts of Omission (37.0%), Financial or Material Abuse (25.1%) and Physical Abuse and Psychological Abuse (both 18.6%). Self-Neglect and Financial or Material Abuse saw the largest proportionate increases (up 2.3% and 2.0% respectively) with 'Domestic Abuse' slightly rising also (up 1.1%).

**Table 5 – Concluded Safeguarding s42 Enquiries by Type of Abuse over past 3 Years since 2018/19**

Concluded enquiries	2018/19	%	2019/20	%	2020/21	%
Neglect and Acts of Omission	236	38.3%	202	37.6%	177	37.0%
Psychological Abuse	131	21.3%	97	18.1%	89	18.6%
Physical Abuse	126	20.5%	112	20.9%	89	18.6%
Financial or Material Abuse	139	22.6%	124	23.1%	120	25.1%
Self-Neglect *	78	12.7%	80	14.9%	82	17.2%
Organisational Abuse	48	7.8%	28	5.2%	22	4.6%
Domestic Abuse *	46	7.5%	39	7.3%	40	8.4%
Sexual Abuse	34	5.5%	24	4.5%	21	4.4%
Discriminatory Abuse	9	1.5%	3	0.6%	2	0.4%
Sexual Exploitation *	7	1.1%	6	1.1%	5	1.0%
Modern Slavery *	0	0%	1	0.2%	1	0.2%

**Figure 6 – Type of Alleged Abuse over past 3 Years since 2018/19**



### Location of Alleged Abuse

Table 6 shows concluded enquiries by location of alleged abuse over the last two years only.

Still by far the most common location where the alleged abuse took place for Reading residents has been the individuals own home (71.8% in 2020/21) which has seen a 4.2% increase proportionately compared to last year. Those in care homes have seen a fall by 2.2% overall (a fall of 4% in the Care Home – Residential location but a rise of 1.8% in the Care Home – Nursing location). Those in a Hospital location have also fallen 1.3% over the year. For those in a Community Service there has also been a 1.8% fall in the numbers.

**Table 6 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Abuse Location Type over past 2 Years since 2019/20**

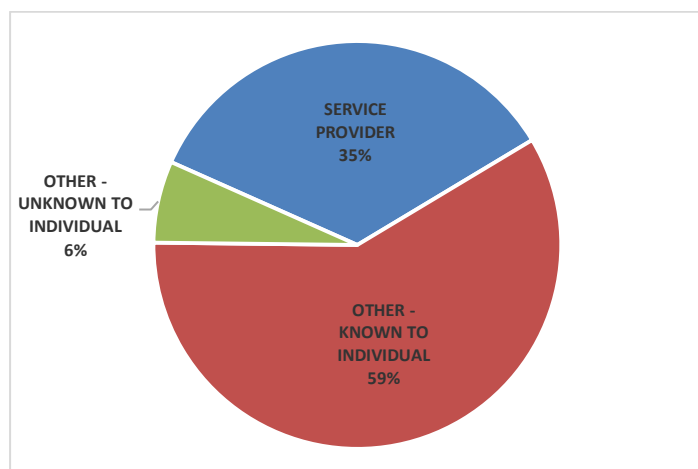
Location of abuse	2019-20	% of total	2020-21	% of total
Care Home – Nursing	25	4.7%	31	6.5%
Care Home – Residential	42	7.8%	18	3.8%
Own Home	363	67.6%	343	71.8%
Hospital – Acute	21	3.9%	15	3.1%
Hospital – Mental Health	18	3.4%	12	2.5%
Hospital – Community	2	0.4%	4	0.8%
In a Community Service	12	2.2%	2	0.4%
In Community (exc Comm Svs)	40	7.4%	38	7.9%
Other	14	2.6%	15	3.1%

### Source of Risk

59% of concluded enquiries (up 1% on 2019/20) involved a source of risk 'Known to the Individual' whereas those that were 'Unknown to the Individual' only make up 6.0% (up 1% on 2019/20). The 'Service Provider' category which was formerly known as 'Social Care Support'

refers to any individual or organisation paid, contracted or commissioned to provide social care. This makes up 35% of the total (down 2% on 2019/20). This is shown below in Figure 7.

