Strategic Risk Register Summary Q4 2025/2026

RISK STATUS

Red ■ Amber

6, 50% 6, 50%

Risk Distribution

Average Risk Scores at Q4 2025 /2026

Risk	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Current RAG
Strategic Risk: Failure to retain and recruit staff	12	12	12	12	Amber
Strategic Risk: Information Governance - Failure to protect personal data	8	8	8	8	Amber
Strategic Risk: Cyber - Risk of loss from cyber attack	12	20	20	20	Red
Strategic Risk: Risk to adherence to Care Act Statutory duties as residents are waiting in Adult Social Care	16	16	12	12	Amber
Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver a balanced budget as a result of demand pressures and achieving income targets.	20	20	20	20	Red
Strategic Risk: Failure to deliver zero carbon commitments (Climate mitigation)	15	15	15	15	Red
Strategic Risk: Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Climate adaptation)	16	16	16	16	Red
Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults	12	12	12	12	Amber
Strategic Risk: Directorate of Children's Services - Lack of local special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) placement provision to meet current and future levels of demand. Insufficient provision impacts on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block (HNB) deficit.	16	16	16	16	Red
Strategic Risk: Failure to fulfil our obligations under the PREVENT Duty	10	10	10	10	Amber
Strategic Risk: Failure to mitigate risks or manage issues, associated with health & safety, appropriately	15	15	12	12	Amber
Strategic Risk Failure to safeguard vulnerable children	16	16	16	16	Red

Risk	Strategic Risk: Failure to retain and recruit staff.	Register: Strategic	**Residual Score 12**
		Risk Owner: Kathryn Cook	

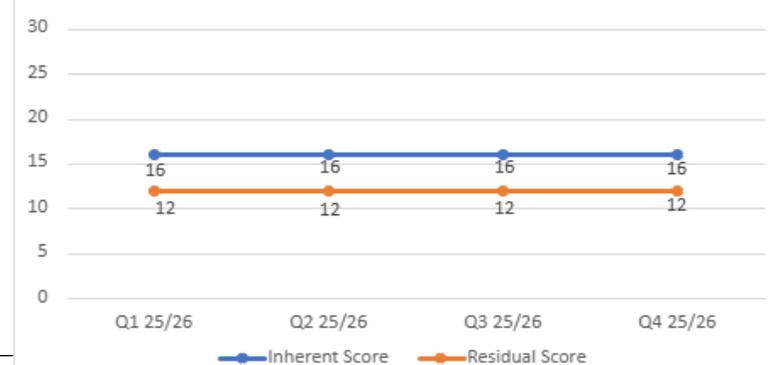| Risk	Failure to retain and recruit staff.
Cause	There is a national shortage of skilled staff for some areas (e.g. Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, local government lawyers and financial professionals, Planners etc). In other areas, local government salaries and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis may mean that the Council is not able to keep pace with salaries being offered in the private sector (e.g. Surveyors, IT professionals and Drivers) and staff may leave for higher paid jobs in other sectors.
Potential Impact	Failure to meet demand. Statutory duties not met. Negative impact on staff motivation and stress related illness.

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	16	16	16	16
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	3	3	3	3
Residual Score	12	12	12	12

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required		Date for completion	Status
	Title		
1	Further development of the Council's approach to apprenticeships including targeting some apprenticeships at care experienced people and focussing recruitment in more deprived parts of the Borough	31/03/2027	In Progress
2	Disability statement and action plan	30/09/2026	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**9**

Background Information

There is an on-going shortage of skilled staff in the employment market for some key local government professions (e.g. Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, local government lawyers and financial professionals) and therefore recruitment in these areas is difficult. We compare our data with other local authorities and national recruitment statistics. RBC has had a record number of applications in the rolling year to date. Some roles are being held vacant to assist with financial savings.

Existing Controls in Place

- Resourcing Team well established to ensure proactive approach and success of permanent and all other types of recruitment. Time to fill (advert to start date) has improved to an average of 57 days (Feb 26) and represents a best ever performance for the council. Success rate of recruitment has is currently 82% (Feb 2026). Whilst fill rates are high for most jobs, there are a small number of jobs where considerable challenges recruiting have been experienced. These difficulties are experienced on a national level by most local authorities and are typically in shortage occupations such as experienced solicitors and social workers.
- Our results for 2025 were encouraging with the council receiving the highest application numbers on record, an increase of 33% on the previous year. This has seen permanency rates in key hard to fill areas such as qualified social workers and solicitors increase by over 40% during the year. The Human Resources Team continues to work with services to help improve recruitment and retention.
- Access to pool of appropriately qualified temporary staff via agency contract. The contract continues to perform well, meeting the vast majority (98% by spend) of our temporary staffing needs and kept off-contract usage to a minimum.
- Apprentice and work experience programmes provide access to a pool of younger and less experienced and skilled staff who can be internally developed to fill hard-to-recruit positions in the future. We continue to support apprenticeships for existing and new staff.
- Staff Surveys have been conducted annually since 2021 to provide insight into how staff feel about the Council as an employer and an opportunity to build on and maintain positive results and address areas for improvement. The 2025 survey ran from mid-November, closing on the 12 December. Participation has increased again and reached 53% including strong contribution from the Directorate of Children's Services who are now in-house. Questions asked were identical to previous surveys (to enable tracking of responses over time) and scores have improved again year on year. A corporate action plan is being developed alongside action plans for each Executive Director (ED) area.
- The Team Reading Programme is embedded to support delivery of the People Strategy which aims to achieve a highly skilled, high performing and motivated workforce. Programme governance reflects the important role of service 'voice' through the Team Reading Stakeholder Group. Items for decisions are remitted to the Corporate Management Team.
- Our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy and Plan was launched in January 2024. The strategy is supported by a three-year action plan with quarterly reviews with a member of CMT and Staff network Chairs. This strategy aims to ensure RBC is an employer where everyone can do their best work and can thrive. Work in this area continues to have a positive impact on retention and on recruitment. The year three plan has been presented to CMT, Staff network chairs and Personnel Committee's annual update report. Year three (2026) actions include an ongoing focus on what is means for the Council to be an anti-racist organisation following launch of the Council's anti racism statement and actions to all staff in December 2025 with pilot training sessions held to support increased understanding in this area. Year 3 actions also include an ongoing focus on Disability inclusion. Staff members receive quarterly updates on delivery plan progress. Work will be completed during 2026 to review the strategy.
- The latest most recent Leadership Development Programme completed in July 2025. A formal commitment has been agreed to launching a programme across 2026/2027 to ensure all managers and leaders have had the opportunity to attend. This programme is designed to ensure managers deliver high quality, inspiring leadership and role model the Team Reading Leadership Behaviours. Proposal for the next phase of the programme have been discussed with CMT.
- Quarterly reporting of Human Resources (HR) & Organisational Development (OD) performance metrics to Corporate Management Team (CMT) and monthly to Directorate Management Teams (DMT's), to identify areas of good practice that can be shared, and areas that require improvement so that these can be addressed.
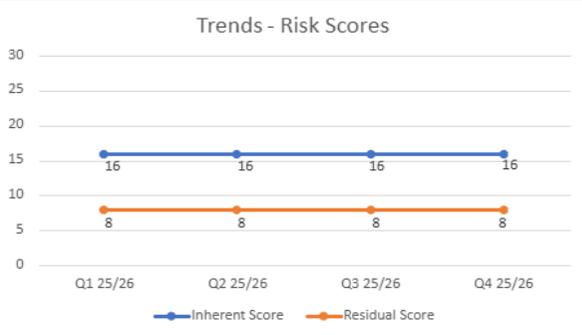
- A communications campaign to continually promote the benefits available to staff is underway (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme, benefits platform and discounts with retailers and gym memberships, lease cars scheme, pensions etc).
- The Council is part of national pay bargaining and so has limited scope to increase pay but market supplement payments can be awarded for particularly hard to fill posts which present recruitment/retention challenges. The National Employers organisation negotiate on RBC behalf. This is a rolling year on year process.
- The number and range of staff groups continue to evolve and now includes a carers group and work is underway to support a faith group. Staff awards are held annually. A new long service recognition event is held regularly to celebrate those with 30+ years employment with the Council.
- Continued deployment of the work experience programme providing opportunities for school children to understand the opportunities available in local government and gain work experience.
- Reverse mentoring pilot launched in June 2025 with 5 members of CMT. Evaluation activity is currently being finalised with recommendations for next steps.
- Anti racism statement and Action Plan launch - Completed - December 2025

