

Supporting our futures *for* Reading

Adult Social Care  
& Wellbeing



# Safeguarding Adults Annual Report

2022-23

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#### 1. Introduction

Reading Borough Council (RBC) hosts the strategic partnership arrangement between Reading, West Berkshire and Wokingham which forms the basis of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults board which operates across the 3 local authorities along with the other statutory partners in Health and the Police. The Board manager is supported by services in Reading including some administration, IT, payroll etc and is line managed by the Assistant director (Safeguarding, Quality and Practice). The Board is led by an Independent Chair who works closely with the Board manager as an independent safeguarding expert.

RBC also has a Safeguarding Adults Team (SAT) who undertake the role of initial triage of concerns and referrals, decision making as to whether Care Act duties are required to be assessed, signposting to other services where required, and determining whether to initiate a section 42 (s42) enquiry to determine how to safeguard an individual at risk. Where an individual is already known the s42 will be referred on to the relevant team to carry out the section 42 but if the referral is not previously known, the team will carry out s42 enquiries.

## 2. Safeguarding Activity

### Concerns and Enquiries:

**Table 1** shows the safeguarding activity within Reading over the previous 3 years in terms of concerns raised, s42 enquiries opened and the conversion rates over the same period.

There were 2374 Safeguarding Concerns received in 2022/23 which is a decrease since the previous year.

**Table 1 – Safeguarding Activity for the past 3 Years since 2020/21**

Year	Safeguarding Concerns received	Safeguarding s42 Enquiries Started	Individuals who had Safeguarding s42 Enquiry Started	Conversion rate of Concern to s42 Enquiry
2020/21	1589	493	435	31%
2021/22	2969	400	335	13%
2022/23	2374	434	358	18%

434 s42 Enquiries were opened last year, with a conversion rate from concern to s42 enquiry of 18% which is still lower than both the national average (Approx. 33.9%) and the South-East average (Approx. 30.6%) for 2021/22. This makes Reading lower than the other West Berkshire authorities and with other current comparator averages such as the South-East ADASS Q4 benchmarking (Approx. 29.5%).

The conversion ratio has increased this year to date in part due to the number of concerns falling this year and due to the audit work within the Safeguarding Team and the change in process of setting up a referral step in the Call Centre to triage referrals before they are passed on to operational teams. This is especially noted in the reduction of Thames Valley Police referrals (down 17.4% of overall total) which has reduced the 'out of scope' numbers for safeguarding purposes. This is audited regularly locally, and issues are addressed with the external agencies in question.

There were 358 individuals who had an s42 Enquiry opened during 2022/23 which is an increase of 23 over the year. Enquiries have risen by 6.9% mainly because of the decrease in inappropriate concerns raised so only relevant concerns are being put through for further investigation.

### Source of Safeguarding Concerns:

As **Figure 1** shows the largest percentage of safeguarding concerns for 2022/23 were once again referred from 'Health' staff (41%) which is a rise of 2.4% over the year.

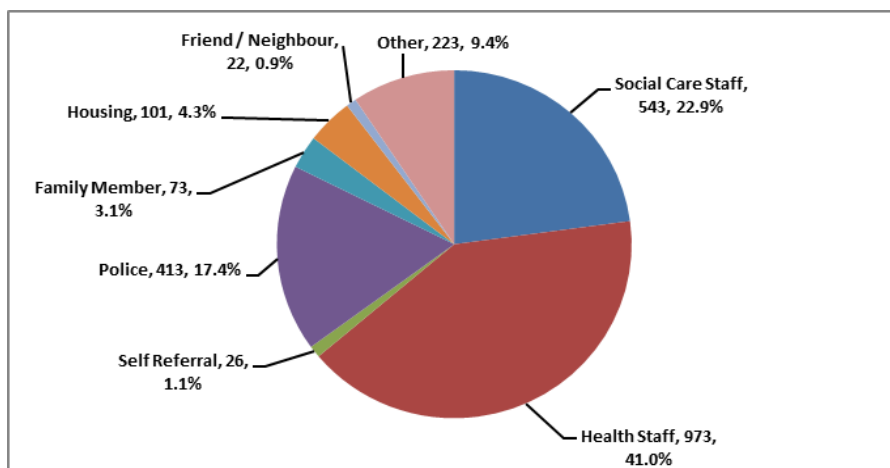
'Social Care Staff' were the next biggest source and make up 22.9% of the total which was a rise of 8.3% over the year.

The 'Police' (17.4%) whilst still the next largest source of Concerns received, has fallen by 14.2% over the period which was mentioned in the previous section.

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 - 2022/23**



**Table 2** below shows a more detailed breakdown of the number of safeguarding concerns by referral source over the past 2 years since 2021/22.

In 'Social Care' the actual numbers coming in have increased over the year by 111, so as mentioned above; this proportionately now makes this group 22.9% of the overall total (up from 14.6% in 2021/22). Most of this proportionate increase has been due to more referrals being made from 'Residential / Nursing Care Staff' (up 30%) and 'Social Worker / Care Manager' (up 62%).

Numbers of referrals coming in from 'Health Staff' have decreased from 1146 to 973 since 2021/22. Proportionately it now makes up 41% of the overall total (up from 38.6% in 2021/22).

'Other Sources of Referral' over the year now make up 26.7% of the overall total.

As a proportion of those in this category by far the biggest fall has been in the 'Police' where it dropped by 9% of the proportion of 'Other Sources of Referral'. The overall total (down 14.2%) is due to a lot less 'Out of Scope' referrals being received during and post Covid over the last year from this source.