**Figure 7 – Concluded Enquiries by Source of Risk 2020/21**



### Action Taken and Result

Table 7 below shows concluded enquiries by action taken and the results for the last three years whereas Figure 8 compares the last 2 years directly in terms of the concluded enquiry outcomes.

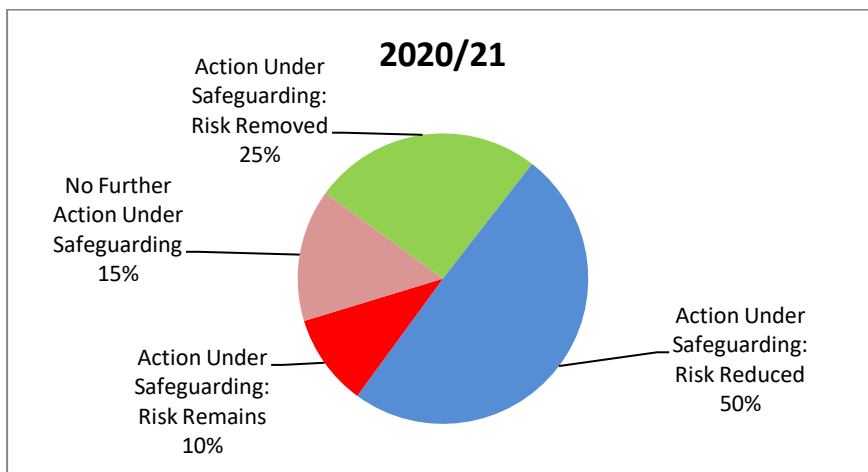
In 2020/21 the data has changed significantly again due to the outcomes of concluded enquiries being looked at closely for the current year and the rise in inappropriate concerns. As a result, those with 'No Further Action' have increased back up to 20% of all concluded enquiries (was 15% of the total in 2019/20).

The risk was 'Reduced' or 'Removed' in 75% of concluded enquiries in 2019/20 whereas this has decreased to 71% of the total in 2020/21. Of those there was an 4% fall in those where a 'Risk Removed' outcome was recorded. There are occasions when we will have mitigated the risks as far as possible and that we remain engaged with the individual, however the risk has not been eradicated but they are still living in the community. We will continue to work in partnership with the individual and other agencies to manage these risks where we are able to.

**Table 7 – Concluded Enquiries by Action Taken and Result over past 3 Years since 2018/19**

Result	2018-19	% of total	2019-20	% of total	2020-21	% of total
Action Under Safeguarding: Risk Removed	113	18%	137	25%	102	21%
Action Under Safeguarding: Risk Reduced	336	55%	266	50%	237	50%
Action Under Safeguarding: Risk Remains	43	7%	55	10%	44	9%
No Further Action Under Safeguarding	124	20%	79	15%	95	20%
<b>Total Concluded Enquiries</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 8 – Concluded Enquiries by Result**

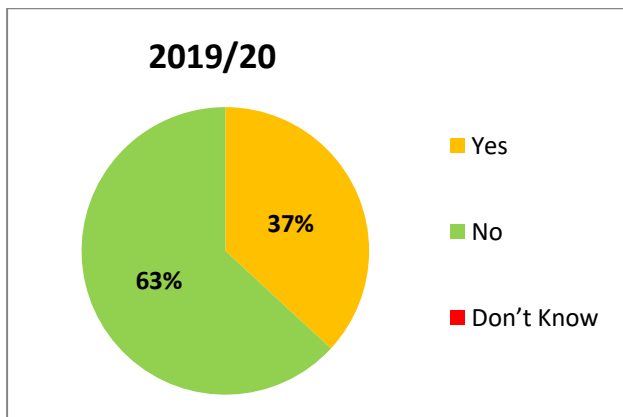


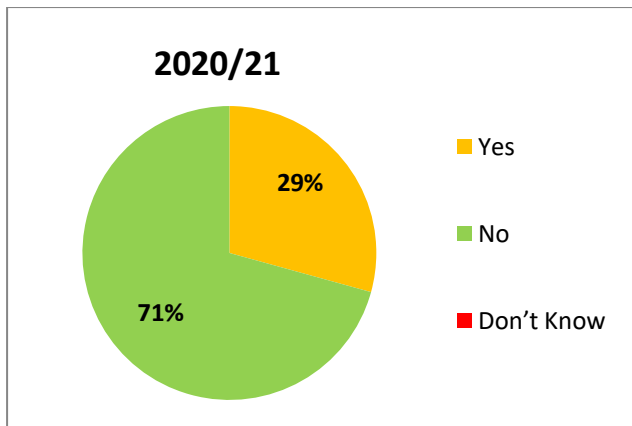
## Mental Capacity

Figure 9 shows the breakdown of mental capacity for concluded enquiries over the past 2 years since 2019/20 and shows if they lacked capacity at the time of the enquiry.