Risk	**Strategic Risk: Information Governance - Failure to protect personal data**	**Register: Strategic**	**Residual Score 8**
		Risk Owner: Ade Marques	

Risk	Information Governance - failure to protect personal data.
Cause	User error, lack of policy guidance and procedures, failure of system reminders, staff workloads resulting in insufficient care and attention to detail.
Potential Impact	Fines/penalties, reputational damage and service failure. Wasted time and cost involved in responding to service failure.

Risk Scores				
Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	16	16	16	16
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	2	2	2	2
Residual Score	8	8	8	8

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required			
	Title	**Date for completion**	**Status**
1	Refresh and relaunch Information Governance Champions Network	30/06/2026	In Progress
2	Information Sharing Protocols to be reviewed by Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN)	31/07/2026	Not Started
3	Records of Processing Activities (ROPA) in place. 2026/27 review to occur.	30/09/2026	In Progress
4	Cascade of compliance requirements now through the Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN).	31/07/2026	Not Started
		Predicted Score	**6**

Background Information

Information governance is an important issue for the Council as information is a corporate resource and is essential for the delivery of services to residents. The Council has duties to manage information properly, under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In addition, in order to make best use of the information, it should be organised in a way that allows Services to derive maximum benefit from it.

Breach of information governance poses significant risk to the privacy of individuals and fines and reputational damage to the Council by the ICO.

Existing Controls in Place

- Information Governance Board (IGB) set up to oversee delivery of Information Management Strategy and compliance.
- Information Management Strategy agreed at Policy Committee on 7th March 2022.
- Corporate training programme for data protection, raising awareness with staff groups of the need to handle personal data securely and properly. Data Protection Training is mandatory for all staff.
- Oversight from the Audit and Governance Committee on a regular basis.
- Face to Face Data Protection refresher training is available for staff as and when needed.
- Subject Access Request policy and Breach Management policy reviewed by Information Governance Board. Further training to be delivered to staff.
- Privacy Notices are being updated for each service area and made available to service users. This is kept under review in Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN).
- Information Sharing Protocols have been centralised and will be reviewed by IGCN.
- The Council now has retention schedules for each directorate. All retention schedules have been updated and will be reviewed through ongoing IGCN programme to ensure they are being actioned. Further work through the IGCN will ensure that the schedules are given greater visibility and to assess level of compliance.
- New Information Governance and Cyber Security modules have been rolled out as mandatory training. Uptake is subject to monitoring at Information Governance Board.
- Corporate Management Team (CMT) have confirmed a corporate approach to mandatory training which includes Data Protection and Information Governance (January 2024).
- Review of Breach Management Policy commissioned in relation to external suppliers of software systems.
- Roll out of annual refresher training for Information Governance

| Risk | **Strategic Risk: Cyber - Risk of loss from cyber attack** | **Register: Strategic**

 Risk Owner: Ade Marques | **Residual Score 20** |

**Risk** — Attack by hostile nation states, criminals or activists. Likelihood remains high. The continuing evolution of the threat environment means that the likelihood will remain high, notwithstanding the council's ongoing efforts to improve our cyber posture.

Cause — Loss of service, loss of reputation, Loss of data, legal challenges, recovery costs

Potential Impact — Fines/penalties, reputational damage and service failure. Wasted time and cost involved in responding to service failure.

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Inherent	4	5	5	5
Inherent Score	20	25	25	25
Impact Residual	3	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	4	5	5	5
Residual Score	12	20	20	20
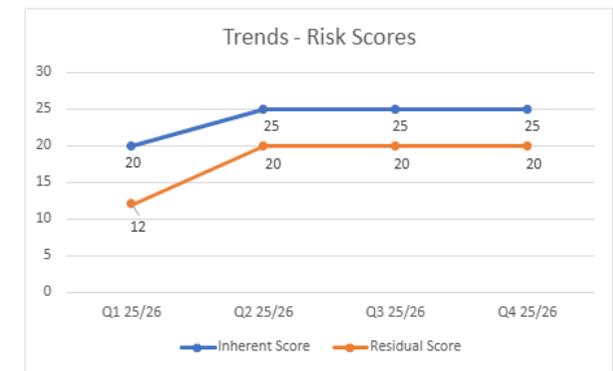
Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

	Specific Actions Required	**Date for completion**	**Status**
	Title		
1	Implementation of Security information and Event Management (SIEM)	31/09/2027	Not Started
2	Achieve Cyber Essentials Plus certification (delayed as a result of delays in legacy application replacement)	31/03/2027	Not Started
3	Introduction of the Customer & Case Management new IT system to remove old software	31/03/2027	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**16**

Background Information

The continuing evolution of the threat environment - not least owing to the war in Ukraine and Middle East - means that the likelihood will remain high, notwithstanding the significant set of actions in place. As evidence of this, we continue to intercept over 75% of emails sent to our network. We also continue to block over 5,000 attempts by users to access web links that led to malicious sites monthly.

The high impact of cyber incidents has been demonstrated by incidents such as the Haringey and Redcar & Cleveland, M&S and Jaguar Land Rover (summer 2025) ransomware attacks.

While the risk to loss of applications and data from a cyber attack does not diminish, in this financial year we have taken further measures to reduce the likelihood slightly. This has included the introduction of Multifactor Authentication as well as further enhancement and enforcement of cyber training programme for all staff across RBC. We have also tightened the criteria for onboarding new applications into our IT estate.

