

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH)

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:			
TITLE:	SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD (SAB) ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR ENNIS	PORTFOLIO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SERVICE:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	JO LAPPIN	TEL:	
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	E-MAIL:	Joanne.lappin@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is responsible for leading strategic adult safeguarding arrangements and overseeing the effectiveness of the safeguarding work of member and partner agencies.

1.2. The overarching purpose of a SAB is to ensure agencies safeguard adults with care and support needs. It does this by assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements are in place, as defined by the Care Act 2014. Alongside partners, local authorities must demonstrate that:

- Safeguarding practice is person-centred and outcome focused.
- Partners are working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect where possible.
- Agencies and individuals give timely and proportionate responses when abuse or neglect has occurred.
- Safeguarding practice is continuously improving.
- The quality of life of adults in its area is enhanced.

1.3. The approach taken by Reading Borough Council to discharge its duty is threefold:

- 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 is chaired by an Independent Chair, newly appointed this year.

- In July 2022 Reading Borough Council moved to the Contact Centre being the single point of contact for receiving safeguarding concerns from partner agencies. This now means that initial screening is undertaken through one route and any concerns about adults with care and support needs who may be at risk of or experiencing abuse or neglect are then signposted to the most appropriate team.
- Reading Borough Council has a dedicated operational Safeguarding Adults Team (SAT) who undertake the role of initial screening of concerns and referrals for people who are not known to the Council; decision making as to whether the Care Act 2014 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.

1.4. The Berkshire West Annual Report 2021/22 is due for publication by the Safeguarding Adult Board. The final published report is an overarching partnership report, appended by individual organisational reports from participating partner agencies.

1.5. The Reading Borough Council's submission to the Berkshire West Annual Report 2021/22 is attached for information.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 Adults Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee to note the Report as Reading Borough Council's contribution to the Berkshire West Safeguarding Board Annual Report.

3. CONTEXT

As outlined in the report 2021/22 continued to be a challenging year for safeguarding services in Reading, in line with the national picture. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is yet to be fully realised, but the data is showing a significant increase in safeguarding concerns raised.

To manage the demand and target resources, the SAB has also taken a role in attempting to reduce the volume of referrals and concerns received which do not meet the criteria for a safeguarding response as they do not relate to any allegations of abuse or neglect. These often concern adults with care and support needs who may be in need of services or support due to poor health or vulnerability.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Current Position:

A summary of the RBC Safeguarding Performance Data is:

The number of safeguarding concerns started in year has risen significantly from 1589 in 1920/21 to 2989 in 2021/22.

The number of concerns which convert into a safeguarding enquiry has fallen to 13%, compared with 31% last year. The national average is 33.9%.

The higher number of out-of-scope concerns are particularly received from the Police and South Central Ambulance Service.

The Police have seen numbers increase as a proportion of all concerns started (up by 9%) along with those in the 'other' category (up 4%) which includes sources such as the Fire Service, Department for Work and Pensions, Berkshire Women's Aid and Age UK. It is positive that more agencies are now referring safeguarding concerns.

Concluded S42 enquiries overall have fallen by a further 19% this year, meaning that a larger number did not progress any further than the original concern.

Neglect and Acts of Omission is still the largest abuse type in the year and has risen by 2.9% (abuse type in 39.9% of cases).

There has also been a slight increase in 'Self-Neglect' cases (up 1.3%).

Even though 'Financial or Material' abuse is still one of the largest groups making up 21.4% it has seen a larger than average drop in numbers (down 3.7%).

There has been a decrease in those cases in their 'Own Home' (down 2.8%) although it still makes up 69% of all cases.

There have however been increases in alleged abuse or neglect in residential homes (up 3.8%) and acute hospital settings (up 4%) although the numbers are smaller.

Compared to Wokingham and West Berkshire we still have more cases in people's own homes and in a hospital environment (due to the proximity of the Royal Berkshire Hospital in our area) and far less in a care home setting.

4.2 Improving the Future of Safeguarding Adults in Reading

The aspiration for 2022/2023 are to:

- We will seek to manage safeguarding referrals through a single point of contact and will utilise the Council's 'front door'.
- We will engage with wider preventative programmes and link with other workstreams such as those being led by Public Health to ensure any harm from abuse and neglect is prevented.
- We will progress the interface between quality assurance and safeguarding to provide a proactive response to quality concerns. Through a restructure the team will become a Quality & Safeguarding Team, responsible for the continuum of quality and safeguarding, with an emphasis on preventing harm.

- We will continue to support partners with their understanding of the thresholds for safeguarding referrals and the appropriate pathways and routes for addressing the care and support needs of adults.
- We will ensure that the voices of adults at risk are sought, heard, listened to, and acted upon and our approach to making safeguarding personal will be developed and enhanced along with partners.
- We will revisit the safeguarding training pathway for staff employed by Reading Borough Council, particularly decision makers and we will audit compliance with safeguarding training.
- We will introduce an audit programme to ensure continuous professional practice.
- 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 direction of our Principal Social Worker.
- We will seek to undertake a programme of audits to evaluate our practice and ensure continuous improvements.
- We will review the census data to better understand and reduce any inequalities in accessing safeguarding services.
- We will ensure SAB priority areas are fully embedded.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 The SAB has set priorities for 2022/2023 to ensure adults at risk of abuse or neglect are safeguarded and has an underpinning business plan.
- 5.2 RBC will support the SAB priorities fully and these will also be reflected in the Corporate and Service Plans where relevant.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is no direct impact noted as a result of this report.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 A priority for the Board is to continue to strengthen communication and engagement across groups and communities of West Berkshire, and to ensure that plans and actions are informed by the experience of the widest range of local people.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The Local Authority, as a public body, is under a legal duty to comply with the public sector equality duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act (2010). To comply with this duty, the Council must positively seek to prevent discrimination, and protect and promote the interests of vulnerable groups. There is currently no change in the service to the residents proposed, hence an Equality Impact Assessment will not be completed at this stage.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Safeguarding Adults Board has a duty under the Care Act 2014 to publish an Annual Report, detailing how effective its work has been. The attached submission to the overall report reflects Reading Borough Council's contribution to this legal duty.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Care Act 2014 provides a power for members of the SAB to contribute towards the expenditure incurred for the purposes of its work. The work undertaken by social care and health staff for delivering a safeguarding service is provided through their core responsibilities and incorporated into the day-to-day responsibilities of all staff.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Reading Borough Council Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2021/2022.

12. APPENDIX

Safeguarding Annual Report Delivery Plan