The data shows that over this year those that lacked capacity has decreased by 8%. Over the past 2 years those concluded enquiries where mental capacity was not fully identified have been reduced to zero as work has been completed to ensure capacity is always considered during the enquiry process.

**Figure 9 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Mental Capacity over past 2 Years since 2019/20**



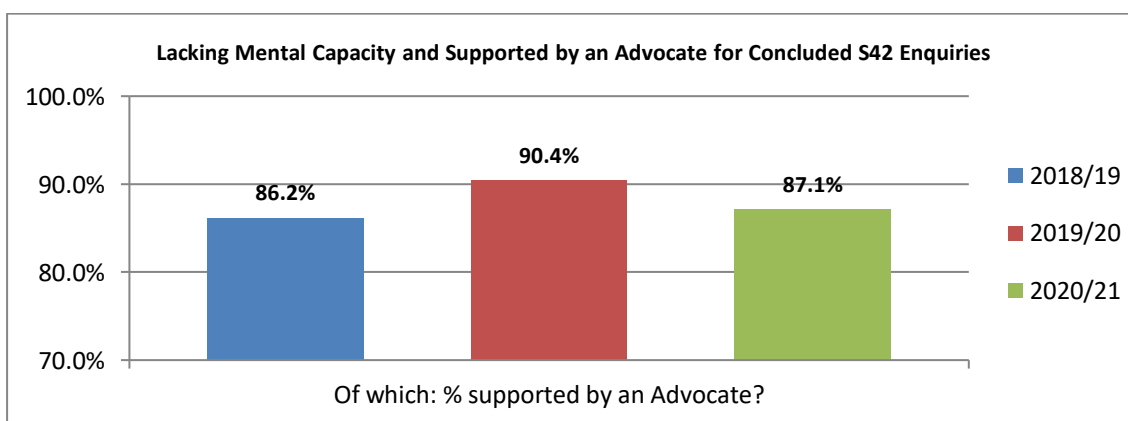


Of those 140 concluded enquiries where the person involved was identified as lacking capacity during 2020/21 there has been a 3.3% drop in those supported by an advocate, family or friend than in the previous years (down to 87.1%). Table 8 and Figure 10 show how the numbers and proportion had risen last year but had fallen again down to a slightly higher level than was seen in 2018/19.

**Table 8 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Mental Capacity over past 3 Years since 2018/19**

Lacking Capacity to make Decisions?	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Yes	195	198	140
<i>Of which: how many supported by an Advocate?</i>	168	179	122
<i>Of which: % supported by an Advocate?</i>	86.2%	90.4%	87.1%

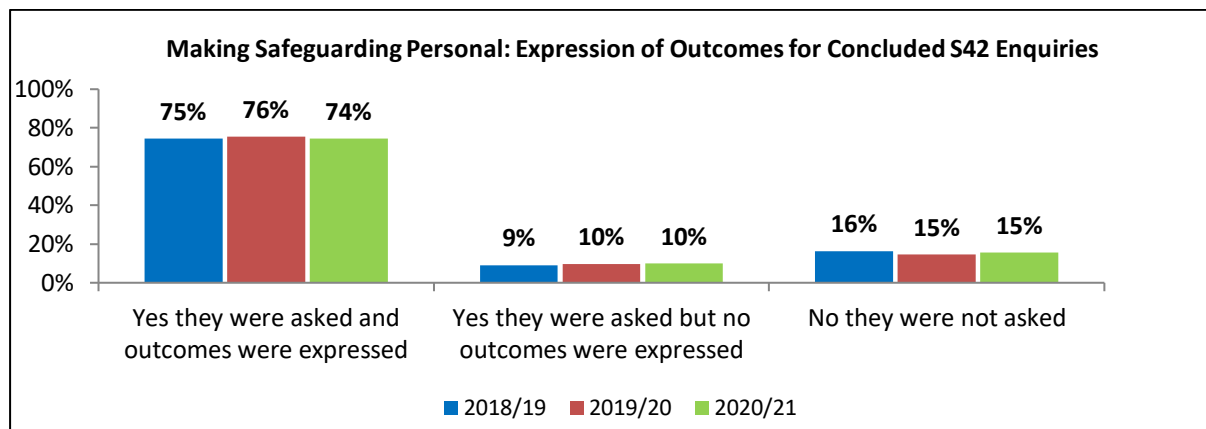
**Figure 10 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by mental capacity over past 3 years**