Existing Controls in Place

Organisational controls

- Security governance provided by Information Governance Board, which reviews policy and strategy relating to cyber security, and also monitor reports of security incidents to identify corrective action. Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services has been appointed as cyber security champion for Corporate Management Team (CMT), and a similar role is played in Council by the Lead Member for Corporate Resources & Customer Services.
- Staff awareness and training is critical. Training (including annual refresher training) has been made mandatory.
- A new training module has been developed in house by the digital and IT team to make this mandatory training more bespoke and user friendly.
- Cyber insurance in place (and ongoing purchase)
- Assessment of security strategy and policy to be conducted against new Local Government profile of Cyber Assessment Framework being conducted by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities Future Councils programme (as part of our grant award).
- Local Government Cyber Assessment Framework assessment and remediation planned.
- Agreed and implemented policy and approach to enforcing mandatory training (cleansing of personnel data for tracking completed, allowing monitoring of training completion to be implemented in June/July) - Information Governance Board

Controls focused on resistance to attack

- Improved defences against attack from Internet via email and internet are now in place.
- External certification of cyber countermeasures against Cyber Essentials Plus framework - work to address gaps identified by internal review is in progress, with the most significant actions relating to work (by both IT and business teams) on certain legacy applications. Following an internal audit report that raised questions over remediation plans, an external review has been conducted. There were no major new issues arising from this review. However, we have moved the target date for Cyber Essentials assessment back by to reflect the revised timing of the implementation of some business applications on which achievement of the criteria depend, and also to allow time for a full audit of business and web applications.
- A ransomware simulation event was held in the spring of 2025, to help measure our level of preparedness for a ransomware attack.

- A similar exercise was carried out for all managers on the 24th of September at the Team Talk session.
- A higher grade of Microsoft antivirus Defender P2, has been procured and implemented from 1st January 2026 to further prevent malware into the RBC network.

Controls focused on recovery from attack

- Cyber incident response plan and cyber incident "playbooks" to reflect learning from recent attacks on the public sector and the latest guidance from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).
- An exercise is in place to review business continuity plans for cyber across all areas of the business. This assessment will be followed by a cross-business cyber resilience rehearsal/exercise, following on from a limited exercise run in Legal & Democratic Services. See 'Specific Actions'
- Independent assessment of security improvement plans and threat monitoring to ensure we have robust plan to achieve Cyber Essentials Plus certification conducted.
- Preparedness for cyber-attack to be assessed through review of business continuity plans - review workshops completed with all DOR services; DEGNS and DCASC to be completed - Action completed December 2024
- Carrying out actions from the ransomware simulation rehearsal April 2025.
- A cyber preparedness summit was convened by the Assistant Director Digital and IT early December 2025. Bringing together suppliers who will be involved in a cyber recovery exercise. This was convened in response to the heightened security alert following the Tri-Borough cyber attack in November 2025.

Risk	**Strategic Risk: Risk to adherence to Care Act Statutory duties as residents are waiting in Adult Social Care**	**Register: Strategic** **Risk Owner: Jo Purser**	**Residual Score 12**

Risk	People do not receive timely adult social care interventions to meet their needs, overspend of budget as the numbers of people waiting does not factor into demand pressures		
Cause	Increased demand which outstrips staff capacity. Lack of capacity in the various teams to meet the complexity of demand		
Potential Impact	Risk of death, harm or injury to vulnerable persons for whom we have a statutory responsibility Breach to meeting statutory obligations as defined by the Care Act 2014		

Risk Scores				
Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Inherent	5	5	5	5
Inherent Score	20	20	20	20
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	4	4	3	3
Residual Score	16	16	12	12

Risk Status

Specific Actions Required	
	Title
1	Deep Dive into the Social Care AWB (Advice Well Being) processes and forms to determine effectiveness
2	Efficiencies to MOSAIC to aid workers and reporting

Trends - Risk Scores

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk.

Background Information

The waiting times for people who draw on care and support waiting for an assessment or review of their social care needs continues to be high as demand for interventions outstrips staff capacity across the various teams.

Post-COVID all teams are seeing significant demand and additional complexity. Pre-COVID as we operate our strengths based model many cases could have been brought to a resolution after 2-3 visits with the person, however this is more likely to be 4-6 visits now and practitioners are needing to undertake more joint working with the National Health Service (NHS) and other partners. Teams have reported that more court work is required which involves lengthy Mental Capacity Assessments, Court of Protection applications and Safeguarding Enquiries.

Data is collected weekly by the Performance Team via a new PowerBI dashboard has been developed to allow managers to analysis their individual waiting lists and target the longest waits.

This data is also reviewed at the Working for People Board and the Directorate Leadership Board which is where we oversee the impact of the mitigations, we are deploying to address the waiting times.

Q1 2025/26 - Demand and resources remain ongoing issues as part of the council's financial position. Demand continues to outstrip capacity with the service seeing as many as 20 referrals per day, as a result the risk rating has increased. We are now undertaking a deep dive to review the internal processes and referral pathways.

Further demand anticipated with the loss of NRS Equipment contract, this in turn will increase referrals as less trusted assessors for less complex equipment.

The RAG rating processes have been reviewed and refreshed, and the Red RAG cases can now be tracked on PowerBI and actioned.

Existing Controls in Place

- Mitigation controls that have been put in place so far include:
- Increased Governance and oversight of waits at CMT, the Directorate Leadership Team & performance Board and Team managers are monitoring the waiting times within their teams. December 2024
- Adult Social Care have developed and implemented a BRAG (Black/Red/Amber/Green) rating system including an overarching 'Waiting Well' Policy that provides guidance for cases that are awaiting allocation to a worker. All residents are being triaged to assess levels of Risk to support this rating system. October 2024
- Risk Matrix tool set up. November 2024
- Additional resources (both short term and permanent) have been agreed and deployed across the service to address the waiting times.
- Deep Dive into the internal processes and referral pathways. Ongoing.
- This targeted approach has demonstrated great progress in both safeguarding and the Hub who have noted reductions in waits and improved adherence to target timeframes for targeted interventions for our Residents.
- New PowerBI system developed and rolled out.
- Reviewed capacity across the service to ensure staff are deployed in the correct teams to meet need - Directorate Leadership Team (DMT). October 2024

- All residents referred into Adult Social Care will be risk assessed to ensure those who are RAG rated red/urgent will be triaged within 24 hours.
- The RAG rating processes have been reviewed and refreshed, and the Red RAG cases can now be tracked on PowerBI and actioned.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) submission for additional resources submitted for 2025/26. October 2024
- Ongoing development work on Advice and Well Being Hub, Digital Front Door and Voluntary and Community Sector Front Door to manage future demand.
- Q1 25/26 - Number of referrals continues to increase on both the Social Care and Occupational Therapy (OT) pathways, with demand outstripping capacity. The wait times for OT pathway sits at approximately 500 workflows.
- NRS Equipment closed at the end of July 2025, this may increase the referrals into the OT service. Generally the demand remains high in August 2025.
- Reviewed MOSAIC pathways to ensure alignment with practice and facilitates robust business intelligence and performance information i.e. PowerBI. July 2025 - Completed
- There has been key recruitment into key roles.
- Improved Power BI reports now being produced to monitor productivity of staff.