**Table 2 - Safeguarding Concerns by Referral Source over past 2 Years since 2021/22**

	Referrals	2021/22	2022/23
	<b>Social Care Staff total (CASSR &amp; Independent)</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>543</b>
Social Care Staff	Domiciliary Staff	86	75
	Residential/ Nursing Care Staff	169	219
	Day Care Staff	0	0
	Social Worker/ Care Manager	75	122
	Self-Directed Care Staff	4	1
	Other	98	126

Health Staff	<b>Health Staff – Total</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>973</b>
	Primary/ Community Health Staff	506	331
	Secondary Health Staff	489	518
	Mental Health Staff	151	124
Other sources of referral	<b>Other Sources of Referral – Total</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>635</b>
	Self-Referral	26	26
	Family member	86	73
	Friend/ Neighbour	24	22
	Other service user	5	14
	Care Quality Commission	11	11
	Housing	62	101
	Education/ Training/ Workplace Establishment	4	4
	Police	938	413
	Other	235	194
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2969</b>	<b>2374</b>

### Individuals with Safeguarding Enquiries - Age Group and Gender

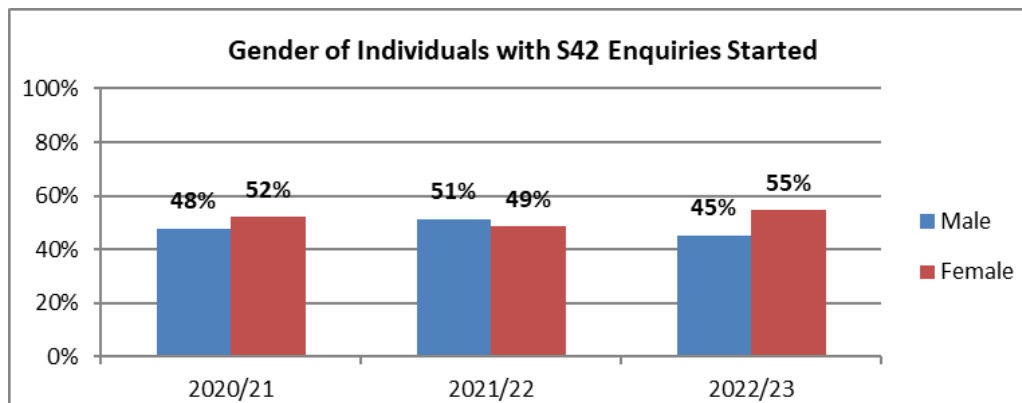
**Table 3** displays the breakdown by age group for individuals who had a safeguarding enquiry started in the last 3 years. Most enquiries continue to relate to the 65+ age group which accounted for 57% of enquiries in 2022/23 which is lower than last year (was at 61% for 2021/22). The only age group that has risen this year is the 18-64 cohort which has increased proportionately by 4% (up to 43% of total). Between the ages of 85-94 less enquiries have been raised as compared to last year where there has been a 4% overall drop in the proportion in these groups (makes up 18% of total).

**Table 3 – Age Group of Individuals with Safeguarding s42 Enquiries over past 3 Years since 2020/21**

Age band	2020/21	% of total	2021/22	% of total	2022/23	% of total
18-64	191	44%	132	39%	152	43%
65-74	68	16%	43	13%	46	13%
75-84	82	19%	72	22%	77	22%
85-94	76	17%	75	22%	66	18%
95+	18	4%	13	4%	17	4%
Age unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Grand total	435		335		358	

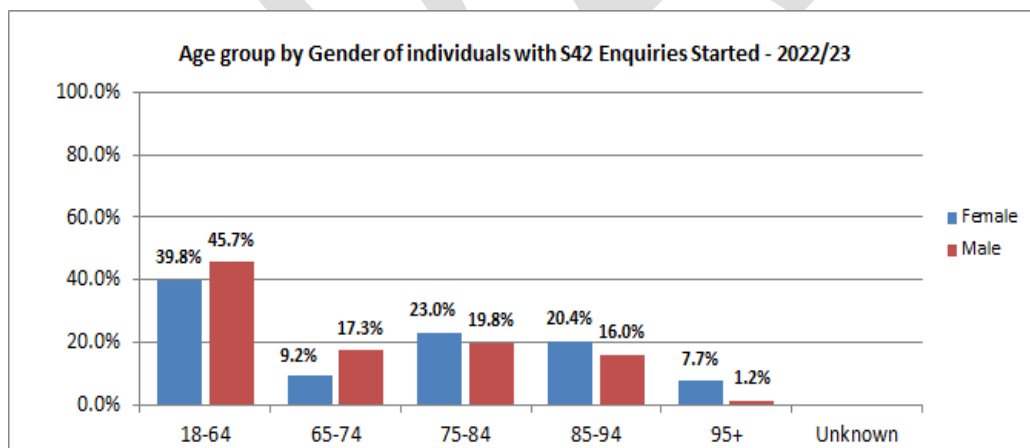
In terms of the gender breakdown there are now more Females once again with enquiries than Males (Females up 6% to 55% of the total for 2022/23). This is shown in **Figure 2** below.

**Figure 2 – Gender of Individuals with Safeguarding s42 Enquiries over past 3 Years since 2020/21**



When looking at Age and Gender together for 2022/23 the number of Males with enquiries is larger in comparison to Females in those age groups from 18 until 74. After 75 years of age the number of Males in each age group drops away. The largest proportion of enquiries is still in the 18-64 age group for both genders although Males make up 45.7% compared to Females 39.8% in that group. For Females it is noticeable that there is a small number of enquiries in the 65-74 age group with the 95+ group nearly being as large. This breakdown is all shown below in **Figure 3**.