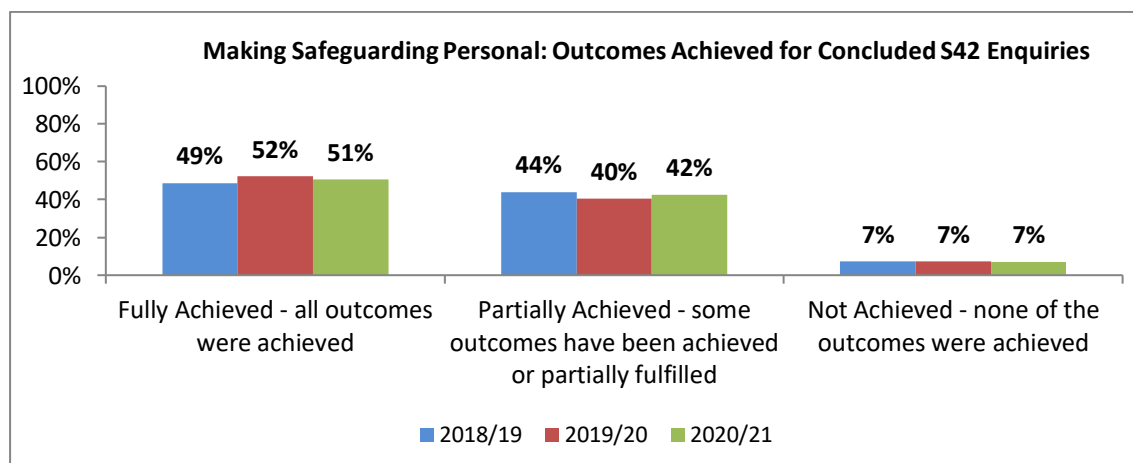
## Making Safeguarding Personal

As at year end, 84% of all service users for whom there was a concluded case were asked about the outcomes they desired (either directly or through a representative) although 10% of those did not express an opinion on what they wanted their outcome to be (in 2019/20 this figure was 86% of which 10% did not express what they wanted their outcomes to be when asked). This is shown below in Figure 11.

**Figure 11 – Concluded Enquiries by Expression of Outcome over past 3 Years since 2018/19**



**Figure 12 – Concluded Enquiries by Expressed Outcomes Achieved over past 3 Years since 2018/19**



Of those who were asked and expressed a desired outcome, there has been a slight decrease of 1% (from 52% in 2019/20 to 51% in 2020/21) for those who were able to achieve those outcomes fully, as a result of intervention by safeguarding workers.

However, a further 42% in 2020/21 (up 2% since 2019/20) managed to partially achieve their stated outcomes meaning 7% did not achieve their outcomes during the year which was on a par with the figures in both of the last 2 years. This is shown above in Figure 12.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The SAB Business Plan for 2020/21 set the priorities for the partnership.

These were:

**Priority 1** – we will continue to work on outstanding actions from the 2019/20 business plan:

- Provide the partnership with the tools and framework to work effectively with people who self-neglect.
- Work collaboratively with Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Community Safety Partnerships and Health & Wellbeing Board to provide the workforce with the frameworks and tools to work with vulnerable adults who are at risk of Domestic Abuse.
- Understand the main risks to our local population regarding Targeted Exploitation and agree how best to equip the partnership to safeguarding vulnerable people against these risks.
- Understand why there has been an increase in organisational safeguarding and seek assurance from commissioners, that there are adequate preventative measures in place.

**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 business as usual tasks in order to comply with its statutory obligations, including re-establishing S42 Audits across the Local Authorities and completing SARs as per statutory requirements.