| Risk	**Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver a balanced budget as a result of demand pressures and achieving income targets**.	Register: Strategic Risk Owner: Darren Carter	**Residual Score** **20**

Risk	Failure to deliver a balanced budget as a result of increasing demand for services, increasing complexity of need and uncertainty about local government funding reforms.
Cause	Financial pressures arising from increasing demand pressures, increasing complexity of need, and volatility in global markets.
Potential Impact	There is a planned draw down from reserves of £4.633 million to fund the forecast 2025/26 deficit. The 2026/27 budget has been balanced through a drawdown from reserves of £0.3 million.

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	20	20	20	20
Impact Residual	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Residual	4	4	4	4
Residual Score	20	20	20	20
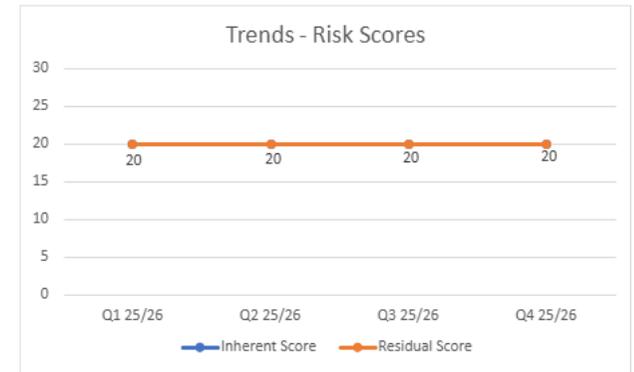
Trends - Risk Scores

Inherent Score · Residual Score

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required		Date for completion	Status
	Title		
1	~	~	~
2	~	~	~
		Predicted Score	**20**

Background Information

The 2025/2026 Quarter 3 forecast is an adverse net variance of £4.633m.

The budget report presented to Council in February 2026 included a drawdown from reserves of £0.3million to balance the budget.

There is a forecast budget gap of £2million for 2027/2028.

Existing Controls in Place

- Controls include regular reporting to CMT and DMT's, plus quarterly reporting to Policy Committee.

| Risk	**Strategic Risk: Failure to deliver zero carbon commitments (Climate mitigation)**	**Register: Strategic** **Risk Owner: Emma Gee**	**Residual Score 15**

Risk	Failure to deliver net zero carbon commitments across the borough
Cause	1. Lack of clear policies and plans in place to deliver 2. Insufficient investment of Council resources in delivery 3. Lack of partner/resident engagement and ownership of climate action 4. Inadequate government funding and policy support for delivery.
Potential Impact	The main direct impacts on the Council are (i) practical in the sense that if the Council is not seen to be leading by example, the success of its efforts to persuade other partners and residents to cut their emissions will be reduced and (ii) reputational, in that the Council may be accused of not delivering on its promises, noting that some of the action required to deliver a net zero Reading by 2030 is beyond the Council's control. The 'impact' score is therefore based on this rather than the ultimately catastrophic impacts which will arise in the long-term from unmitigated climate change (see also 'Failure to adapt to climate change' risk card).

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Inherent	5	5	5	5
Inherent Score	25	25	25	25
Impact Residual	3	3	3	3
Likelihood Residual	5	5	5	5
Residual Score	15	15	15	15
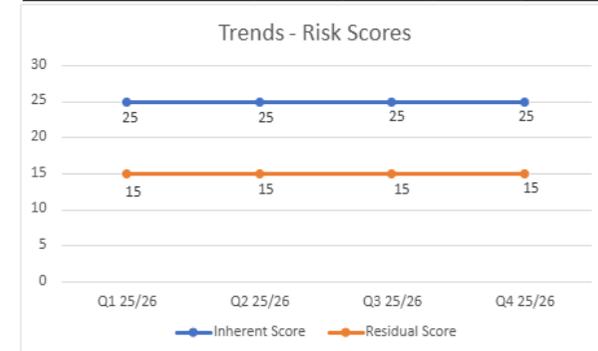
Trends - Risk Scores

Specific Actions Required			
	Title	**Date for completion**	**Status**
1	Climate training roll out to priority cohorts (officers and members) to continue through 2026/2027	31/12/2026	In Progress
2	Complete Heat Network detailed project development & apply for Green Heat Network Fund	01/05/2026	In Progress
3	Solar Investment Programme - First Project Completion	31/12/2026	In Progress
4	Levelling up Fund Decarb of Hexagon	31/03/2027	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**12**

Background Information

This risk relates primarily to the Borough-wide target of net zero by 2030 which the Council can influence but not control in its entirety (delivering the corporate net zero by 2030 target is a separate risk in the Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS) Directorate Risk Register). A major factor is the prevailing government policy and funding position which, as Reading's climate emergency declaration made clear, would need to change significantly to enable the 2030 target to be met. The 7th Carbon Budget Report released (February 2025) by the Committee For Climate Change sets out a balanced pathway to net zero by 2050 which indicates that net zero position would not be met until there is widespread uptake of key technologies. This would most likely go out beyond 2030 and so the risk of not meeting net zero by 2030 remains high albeit a new climate emergency strategy focusses on continuing decarbonisation efforts beyond 2030. Failure to deliver the Council's net zero commitments will ultimately contribute to catastrophic climate change impacts although the 'contribution' of greenhouse gas emissions from Reading will ultimately be indistinguishable from that of other jurisdictions. Government policy has shifted in some respects, namely the introduction of Great British Energy and decarbonisation of the electricity grid but Local Authority funding specifically has reduced with the withdrawal of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund for England. Major investment is needed to install electric technologies for vehicles and heat and this is not currently forthcoming. Heat Network Infrastructure plans are progressing, however as this area was supported by Treasury.

Existing Controls in Place

Action is broken down in relation to 'cause' categories listed above as follows:

1. Lack of clear policies and plans in place to deliver:

- Reading Borough Council (RBC) worked with partners to develop the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025-2030, which includes action plans for all key policy areas (endorsed by Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee November 2025). Implementation ongoing
- Reading Borough Council produces its own Corporate Carbon Plan to set out its pathway to net zero and action required (adopted by Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee November 2020). In place but new five-year plan required for 2026-31. In development (at Mar 26).
- Annual Reports on progress with both the Climate Strategy and Carbon Plan are presented to Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee on the anniversary of their publication. In place and the latest Annual Reports were published November 2025.
- A mandatory section of Committee Reports requires report authors to assess the environmental and climate impacts of decisions, using a climate impact assessment tool and accompanying guidance where appropriate. This is in place with periodic audit of compliance completed Q4 2022-2023 and remedial action underway. Similar mechanism included in Budget Bids from 2023.