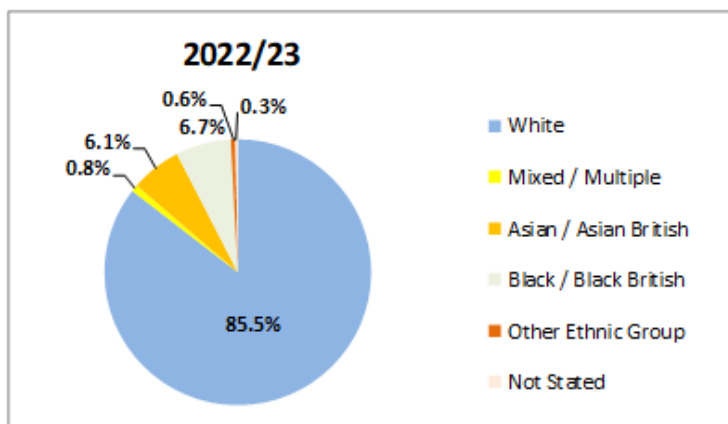
**Figure 3 – Age Group and Gender of Individuals with Safeguarding s42 Enquiries – 2022/23**



### Individuals with Safeguarding Enquiries - Ethnicity

85.5% of individuals involved in s42 enquiries for 2022/23 were of a 'White' ethnicity with the next biggest groups being 'Black or Black British' (6.7%) and 'Asian or Asian British' (6.1%). The 'White' group has increased this year (up 5.5%) along with the 'Asian or Asian British' group which has also increased by 1%. The 'Black or Black British' group has stayed more or less the same in the year whereas the 'Mixed / Multiple' group has fallen by 1.6%. Those 'Not Stated' have fallen by 4.5% over the year (down to 0.3% of the total). This Ethnicity breakdown is shown in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4 – Ethnicity of Individuals involved in Started Safeguarding s42 Enquiries - 2022/23**



**Table 4** shows the ethnicity split for the entire population of Reading compared to England based on the ONS Census 2021 data along with the % of s42 Enquiries for 2021/22 compared to 2022/23. 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 2021/22**

Ethnic group	% of whole Reading population (ONS Census 2021 data) *	% of whole England population (ONS Census 2021 data) *	% of Safeguarding s42 Enquiries 2021/22	% of Safeguarding s42 Enquiries 2022/23
White	67.2%	81.0%	84.1%	85.7%
Mixed	5.1%	3.0%	2.5%	0.8%
Asian or Asian British	17.7%	9.6%	5.3%	6.2%
Black or Black British	7.2%	4.2%	7.2%	6.7%
Other Ethnic group	2.8%	2.2%	0.9%	0.6%

The numbers above suggest individuals with a 'White' ethnicity are more likely to be referred to safeguarding. Their proportions are much higher than for both the whole Reading population and the England Population based on the 2021 Census data.

It also 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 although that figure has marginally improved this past year. Once again, the 'Black or Black British' ethnic group is more comparable to the local picture and is higher than that at a national level. The 'Mixed' group has fallen this year by 1.7% and is much lower than both Reading and national levels.

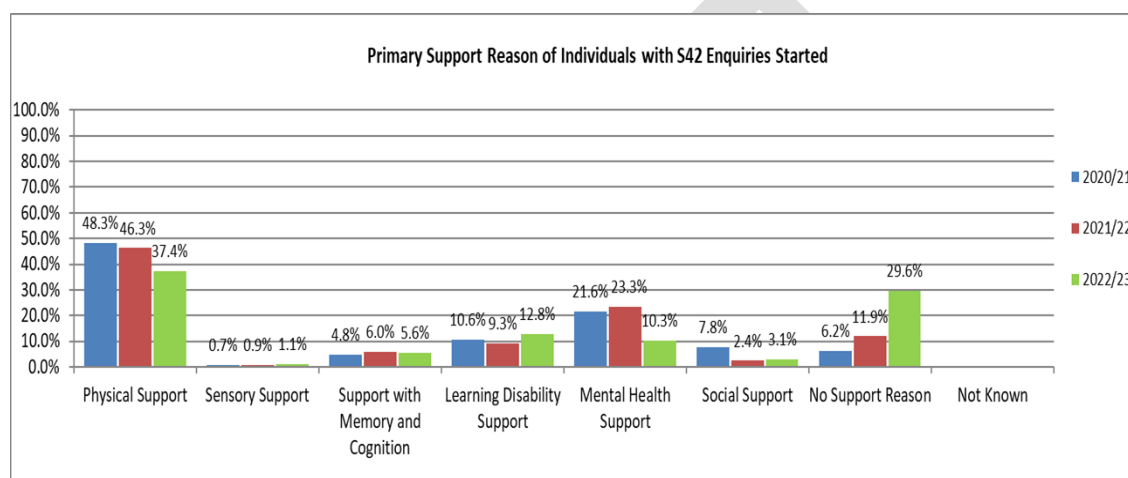
## Individuals with Safeguarding Enquiries - Primary Support Reason

**Figure 5** shows the breakdown of individuals who had a safeguarding enquiry started by Primary Support Reason (PSR). The largest number of individuals in 2022/23 had a PSR of 'Physical Support' (37.4%) although it has seen a decrease in its proportion of 8.9% over the year.

The 'Learning Disability Support' one has risen back up this year by 3.5% (from 9.3% in 2021/22 to 12.8% in 2022/23) whereas the 'Mental Health Support' group has fallen substantially by 10% (down from 23.3% in 2021/22 to 10.3% in 2022/23).

For 2022/23 the number of those individuals with 'No Support Reason' has increased by 17.7% (up to 29.6% of the total) due to more robust and accurate recording within the authority. (See Table C in Appendix A for actual data).

**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 2022/23 were for 'Neglect and Acts of Omission' (41.2%), 'Financial or Material Abuse' (18.9%) and 'Self Neglect' (18.9%).

'Neglect and Acts of Omission' and 'Sexual Abuse' saw the largest proportionate increases (up 1.3% and 1.7% respectively) with 'Physical Abuse' falling the most (down 7.3%).

'Domestic Abuse' cases also dropped this year by 3.5% although the actual numbers are lower than some other categories.