Without doubt, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the nature of the work undertaken during year 2020/21 and has impacted on the strategic progression that has been possible with the priorities.

However, the service has continued to support all SAB activity and maintained the safeguarding response throughout the pandemic, redeploying staff from other teams as necessary.

### Operational Teams

The Adult Safeguarding Team continues to undertake the screening process for all the safeguarding concerns for Reading Borough Council and the Locality Teams undertake most of the section 42 enquiries.

There remains in place a robust oversight of all section 42 enquiries by managers.



There have been bite size learning events with managers regarding key aspects of the safeguarding process where it has been identified through consultation with managers that they felt the necessity for greater clarity.

## **Service Development**

### **Hoarding and Self Neglect**

Adult Social Care during the Covid-19 Pandemic noted that individuals who needed help to address their hoarding and self-neglect were reported when their situation had often become acute. The challenges for all professionals during the pandemic were that because of reduced interaction in the community these cases were not identified until a later stage. The impact of hoarding and self-neglect can be significant and risks which are associated with the condition may include:

- Delays in hospital discharge and associated additional costs of 'bed-blocking'.
- Fire hazards.
- Poor physical and mental health.
- The potential for safeguarding concerns to be raised.
- The potential for individuals presenting on multiple occasions to services – the revolving door scenario.

This created ongoing challenges for all agencies working alongside Adult Social Care, which resulted in reaching an agreement to produce a hoarding and self-neglect local procedure and pathway for the residents of Reading Borough Council.

Adult Social Care identified that there were opportunities to apply for a hoarding grant and were successful in securing funding of £58,030 from the Social Impact Voluntary and Community Grant. The grant which Reading Borough Council have been awarded will be used to develop a multi-agency hoarding and self-neglect procedure and pathway.

### **Aims of the Project**

- Provide practical and emotional support to people who hoard/self-neglect.
- Research to identify how best to support people with self-neglect or hoarding tendencies in the community and ensure interventions and support meet longer term needs.
- Establish a multi-agency network to provide a joint and joined-up approach
- Establish integrated pathways and a multiagency "panel" with safeguarding leads to support with risk management and interventions.
- Set up a framework in collaboration with participating agencies and using service users views and experiences of service users involved.
- Educate statutory and voluntary agencies on hoarding and self-neglect, raise awareness and impact on wellbeing.

### **Expected benefits for the target group**

- Promoted independence and support for a group of people who often refuse support and are hard to engage.
- Increase access to services to support mental wellbeing, reduce social isolation and stigma.
- Increased access to community and health services
- Prevent crisis and hospital admissions through preventative work

- Enabling people to stay healthy and active in their community and at home

### **Research aims**

To use qualitative research methods to gain an understanding of the service users experience of our service. This will guide future service development for this group.

The funding identified will include:

- Lead Practitioner for 9 months to run the project .
- Specialist training and service development support will be offered from Hoarding UK.
- Development of “Train the Trainer” in order to ensure a consistent high level of expertise in this area of work.
- Workshops to review the existing Hoarding pathways and services with all agencies across Reading.
- Development of a Reading hoarding and self-neglect procedure/pathway for all partner agencies involved in delivering services in Reading.
- Focus groups with service users to understand how Reading Borough Council can support them through the process, what worked well and changes they feel would be beneficial in their journey.

### **Section 42 provider enquiry template**

There was in existence a section 42 provider enquiry template that was primarily being used for GP’s to respond to Adult Social Care with information to assist in the section 42 enquiry. A staff survey highlighted that it was not being consistently used across the service and feedback demonstrated the need for clarity regarding the content of the document and which external professionals should be completing the form.

A review of the safeguarding process highlighted the need for consistency of approach to gathering information from providers as part of the section 42 enquiry. The inconsistency of approach resulted in lack of accountability by some providers, difficulties in identifying the feedback by providers in Mosaic with defined outcomes and the learning. Unclear timeframes for the enquiry to be completed which resulted in some drift. All of this resulted in the need to ensure that a coherent and consistent approach to all section 42 enquiries was adopted across all provider organisations.

The decision about how best to approach an enquiry is made by the Local Authority. Under Section 45 of the Care Act, any professional or organisation asked to co-operate in the enquiry has a duty to do so.