2. Insufficient investment of Council resources in delivery:

- The Council's capital programme has funded significant investment designed to directly support net zero goals, including investment in public transport, energy efficient housing, sustainable waste management practices, and carbon reduction measures in the Council's own buildings and fleet. However, these capital funds (principally the low carbon capital programme and the fleet replacement programme) expire in the next year or two, and further provision will need to be made to manage this risk. Efforts have also been made to secure external grants to support installation of low carbon measures (e.g. successful applications to Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) for Civic Offices decarbonisation, and to Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for Hexagon decarbonisation). Grant has also been secured for social and public housing albeit there was a relatively low settlement for Reading due to a lack of match funding offered. The PSDS was revoked in the last spending review, meaning less available funding.
- The Council's revenue budgets for dedicated work on climate change are modest, and the proposed restructure reduces these further.

- Across the organisation, efforts are being made to ensure that climate action is embedded in all services and service plans through provision of support such as guidance and training for officers. A programme of Carbon Literacy training for senior officers and elected members is now underway with over 100 managers trained.

3. Engagement of partners and residents:

- Emissions from the Council's direct operations represent just 1.2% of the total for Reading, and it can influence an estimated 33% of Borough emissions overall. Securing ownership of climate action from organisations, businesses and residents is therefore vital. Some of these partners come together in the Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) which is hosted by the Council. The Council is working with partners to deliver the latest Climate Emergency Strategy (25-30). Reading Climate Change Partnership and Dialogue Matters won an award for their Reading project. The strategy was published in November 2025.

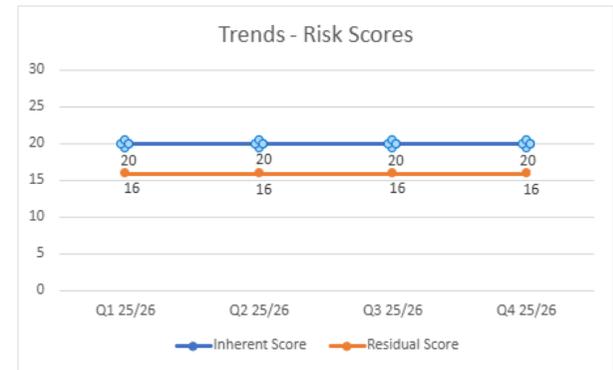## 4. Inadequate government funding and policy support for delivery

- While Government policy is aligned to net zero, the national target of 2050 remains less ambitious than the local target of 2030 albeit the new government has now implemented a policy objective for clean electricity for 2030 (95% clean power by 2030). Some key Government policies have also been diluted or target dates delayed (such as the Zero Emission Vehicles mandate) though some of these have been reinstated since the General Election. Even so, some policies are not fully aligned, and while Government has made significant funding available it is not yet of the scale required to support net zero by 2030. Furthermore, most funding streams are extremely competitive and/or over-subscribed. The Council therefore works through representative bodies to lobby for more generous financial support and a more ambitious policy framework to enable net zero by 2030. Regular engagement with representative bodies who have influence over government i.e., Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) Climate Board continues, and this lobbying is an ongoing task.
- The annual progress report on the Reading Climate Change Strategy in November 2023 highlights that while progress was being made with Borough-wide emissions reduction (which have been cut by 57% since 2005, the 12th largest reduction out of almost 400 UK local authorities), the pace of the reduction needs to increase significantly to achieve 'net zero by 2030'. Some of the Borough-wide action needed to achieve net zero is beyond the Council's control, but the wider community understandably looks to the Council to lead by example. In this regard, the Council is no longer on track to meet its own corporate Carbon Plan target of an 85% reduction in emissions by 2025 (en-route to net zero by 2030) - achieving a 74% cut since 2008/2009 with little chance of making that level of reduction in the final year of reporting against the 2020 to 2025 Carbon Plan. Further investment will, therefore, be needed to meet the net zero by 2030 target and without this the gap between target and actual will widen further. Monitoring and reporting on an annual basis is in place.
- Borough wide emissions for 2023 were published in June 2025 and showed a 57% reduction on the 2005 baseline.
- An internal audit of the Council's climate action programme was concluded in February 2022 giving 'reasonable assurance' - this made a number of recommendations to improve accountability for delivery of the Council's net zero commitments.
- Clear identification of responsible teams/officers for actions in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy where Reading Borough Council (RBC) is listed as a delivery partner, with these actions being better reflected in the Service Plans of relevant services - this work was completed in September 2022 and guidance was issued to Assistant Directors' on how to reflect climate action in Service Plans from 2023-2024 - this was updated and re-issued for the 2024-2025 Service Plans but staff resource has now allowed this process to be supported in 25/26.
- Clearer articulation of timescales and accountability for various actions in the corporate Carbon Plan - this was completed in November 2022 and, again, guidance has been issued to relevant Assistant Directors on reflecting these actions in Service Plans from 2024-2025
- Improved support and training for officers and services to embed climate action in their work - a climate module is included in staff induction, guidance on climate assessment in Committee Reports has been produced, and sessions on climate have been included in Team Talk and Senior Leadership Group meetings. A more comprehensive 'Carbon Literacy' training offer for members and managers is underway. See 'Specific Actions'
- Reading's Climate Emergency Declaration made clear that additional powers and resources would be needed from central government to enable delivery of 'net zero by 2030' - to date, these have not been forthcoming to the extent required and this remains probably the biggest risk to delivery of the Council's commitments.

- Further developments from the government have made some resources available through retrofit for which RBC have just joined the Portsmouth led Consortium, offering retrofits across 31 Local Authorities in the South. For Reading, this represents a tiny fraction of the amount required. £0.5m Grant has also been secured for social and public housing albeit there was a relatively low settlement for Reading due to a lack of match funding available.
- The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding for public electric vehicle charging and the Boiler Upgrade Scheme which enables boilers to be replaced with heat pumps are important priorities for net zero. Public Sector Decarbonisation funding has now been withdrawn. The Council still has many buildings that need decarbonising.
- A bid to invest in decarbonisation and improving the condition of the Town Hall was submitted, but funding for decarbonisation was not supported.
- Published climate emergency strategy with partners 25-30.
- Climate emergency communication campaign implemented.
- Reading Bus Depot Electric Vehicles Delivered
- Influencing government policy through ADEPT, Greater South East Net Zero Hub and other bodies. (ADEPT - Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport) - Ongoing

Risk	**Strategic Risk: Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Climate adaptation)**	**Register: Strategic**	**Residual Score 16**
		Risk Owner: Emma Gee	

Risk	Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change
Cause	Inadequate planning and preparedness and long-term planning to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
Potential Impact	Risk of death, harm or injury to vulnerable persons for whom we have a statutory responsibility. Breach to meeting statutory obligations as defined by the Care Act 2014