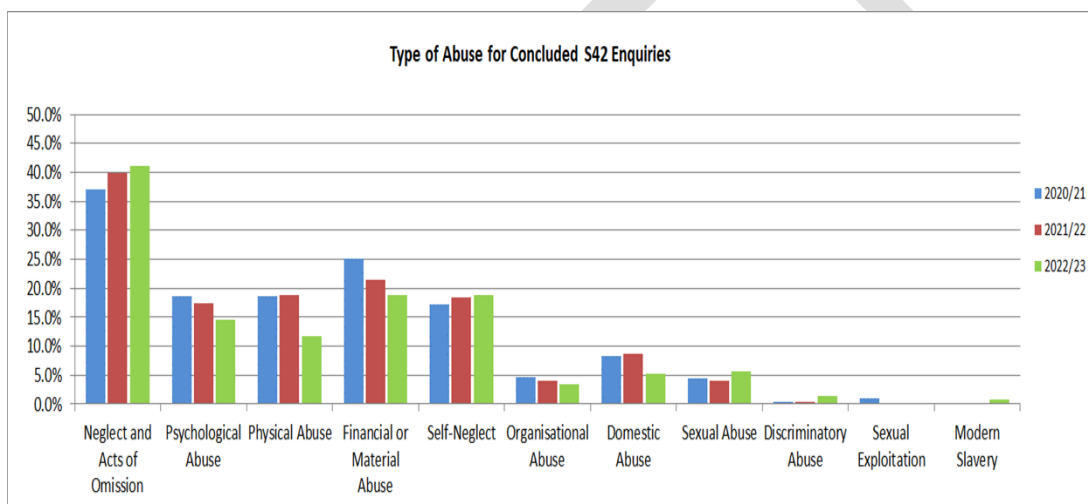
**Table 5 – Concluded Safeguarding s42 Enquiries by Type of Abuse over past 3 Years since 2020/21**

Concluded enquiries	2020/21	%	2021/22	%	2022/23	%
Neglect and Acts of Omission	177	37.0%	179	39.9%	166	41.2%
Psychological Abuse	89	18.6%	78	17.4%	59	14.6%
Physical Abuse	89	18.6%	85	18.9%	47	11.7%



Financial or Material Abuse	120	25.1%	96	21.4%	76	18.9%
Self-Neglect *	82	17.2%	83	18.5%	76	18.9%
Organisational Abuse	22	4.6%	18	4.0%	14	3.5%
Domestic Abuse *	40	8.4%	39	8.7%	21	5.2%
Sexual Abuse	21	4.4%	18	4.0%	23	5.7%
Discriminatory Abuse	2	0.4%	2	0.4%	6	1.5%
Sexual Exploitation *	5	1.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Modern Slavery *	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	3	0.7%

**Figure 6 – Type of Alleged Abuse over past 3 Years since 2020/21**



### Case details for Concluded s42 Enquiries - 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 clients has been the individuals 'Own Home' (68.5% in 2022/23) which is at the same level proportionately compared to last year. Those in 'Care Homes' have also stayed stable overall (a fall of 0.2% in the 'Care Home – Nursing' location and a rise of 0.3% in the 'Care Home – Residential' location). Those in a 'Hospital' location have fallen by 2.2% over the year which is due to marginal drops in both 'Mental Health' and 'Acute' Hospital locations.

**Table 6 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Abuse Location Type over past 2 Years since 2021/22**

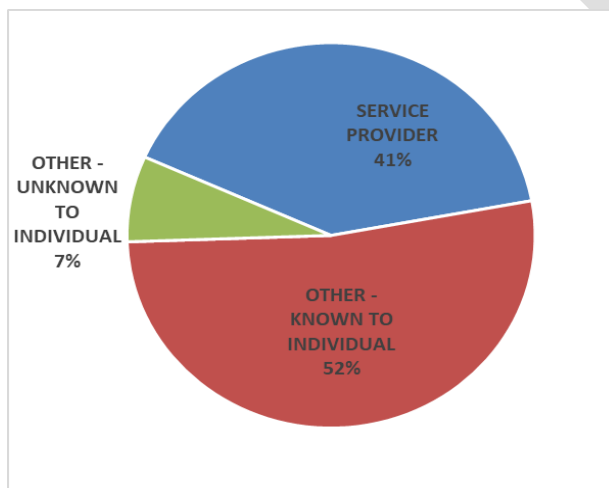
Location of abuse	2021/22	% of total	2022/23	% of total
Care Home - Nursing	22	4.9%	19	4.7%
Care Home - Residential	34	7.6%	32	7.9%
Own Home	310	69%	276	68.5%

Hospital - Acute	32	7.1%	23	5.7%
Hospital – Mental Health	14	3.1%	7	1.7%
Hospital - Community	2	0.4%	4	1.0%
In a Community Service	3	0.7%	4	1%
In Community (exc Comm Svs)	18	4.0%	17	4.2%
Other	14	3.1%	21	5.2%

### Case details for Concluded s42 Enquiries - Source of Risk

52% of concluded enquiries (down 6% on 2021/22) involved a source of risk 'Known to the Individual' whereas those that were 'Unknown to the Individual' only make up 7.0% (up 1% since 2021/22). 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 41% of the total (up 5% on 2021/22). This is shown below in **Figure 7**.

**Figure 7 – Concluded Enquiries by Source of Risk 2022/23**



### Case details for Concluded s42 Enquiries – 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 2022/23 even though there were less 'Out of Scope' concerns coming through because of more robust recording and initial investigation processes, the number with 'No Further Action' has increased 6% as a proportion of all concluded enquiries (was 16% of the total in 2021/22).