Where the approach involves another professional or organisation making enquiries, the Local Authority remains the lead agency, with responsibility for monitoring progress of enquiries made by others and coordinating the safeguarding process.

- The specific enquiries to be made
- Who has been allocated which enquiry?
- The timeframe within which the enquiry must be made

A group of Safeguarding Leads worked together to update the template, and this culminated in the relaunch in November 2020 of the Section 42 enquiry provider template.

A review took place in the Spring of 2021 regarding the implementation and use of the template. Feedback from staff and providers was positive and the template is now consistently used.

### **Safeguarding Concerns – working alongside partners**

An audit of Safeguarding Concerns being sent to the Safeguarding Team was undertaken by the Safeguarding Senior Manager. It identified several themes in respect of the interpretation of Care and Support needs, what constitutes a safeguarding concern and appropriate pathways for individuals who are experiencing a mental health episode. This work sat alongside the launch of the West Berkshire Safeguarding Guidance document which supports professionals in making decisions to refer a safeguarding concern to the appropriate Safeguarding Team.

A programme of work was identified to address these issues with external partners, and this resulted in working alongside Thames Valley Police to address the emerging themes.

Over a 2-day period auditing of TVP safeguarding concerns took place which identified a total of 15 safeguarding concerns that Thames Valley Police had sent to the team which clearly demonstrated that the two agencies needed to work closely together to ensure that the right professionals received the right information at the right time. It was a collaborative approach and has resulted in the development of a Power Point presentation by the police for police officers to enhance their knowledge and skills in respect of adult safeguarding. This will be implemented over the coming months with input from the managers within the Safeguarding Team.

It is the intention of the managers involved with this collaboration to undertake further audits at the end of the year examine what differences there have been with the quality of the safeguarding concern post the workshops, and to continue to support police officers to understand their role in referring a safeguarding concern to Reading Borough Council.

### **Mental Capacity Act Training**

A review of the Mental Capacity Act Training took place, which included the themes that had arisen from Safeguarding Adult Reviews across West Berkshire. In addition, feedback from staff and managers identified the necessity to implement further training to support their professional practice. It was identified as level 2 and level 3 training.

The learning outcomes for level 2 training were as follows:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concept of capacity and incapacity
- Understand the importance of the key concepts in the context of the relevant safeguards of the mental capacity act
- Understand and apply the key principles of supporting individuals to make decisions
- Understand the requirement for undertaking formal assessments

Level 3 training leads on from level 2 training and is an opportunity for staff to come together and discuss in detail how they have applied the learning from level 2 training by using case studies.

The learning outcomes for level 3 training is as follows:

Demonstrate through case studies the learning from the level 2 training including the following aspects

- Who the Mental Capacity Act concerns?
- The Mental Capacity Act code of practice
- The five core principles of the Mental Capacity Act
- When and how to assess mental capacity
- How to make decisions in a person's best interests
- The importance of keeping good records
- What can be done within the law?
- When and how to use restraint

### **Mental Capacity Act Champions (MCA)**

It was also identified that in order to maintain a good level of knowledge and skills within the service it was helpful to identify staff who would be willing to become MCA champions and apply the principles of the Mental Capacity Act. Only staff who attended the training would be asked if they would be willing to undertake the role of an MCA champion.

The objective of the MCA champion role is to promote the correct and effective application of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) across Adult Social Care

The intention is that there will be at least one MCA Champion for each team .

MCA champions would be asked to undertake the following:

- Providing a source of basic advice of MCA to colleagues within Adult Social care

The Champions are not expected to provide legal expertise or to advise on complex matters but would be able to support colleagues in relation to matters such as:

- The general issues relating to MCA
- Promoting awareness of MCA in their team
- How to locate the MCA resources on the intranet
- Discuss in teams meeting any MCA updates
- Support other staff with guidance on completion of the MCA assessment
- Who to contact for more detailed advice (ie DoLS lead, Legal Services Team).