Risk Scores				
Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	20	20	20	20
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	4	4	4	4
Residual Score	16	16	16	16

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required			
	Title	**Date for completion**	**Status**
1	Business continuity plans to take account of climate impacts and changes to working practices which may be needed to protect staff and service users. (Lack of resources)	31/07/2026	Not Started
2	Continue to roll-out Carbon Literacy training to priority cohorts of senior officers and members throughout 2025/2026	31/12/2026	In Progress
3	Incorporate adaptation measures into the Town Centre and Public Realm Strategies	31/03/2026	In Progress
4	Incorporation of Adaptation Framework within Service Plans	31/03/2027	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**16**

Background Information

Key climate impacts for which the Council needs to prepare are:

Flood Risk: The Council is responsible for surface water flooding and produced a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2015 (Review commenced October 2024 - awaiting final report August 2025)

Heatwave risk: Various local agencies, including the Council and National Health Service (NHS), participate in the Berkshire Heatwave Plan and England Heatwave Plan.

Extreme weather events: The Council has a variety of roles as infrastructure owner, service provider, community leader and first responder which may involve it taking some level of responsibility prior to/during/after extreme weather events. 2024 was the warmest year on record.

The Council has (as of Q3 2024) implemented adaptation framework and this work highlighted the need to integrate adaptation planning into service planning. There isn't currently the resources to drive this work through so the risk won't effectively be mitigated.

Existing Controls in Place

- Flood Risk: The Council is responsible for surface water flooding and produced a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2015. Action has been taken in all but one of 6 'hotspots' identified and plans for works at the remaining site (Stone Street) have been approved. Flash flooding from extreme rainfall events is likely to be an increasing but unpredictable risk. The Environment Agency is responsible for fluvial flooding and we are working with the Agency to address our main fluvial flood risks from the Thames, though the Agency's decision not to proceed with the Reading & Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme raises questions about how to address the inherent flood risk which remains. The floods of winter 2023/2024, which tested the Council's emergency preparedness, highlighted the sort of events which are likely to become more frequent and more extreme as a result of climate change and a 'lessons learnt' exercise has been conducted. Statutory responsibility: Lead Local Flood Authority responsibility sits with Environment and Commercial Services (Sam Shean). Procedures in place: Emergency Planning Officer will open rest centres if major flooding occurs due to extreme rainfall under direction taken from Thames Valley Police Command. A sandbag policy is in place.
- Heatwave risk: Various local agencies, including the Council and National Health Service (NHS), participate in the Berkshire Heatwave Plan and England Heatwave Plan. A 'Heat Health Planning Advice' alert was introduced in 2023 and the Council has played its part in responding to these alerts. Heatwave plans were tested in the 2022 heatwaves during which there were a significant number of excess deaths. As the severity and frequency of hot weather events increases, however, more action will be needed to protect vulnerable people and infrastructure.
- Adverse Weather and Health Plan: This new plan was launched by UK Health security Agency (UKHSA) in 2023 and creates new responsibilities for Local Authorities and others in responding to adverse weather events which may impact on public health. Reading Public Health and Emergency Planning are working on this activity.
- Extreme weather events: Service business continuity plans are in place to help prepare for such events, but it will be important to ensure that these reflect the changing risk profile associated with climate change and extreme weather.
- Climate impact assessment in decision-making: A protocol for climate impact assessment in Committee reports is now in place and being used by report authors - this includes tests to ensure that decisions are taking account of key climate impacts.
- Planning policy and new development: The Reading Local Plan includes policies on climate change adaptation (CC3) and flood risk (EN18) designed to ensure that new development is resilient to climate impacts. The Local Plan monitoring process should enable assessment of how well these policies are being applied, and the Local Plan review provides an opportunity to revisit policies which may support resilience to climate impacts. See 'Specific Actions'.
- 3rd National Adaptation Plan (NAP 3): Was published in July 2023 and provides an updated view of the key climate related risks and vulnerabilities facing the UK at national level (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/third-national-adaptation-programme-nap3#:~:text=The%20NAP3%20sets%20out%20the,under%20the%20Adaptation%20Reporting%20Power). It also emphasises the need for Local government to

ensure that local services are resilient to local climate impacts. We are expecting further clarification on what is expected by Local Government in terms of Resilience Planning.

- A programme of accredited Carbon Literacy training is being rolled out to priority cohorts of senior officers and members to help embed awareness of climate risk and response across the organisation.
- A Climate Change Adaptation Framework has been adopted. It sets out how services need to adapt to a change in climate.
- A number of strategies including the public realm and town centre strategies incorporate adaptation measures. For example, recognising the need to enable mobility of water resources in the urban environment for through sustainable urban drainage and through the provision of planting to encourage shade and reduction of flood risk factors. Engagement has taken place with utility companies, namely Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) and Thames Water regarding the incorporation of adaptation planning measures into their functions.
- The Council adopted a Climate Adaptation Framework at Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) committee on the 20th of November 2024. This now needs to be embedded in the Council's services, focussing first on the highest risks identified to establish targeted actions which services can embed into their service plans.
- Ensured the Local Plan review updates adaptation policies where required. November 2024
- Completed the corporate climate change adaptation framework for the Council. November 2024
- Submitted local plan review update (net zero and heat networks). April 2025.
- Worked with partners to launch and deliver the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy Action Plan

Risk	**Strategic Risk: Directorate of Children's Services - Lack of local special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) placement provision to meet current and future levels of demand. Insufficient provision impacts on the outcomes for children, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and High Needs Block (HNB) deficit.**	**Register: Strategic** **Risk Owner: Brian Grady**	**Residual Score 16**

Risk	Poor outcomes for children and failure to deliver a balanced budget position on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant as a result of increasing numbers of children with special educational needs and lack of local special provision.
Cause	Risk that the needs of children with SEND cannot be met in Reading -and/or 'Out of Borough' placements will be required, leading to costs exceeding budget and poorer outcomes for the children in question.
Potential Impact	Risk that the needs of children with SEND cannot be met in Reading and/or Out of Borough placements will be required, leading to costs exceeding budget and poorer outcomes for the children in question. Risk that the deficit on the High Needs Block continues to increase and puts at risk the financial stability of the council.

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	16	16	16	16
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	4	4	4	4
Residual Score	16	16	16	16

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required			
	Title	**Date for completion**	**Status**
1	New special school provision of up to 244 places to be available	01/09/2027	In Progress
2	Additionally resourced provision places in the secondary phase	30/09/2026	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**9**

Background Information

The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient school places for pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). There is a national and local shortage of resources and placements for children within SEND, in addition to an increase in demand for support and services. Following a steady increase in the number of Educational Health and Care Plan's (ECHP) since 2018, there has been a sharper increase in EHCP's in 2022/2023, which has been at a higher rate than the increase in the population of children and young people, meaning that a higher proportion of pupils now have an EHCP. Following the period of the pandemic more children and young people are being identified as having SEND, including in the early years, particularly increased levels of speech, language and communication needs and social and emotional mental health needs. There has also been an increase in children with autism. Collectively these needs have resulted in the increase in EHCP's, the number of which rose at a higher rate in the last year than previous years.