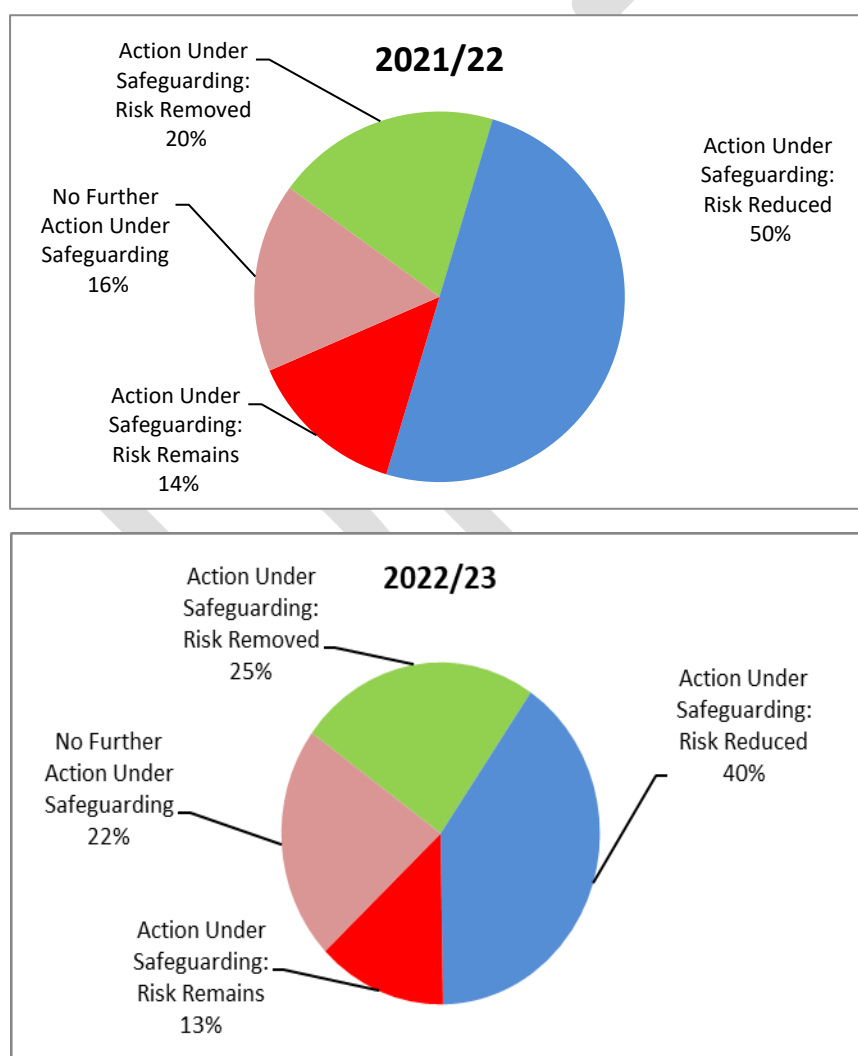
The risk was 'Reduced' or 'Removed' in 70% of concluded enquiries in 2021/22 whereas this has decreased to 65% of the total in 2022/23, although those with a 'Risk Removed' has risen by 5%. Those where a 'Risk Remains' has decreased slightly by 1%.

**Table 7 – Concluded Enquiries by Action Taken and Result over past 3 Years since 2020/21**

Result	2020/21	% of total	2021/22	% of total	2022/23	% of total
	1		2		3	

Action Under Safeguarding: Risk Removed	102	21%	88	20%	99	25%
Action Under Safeguarding: Risk Reduced	237	50%	224	50%	162	40%
Action Under Safeguarding: Risk Remains	44	9%	62	14%	53	13%
No Further Action Under Safeguarding	95	20%	74	16%	89	22%
<b>Total Concluded Enquiries</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 8 – Concluded Enquiries by Result, 2021/22 and 2022/23**

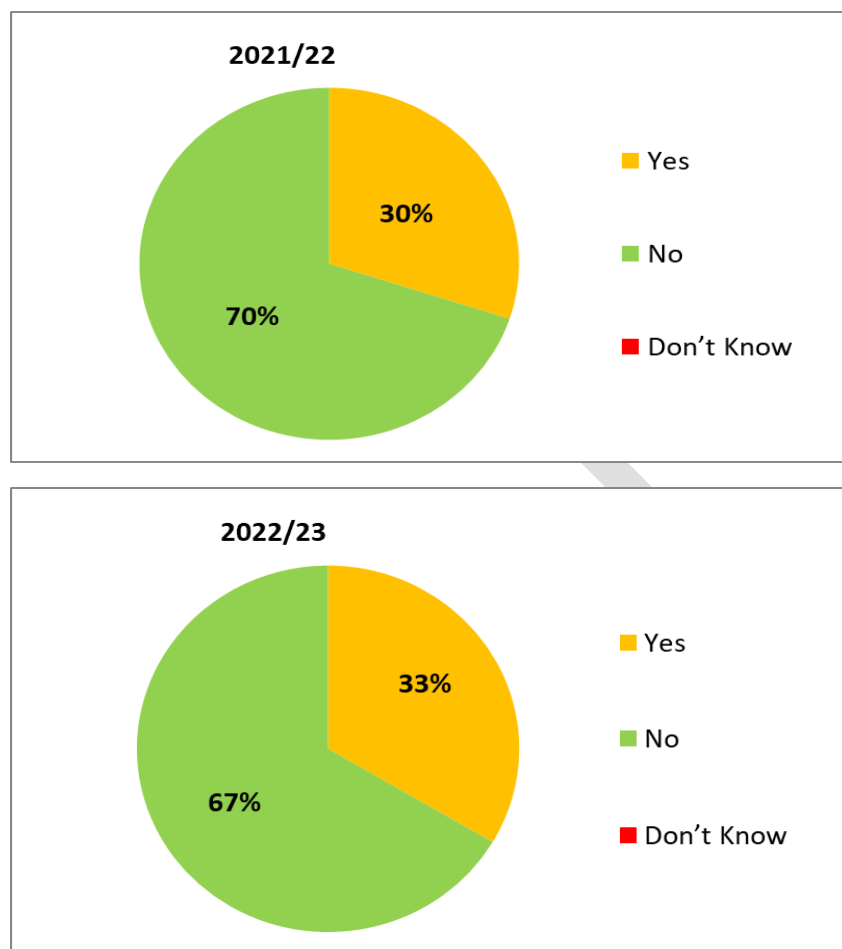


### Case details for Concluded s42 Enquiries – Mental Capacity

**Figure 9** shows the breakdown of mental capacity for concluded enquiries over the past 2 years since 2021/22 and shows if they lacked capacity at the time of the enquiry.