### **Safeguarding Consultation document**

The safeguarding consultation process and document was launched at the beginning of 2021. The document is completed by a manager within the Safeguarding Team. It is an internal recording tool and has been developed in order to ensure there is consistency in the approach to recording safeguarding consultations with staff across the service. In such situations it is a crucial recording tool which is well structured in order to ensure readability, to allow analysis and the practitioner's overview of the safeguarding concern and to follow the principles of evidence-based content. The safeguarding consultation document is recorded in accordance with the following recording principles:

- **Completeness:** all information relevant to the consultation and the adult's circumstances is documented.
- **Openness:** any adult may request access to their file at any time
- **Accuracy:** all content is accurate - facts are distinguished from opinion

The safeguarding consultation document once completed is placed within the IT system and as a stand-alone document is useful to all practitioners who are involved with the service user and will assist in feedback to referrers and evidence of actions that may need to be taken to support the individual.

## **Safeguarding Adult Reviews**

There have been no Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR's) for Reading Borough Council over the past 12 months.

Adult Social Care have reviewed their internal processes regarding SAR's and have developed robust SAR actions plans which meet internal quality assurance standards. Reading Borough Council existing SAR action plans are continually reviewed through the Adult Social Care Quality Board to ensure continued improvement in any learning.

Safeguarding training plans are reviewed to ensure mandatory training encompasses the priorities of the Safeguarding Adult Board and remain responsive to emerging findings from SARs.

Internal briefings have taken place with all staff regarding the learning from SARs across West Berkshire which not only raise awareness.

## **Unexpected/Suspicious death process**

Significant work has been undertaken across Reading Borough Council to produce procedures and support tools for all staff in implementing a robust approach to Unexpected/Suspicious deaths. It was identified as an area of work that could be challenging with what was lack of clarity regarding what constitutes an Unexpected/Suspicious death. This lack of clarity resulted in limited adherence to the Local Authorities statutory responsibilities within the Safeguarding process to consider transferrable risks. It also highlighted a risk regarding the Local Authorities statutory responsibility regarding the criteria for Adult Safeguarding Reviews which can arise from deaths of this nature. The clarity offered is as follows:

When an adult has died in unexpected/suspicious circumstances the following criteria must be applied:

- There is a suspicion, or it is known, that abuse, or neglect was a contributory factor in their death, and
- The abuse or neglect was caused by a third party.

Several workshops took place with managers to launch the procedures and templates and to facilitate an opportunity to discuss in detail the practical aspects of the process and to allow them time to understand their responsibilities as a manager.

Reading Borough Council have implemented an action log of all Unexpected/Suspicious deaths which is overseen by the Safeguarding Locality Manager. Its function is to capture all the vital information and actions taken. It also highlights emerging themes which are addressed through task and finish groups. The action log is brought to the Adult Social Care Quality Board to be reviewed and identify any action required.

## IMPROVING THE FUTURE OF SAFEGUARDING ADULTS IN READING

The aspiration for 2021/2022 will be to:

We will continue to support partners with their understanding of the thresholds for safeguarding referrals to our dedicated team and the appropriate pathways and routes for addressing support needs of vulnerable adults, who may have care and support needs.

This will enable us to seek assurance that all agencies are clear about their obligations to deliver adult safeguarding activity which prevents abuse, crime, neglect, self-neglect and exploitation.

We will continue to seek assurance that agency obligations are supported by clear processes which directly support the West Berkshire Multi- Agency Adult Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, as a model of good practice.

We will work with each other and collaborate, to maximise our multi-agency practice to reduce risk and improve lives.

We will raise public awareness about and for adults at risk; what can be done to help; how communities can raise concerns and how the work of the Board is vital for planning; assurance, oversight, transparency and accountability.

We will ensure that the voices of adults at risk are sought, heard, listened to and acted upon, and that we engage with local communities ensuring we are transparent about what we are saying we are going to do and how we will measure it.

We will seek to manage safeguarding referrals through a single point of contact.

We will progress the interface between quality assurance and safeguarding to provide a proactive response to quality concerns.

Our approach to safeguarding personal will be developed and enhanced along with partners.

We will revisit the safeguarding training pathway for staff employed by Reading Borough Council.

Our intention is to develop lead roles around specialist areas.

We will pay particular attention to understanding the context of risks for young people and introduce a transition protocol.

We will ensure all staff are conversant with any new or emerging legislation and policy in relation to safeguarding, through the appointment of a Principal Social Worker.

We will ensure SAB learning regarding self-neglect and other priority areas is fully embedded.