Demand for EHCPs is rising. As of November 2023, there were 1959 Children and Young People (CYP) aged 0-25 with EHCPs for whom the Council is responsible. This represents an increase in EHCPs of 12% since January 2023. If EHCP numbers had continued to rise at the 22/23 rate, we anticipated there being 2194 EHCP plans by September 2024. As of November 2024, there are 1972 children with an EHCP; a stabilising in terms of percentage increase, but with a greater proportion of EHCPs requiring additional funding.

From September 2024, projections have confirmed that Reading needs 1184 places for CYP with EHCPs outside of mainstream settings. From September 2024, all proposed Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARP's) opened, and Hamilton school increased its intake to 64 children, resulting in a total of 800 places available for children in ARPs (408) and Maintained Special Schools (MSS) (392). New all-through Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) provision has been explored, with a possible 140 places in total for which Reading children given priority from September 2024.

This means that there are 940 places available in INMSS/ARP/MSS for Reading children, but a need of 1184 places, leaving a shortfall of 244 places.

Participation in the Department of Education (DfE) Delivering Better Value programme established a future demand and financial forecast based on data from 2020 to 2023. This identified an unmitigated forecast of financial pressure, which, if not mitigated, would lead to an accrued budget pressure of £97,598,000 by 2027/28. The pressures are being driven through the significant increase in Education health and Care Plans from April 2022, and the increased demand pressures leading to more INMSS places being used, in the absence of other more cost effective school places being available. Planned mitigations reduce the projected budget pressure to £50,000,000 by 2030. Further special school places are needed to reduce the budget pressure further.

Planned Additionally Resourced Provision Places have been delivered for the 25/26 academic year. As of December 2025, RIBA Stage 3 work is progressing on the identified two school sites for the key action, new special school provision. However, the risk rating remains unchanged due to the ongoing financial pressures.

Existing Controls in Place

The local area SEND Strategy 2022-2027 sets out partnership actions to identify and respond to needs of children with SEND at the earliest opportunity and in the most efficient way and develop the appropriate range of provision to meet need. Joint partnership steering group for the strategy is overseeing action plan and monitoring progress. The following bullet points confirm the controls and measures in place from 2023 to present:

- New free special school opened in Wokingham September 2023, providing 75 places for Wokingham and Reading children, as a joint partnership between Reading and Wokingham Councils. 17 places have been secured for Reading children as part of the phased opening.
- An additional 90 places have been secured from local schools to deliver Additionally Resourced Provision from September 2023.
- Further places in Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) from April and September 2024 have been delivered.
- RBC have undertaken work to appraise options, including RBC owned assets and schools' sites to secure more mainstream and specialist school places for children with SEND for September 2025.
- Two independent special school providers have established additional local provision in the past nine months, which is helping meet immediate need for places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Exploring options with other providers to establish provision in the area for 2023/2024 continues.
- Regular High Needs Block (HNB) meetings monitor the spend in this area and inform forecasting. Monitoring occurs monthly.
- Recruitment to key Delivering Better Value posts completed. New SEND advisory and support service commenced January 2024.
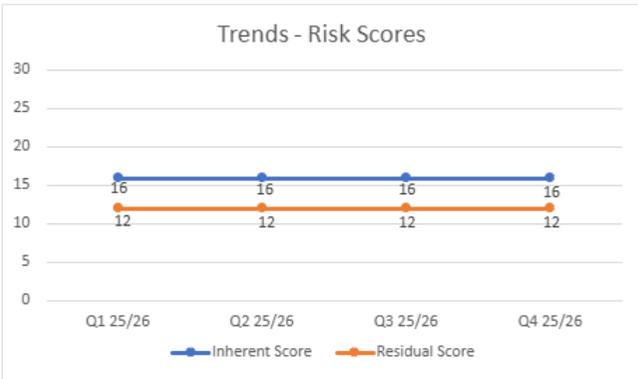
- Strategic Asset Review completed, identifying opportunities for special schools on community school sites to meet the needed 244 projected places.
Transition to adulthood planning and post 16 placements for children with SEND through closer working with Adult Social Care. SEND Strategy Steering Group (from April 2024)
- 'High needs block' deficit management plan being implemented; including EHCP reviews and demand management actions - High Needs Block Review Meeting. Executive Director and Chief Finance Officer present at these meetings.
- 10 more local specialist school places for children with SEND (Social, Emotional & Mental Health) through improved local provision - SEND Transformation Group
- Options for special school delivery secured, and work with schools underway overseen by the SEND Transformation Group and Corporate Management Team (CMT)
School sites reviewed for potential special school provision. November 2024
- Procurement of architects to confirm programme viability for four shortlisted options. November 2024
- Reviewed transition plans for top 50 children in high-cost placement, including those transitioning to adult services. November 2024
- Consideration of options for new special school provision presented to ACE Committee in January 2025
- 40 more 'Additionally Resourced Provision' places in North and East Planning Area. June 2025

Risk	**Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults**	Register: Strategic	**Residual Score 12**
		Risk Owner: Jo Purser	

Risk	Person(s) with care and support needs experiencing a serious incident, near miss or death
Cause	Delay in screening safeguarding concerns and completion of Section 42 enquiries, resulting in people waiting for a significant period without appropriate risk assessment or action taken.
Potential Impact	Harm, injury or death of person(s) to whom adult social care has a duty Potential of legal claim for negligence, corporate manslaughter Reputational damage Media coverage

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	16	16	16	16
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	3	3	3	3
Residual Score	12	12	12	12

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Trends - Risk Scores

Specific Actions Required

	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Gather feedback from people with lived experience to ensure services are shaped to meet the needs of the community.	30/06/2026	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**9**

Background Information

Deaths and serious incidents relating to abuse or neglect are reported to the Executive Director who raises as appropriate with the Chief Executive, Lead Member and Leader. They are also reported to West Berkshire Safeguarding Adult Board (WBSAB) which Reading Borough Council is the lead agency under the requirements of the Care Act 2014. The Safeguarding Review Panel (SAR Review Panel) which is a subcommittee of the Board considers all such cases in order to determine where a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) is required and reports its findings to the Board. All agencies represented on the Board have a duty of co-operation under the Care Act to cooperate with any such review and to consider and act on the learning from reviews to improve practice and take mitigating action to ensure such failures to safeguard are reduced and lessons are learnt.

Safeguarding Adults Reviews are published by the Board and reported onto the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who regulate Adult Social Care Statutory (ASC) Services whether provided directly by the Council or commissioned from external agencies.

This card was separated from a joint Risk Card with Children's Safeguarding in June 2024 to provider greater accuracy about each services ability to manage the risk.