The data shows that over this year those that lacked capacity has increased by 3%. Over the past 2 years those concluded enquiries where the Mental Capacity was not fully identified have been reduced to zero as work has been completed to make sure capacity is always considered during the enquiry process.

**Figure 9 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Mental Capacity over past 2 Years since 2021/22**

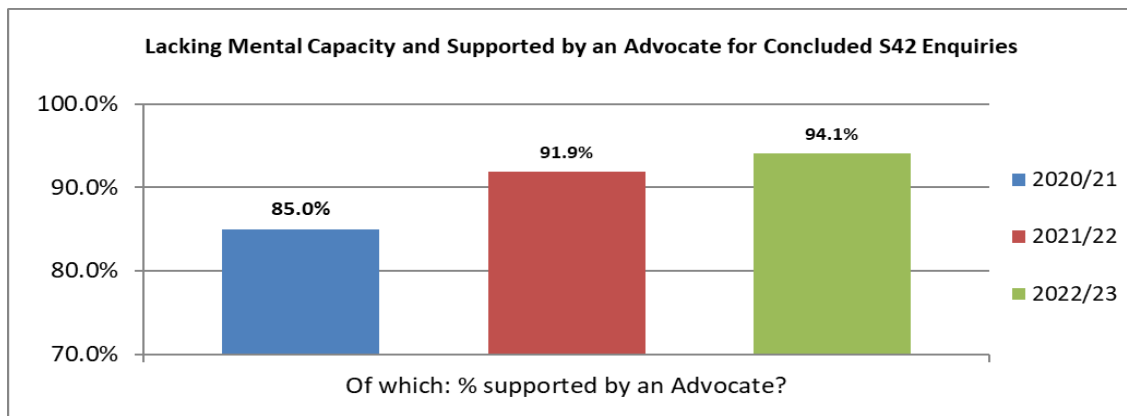


Of those 135 concluded enquiries where the person involved was identified as lacking capacity during 2022/23 there has been a 2.2% rise in those supported by an advocate, family, or friend than in the previous years (up to 94.1%). **Table 8** and **Figure 10** show how the numbers and proportion have risen again for a second year running which is a rise of 9.1% since 2020/21 for all those identified as lacking capacity.

**Table 8 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Mental Capacity over past 3 Years since 2020/21**

<b>Lacking Capacity to make Decisions?</b>	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Yes	140	135	135
<i>Of which: how many supported by an Advocate?</i>	119	124	127
<i>Of which: % supported by an Advocate?</i>	85%	91.9%	94.1%

**Figure 10 – Concluded S42 Enquiries by Mental Capacity over past 3 Years since 2020/21**



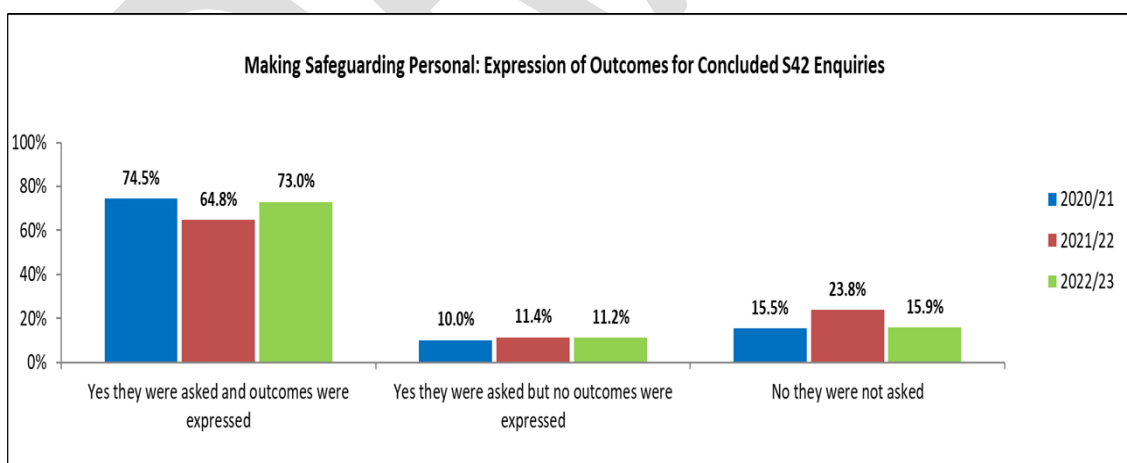
### Making Safeguarding Personal

As at year end, 84.2% of all clients for whom there was a concluded case were asked about the outcomes they desired (either directly or through a representative) although 11.2% of those did not express an opinion on what they wanted their outcome to be (in 2021/22 this figure was 76.2% of which 11.4% did not express what they wanted their outcomes to be when asked).

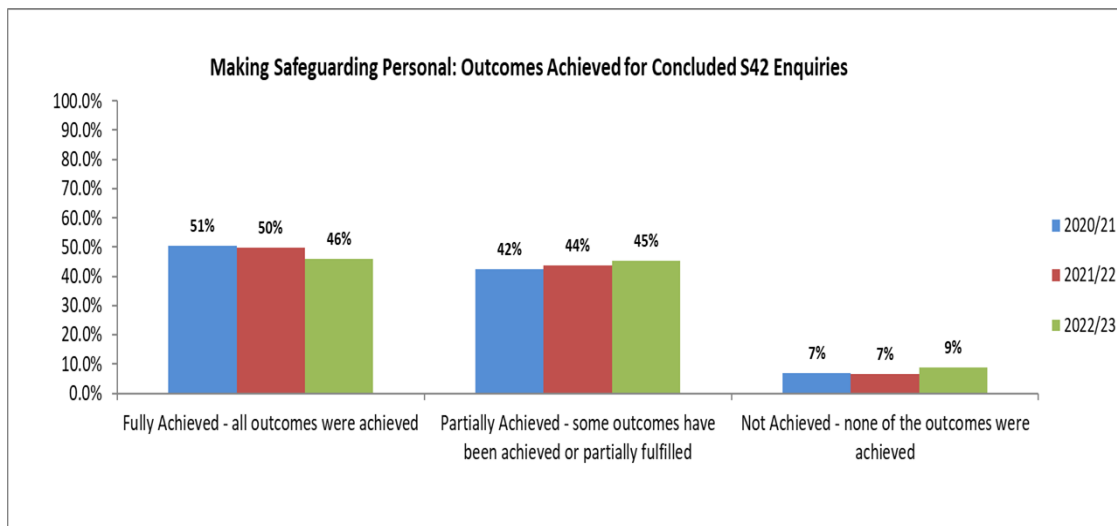
Approximately 86.7% of all those asked also expressed an opinion in 2022/23 which is a positive outcome which is a 1.6% increase since 2021/22 (up from 85.1%). Those who were 'Not Asked' have been added to a Data Integrity list to allow us to regularly audit cases to make sure recording is accurate in such areas. This also allows the authority to identify any reasons for service users not being asked and to act upon any issues raised.

This is shown below in **Figure 11**.

**Figure 11 – Concluded Enquiries by Expression of Outcome over past 3 Years since 2020/21**



**Figure 12 – Concluded Enquiries by Expressed Outcomes Achieved over past 3 Years since 2020/21**



Of those who were asked and expressed a desired outcome, there has been a decrease of 4% (from 50% in 2021/22 to 46% in 2022/23) for those who were able to achieve those outcomes fully, because of the safeguarding intervention.

However, a further 45% in 2022/23 (up 1% since 2021/22) managed to partially achieve their stated outcomes meaning 9% did not achieve their outcomes during the year which is a slightly higher figure than for the last 2 years. This is shown above in **Figure 12**.

### 3. Achievements

#### a) Hoarding and Self Neglect

RBC were able to secure a grant to create a Hoarding and Self-Neglect Protocol including a risk assessment tool and pathway, and a self-neglect training offer as well as a project worker to evaluate the local challenges and promote the work. Whilst recruiting a successful project worker took some time to achieve, the funding enabled RBC to define the self-neglect pathway to “Safe Environments” which included hoarding and other environmental factors impacting on a person’s ability to live safely within their normal place of residence.

This work was a priority for RBC for 22/23 because there were several delayed discharges from hospital which were resulting from self-neglect and hoarding in the person’s own home and insufficient resources and an apparent lack of confidence by staff working with people who were self-neglecting and/or hoarding in being able to meet the needs of this safeguarding area of work. Out of 76 safeguarding referrals recorded as self-neglect in 22/23, 19 could be categorized as having a hoarding disorder or being in uninhabitable environments that placed them at serious risk of harm.

With the additional funding ASC were able to secure a part-time project lead and an OT/SW who could work directly with people who hoard. Additional capacity also enabled the creation and embedding of the self-neglect pathway including risk assessments. The new hoarding protocol was created and shared with partners and the website updated in November 2022 to promote the protocol.

RBC supported 26 individuals with Health and Well being Grants to carry out cleaning, decluttering, removal of fire risks and rubbish and supporting safe discharge from hospital for people with self-neglect/ hoarding histories. Part of the Hoarding grant was used to increase awareness and understanding that hoarding disorders are not “lifestyle choices” made by individuals who desire to live with this degree of risk. Jo Cook from Hoarding Disorders UK provided 9 sessions to 196 workers from across Reading and across agencies. 17 people also attended Level 2 and level 3 training on working with people who hoard as well as 89

people attending “the MCA and self-neglect “training provided by the Edge Consultancy referred to below.

The Principal Occupational Therapist and the Hoarding worker ran 2 webinars on using the hoarding protocol and working with the self-neglect assessment tool and these were attended by 199 people in 22/23. The embedding of these tools and the mainstreaming of this project work is a key challenge for 23/24.

### **b) Safeguarding and Provider Concerns**

Following the death in December 2022, which was the subject a Safeguarding Adults Review, the Quality Officers provided a targeted program, in conjunction with the Fire Service, to promote and enhance fire safety awareness and knowledge. This was for both staff working in Adult Social Care Services and staff working for Providers of home care and supported living services. 82 staff in Adult Social Care attended the workshops across all levels of the Department. 212 staff from Providers of homecare and supported living services attended workshops also and received training on how the fire service carry out safe and well visits and provide fire safety advice to enable individuals and their carers to be less at-risk from fire in their homes.

The workshops were very well received by staff internal to RBC and by staff working in the independent sector. There has also been a subsequent increase in requests for fire safety measures and equipment such as fire-retardant bedding, smoke alarms etc. One Provider in Reading referred 90% of the residents in Reading they support, for new or follow-up fire safety visits by the Fire Service which they were able to carry out. This would seem to be a clear indication of the value and usefulness of the training. Carers were also given advice on fire prevention and the feedback that has been received about the training has been very positive and indicated that attendees felt more confident after the training in understanding the dangers of fire risks and the support available to them from the Fire Service to advise on fire prevention.

The Quality Officers also have been providing safeguarding “roadshows” from January 23 onwards with staff in care homes to help them be more confident about safeguarding and particularly what to refer. They have used scenarios with staff to encourage discussion around the challenges of understanding and reporting safeguarding risks. The feedback received from these workshops has been very positive and indicates that Providers who attended are clearer about safeguarding risks and particularly the requirements placed on them to report safeguarding incidents both to the local authority and to the Care Quality Commission.

### **c) Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) training**

Training on Mental Capacity and deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is a key part of the training offer for relevant staff across Adult Social Care in Reading. Much of it is commissioned from Edge Training and Consultancy who are experts on health and social care law and are widely used and well regarded across the sector. In the period April 22 to the end of March 2023 they provided:

- “How to Assess Mental Capacity” training for 72 RBC staff -on line training 3 hours duration.
- “MCA and Self-Neglect” training for 89 staff- on line training lasting one day.
- “MCA and Young People” for 17 staff on -line for 1 day.

- “MCA and Disability” for 25 staff on -line over 1 day

In addition, members of the RBC legal team provided 3-hour workshops for 61 staff on DOLS with people living in their own homes and in community facilities. This area of training is particularly challenging and important given the demands on staff who are required presenting cases in the Court of Protection and remains a very significant priority for continuing training resource requirements.

#### 4. Improving Safeguarding services for Adults in Reading

The priority areas of focus for 22/23 outlined in last year’s report from Reading detailed:

- i) **Seeking to manage safeguarding referrals through a single point of contact at the Council’s front door.**

**Progress:** Because of the volume of safeguarding contacts to be managed through the year and the pressures of numbers coming through the Contact Centre into the hub, this work has progressed but has not yet been fully achieved and the Safeguarding Adults Team continues to manage contacts. The emphasis throughout the year, has been on improving timescales for managing contacts and the timely completion of s42 enquiries. However, work is progressing on the development of clearer referrer pathways to enable the safe transition of safeguarding into the Advice & Wellbeing Hub (Front door).

The safeguarding team have also been able to work more closely with the Council’s Customer Centre to ensure that they are able to be able to recognise safeguarding concerns when they come in and enable them to be triaged more effectively.

- ii) **Engage with wider preventative programs and link with other workstreams such as those being led by Public Health to ensure any harm from abuse and neglect is prevented.**

**Progress:** There are examples through the year of wider preventative programs. The work by the Quality Concerns Managers described above details some of these. This continues to be a priority for 23/24, particularly in respect of multi-disciplinary preventive work such as the continuing work around hoarding and self-neglect, exploitation and modern slavery and other key areas of existing and emerging safeguarding priorities.

- iii) **Strengthen the interface between quality assurance and safeguarding to provide a proactive response to quality concerns and improvement through the Serious Concerns Process**

**Progress:** The Serious Concerns process has been used effectively through 22/23 to monitor the improvement work needed with Providers where there have been safeguarding and care quality concerns identified. When care providers are not able to rectify concerns raised, or where the nature of those concerns is such that restrictions to their capacity to provide care are needed in order to deal with the improvements needed, amber or red flagging was used to place restrictions the use of those providers. This system is supported by partners across health and social care and with the Care Quality Commission and as the



interface between safeguarding and commissioning is strengthened, the safeguarding work in care settings and with Providers is strengthened.

**iv) Ensure that the voices of adults at risk are sought, heard and acted on and our approach to making safeguarding personal and co-production will be enhanced along with partners.**

**Progress:** The requirements of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) to ensure that people experiencing interventions through safeguarding are consulted and involved at all stages has remained challenging because of the pressures of workload from number of concerns and staffing within the Safeguarding Team. However, work has continued improving the information about safeguarding outcomes to referrers. The learning from SARs and case audits has shown through the year that this remains a priority and a challenge in safeguarding, as co-production is developed across adult social care in 23/24.

**v) Revisit the safeguarding training pathway for staff employed by RBC particularly decision makers and we will audit compliance with safeguarding training.**

**Progress:** Safeguarding training was regularly monitored and reported on through the Workforce Board throughout 22/23. Most of the training through the year was on-line, largely for efficiency and cost reasons, given the volume of training required in safeguarding across the Council and its partners. The challenges of providing more face-to face safeguarding training, particularly for workers carrying out, or managing, section 42 enquires remains for 23/24.

**vi) Introduce an audit program to ensure continuous professional practice.**

**Progress:** From January 23 work was progressing in Reading to introduce an audit program across adult social care which included a focus on safeguarding audits. This was incorporated into the quality assurance framework for the Department approved later in July 2023 and an audit template for recording audits was also developed. Audits of a sample of safeguarding cases across the teams were undertaken with managers and the themes from those audits were feedback to workers and their managers and underpinned the improvement work across safeguarding.

Embedding the audit work is a key focus for 23/24 particularly to ensure consistency of auditing practice through the introduction of moderation methodologies, auditing practice and training for managers and quality assurance in relation to inspection requirements for the Care Quality Commission.

**vii) Ensure SAB priorities are fully embedded.**

**Progress:** SAB priorities are known and underpin the priorities of safeguarding in Reading. The learning from SARs and other reviews carried out across the SAB partnership footprint were reported on and considered at monthly meetings of the Care and Quality Board along with learning from unexpected deaths and serious incidents.

This continues to be a priority for 23/24 along with continued support of the Safeguarding Adults Board and its sub-committees.

**viii) Learning from SARs and other reviews are embedded into practice.**

**Progress:** As described in (vii) above

**ix) Respond to concerns regarding modern day slavery and exploitation and ensure these are fully explored and vulnerable service users protected.**

**Progress:** In February 2023 Adult Social Care in Reading launched and led “Operation Rivermead” in response to allegations of possible modern-day slavery in the delivery of services by 4 Providers who were commissioned to work with service users in Reading. All 4 Providers also operated in neighbouring authorities, and some provided jointly funded services across health and social care. Chaired by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Quality and practice in Reading and supported by a senior commissioner, and multi-disciplinary meetings were held involving representatives from the local authorities, Health, Police, the Home Office, the Care Quality Commission and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA). These meetings enabled sharing information about reports across the agencies represented and considered information received concerning all 4 Providers. Operation Rivermead continued to meet through 2023, concluding in November 2023.

The lessons learned from the investigations into allegations concerning the 4 Providers identified, will form the basis of a continuing focus in 23/24 particularly on recruitment practices by Providers and on strengthening the ability of quality officers and others to hear the “voices” of care who are providing care for some of the most vulnerable people in Reading’s communities.

**REPORT END**