The risk of likelihood has reduced due to concerns raised being screened within 48 hours, this enables immediate actions to be taken where necessary and make enquiries to identify risks and consider safety measures. August 2024.

Existing Controls in Place

- All Directorate staff and relevant other Officers receive mandatory training to assess safeguarding risks. Staff and Managers have regular refresher training which is mandatory and these are reported on completion to the 'Workforce Board' and Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) on a quarterly basis. Due to staff turnover and the frequency of staff refresher training, employees are continually required to update their knowledge.
- Supervision policy has been improved to ensure that staff receive 1-1 supervision from their managers where safeguarding is discussed and practice support is available.
- Ongoing support is provided through the Safeguarding Adults Team.
- Open safeguarding episodes are reviewed and reported weekly to the Executive Director and monthly through Working with People Board, Managers in the teams have oversight and support from senior managers.
- RBC follows the local policies and procedures, as set out by West Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board (WBSAB).
- All referrals received are screened, risk assessed and prioritisation decisions made. Process for this is well embedded.
- All learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR's) is used to improve practice across Adult Social Care and multi-agency partners. As new reviews / cases occur the Principal Social Worker (PSW's) is responsible for implementing appropriate processes and sharing information across the service.
- Inspection findings from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) are acted on in services provided directly by the Council or by external Providers where services are commissioned and/or supported. Procedures and staffing are in place to manage situations as they arise. Monitoring of providers occurs through Commissioning arrangements, to ensure that identified improvements occur.
- Directorate of Communities and Adult Social Care (DCASC) provides safeguarding and quality oversight of care settings and where Serious Concerns (SC) are identified.
- Providers are held to account for improvements required and quality assures care quality through the contractual relationships which are commissioned. Process in place.
- Head of Strategic Safeguarding, Strategy and Improvement recruited to and commenced in role in June 2025.
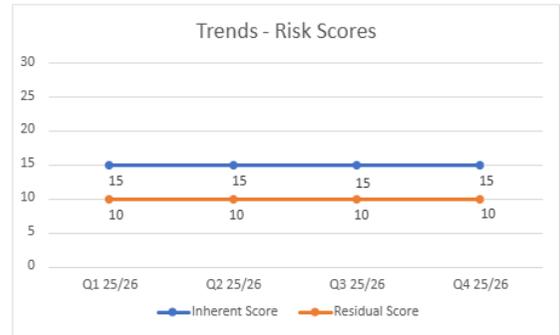- Pan Berkshire Policies and Procedures agreed and in place.

- Effective relationships embedded with key partners and forums.
- Management and supervision of staff in place across the service.
- Berkshire West Safeguarding Board in place
- Quality Assurance Framework in place
- Established and recruited to a Permanent Strategic Safeguarding Lead, recruitment process.

| **Risk** | **Strategic Risk: Failure to fulfil our obligations under the PREVENT Duty** | **Register: Strategic**

Risk Owner: Jackie Yates | **Residual Score 10** |

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Inherent	3	3	3	3
Inherent Score	15	15	15	15
Impact Residual	5	5	5	5
Likelihood Residual	2	2	2	2
Residual Score	10	10	10	10

Risk	Failure to fulfil our obligations under the PREVENT Duty.
Cause	The terrorist threat we are currently facing is multifaceted with a changing and diverse landscape particularly driven by social media, highlighted by the disorder after the Southport incident on 29 July 2024 and Manchester Synagogue incident October 2025. Limited resources. Area for development: Partnership working.
Potential Impact	Reading suffered a terrorist attack in June 2020. Since the start of 2017, (as of April 2025) agencies and law enforcement have disrupted 39 late-stage plots and there have been 16 domestic terror attacks. These tragic attacks have caused deaths and casualties among people going about their daily lives as well as impacting on the whole community. The most recent attack in October 2025 took place at a Manchester synagogue where two people died. A terrorist attack in the UK by a self-initiated terrorist (S-IT) is likely and could relate to either Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism or Islamist Terrorism. Low-sophistication methodologies, such as use of bladed weapons or vehicles, remain the most likely method of attack across all ideologies.

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required

	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Raise awareness across organisations and communities about the increasing threat from extremist and fascination with violence influence on social media and gaming platforms	31/07/2026	In Progress
2	Monitor community tensions to understand and mitigate risks to vulnerable groups and the wider community	31/07/2026	In Progress
3	Promote awareness of the Prevent and Channel process to professionals, the voluntary sector and business community to safeguard young and vulnerable individuals	31/07/2026	In Progress
4	Ensure the local Reading Channel Panel is an effective and knowledgeable working partnership in managing individuals referred for support	31/07/2026	In Progress
5	Cases adopted by the panel are offered appropriate and targeted support on a voluntary basis	31/07/2026	In Progress
6	Partners deliver an annual tiered training according to role to ensure staff have the knowledge and capabilities to understand their role in identifying and supporting individuals vulnerable to radicalisation	31/07/2026	In Progress

	Predicted Score	10

Background Information

The Prevent Programme is one of 4 strands of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy- Contest (the others being Pursue, Protect, Prepare) and is therefore one element of the government's approach to reduce the risk of terrorism in the area.

A Counter Terrorism South East Local Profile (CTLP) produced each March, is used to inform the local action plan and updates are reported to the Prevent Management Group Quarterly by the Counter Terrorism police team. The CTLP has highlighted the continuing risk of community tensions in the profile March 2025. Following the murders in Southport of three young girls, riots broke out first in Southport fuelled by misinformation on social media and led to violent disorder across the country. This has been linked to Extreme Right Wing (ERW) narratives. Subsequently a Prevent Learning Review (PLR) has been published relating to the perpetrator, which will lead to updates to Prevent and Channel guidance documents over 2025. Policy updates have been released through 2025 which aim to mitigate risk by reinforcing the Prevent Category of Fixation with Violence and Mass Casualty Attacks and how to manage repeat Prevent referrals. A new policy has been introduced whereby cases in overt counter terrorism investigation can be referred to Prevent.

Existing Controls in Place

The aim of the Prevent Duty is to safeguard people from supporting terrorism or becoming terrorists:
- The Prevent Action Plan 2025/2026 (annual plan) has been approved by the Prevent Management Group in July and was approved at the Community Safety Partnership in September 2025. It is informed by the Counter Terrorism Local Profile and local risk assessment with actions across partners to mitigate risks identified. The plan is signed off annually by the multi-agency Prevent Management Group and Community Safety Partnership.
- There is also a statutory requirement to produce an annual training plan and community and engagement plan to build skills and knowledge and raise awareness across our community. Updated plans have been produced over August / September 2025 informed by the action plan.
- Prevent Delivery is assessed annually by the Home Office against a set of seven benchmarks and in 2025 was assessed as exceeding against all seven.
- The Home Office Prevent advisor also attends the Prevent Management Group at its quarterly meetings where quarterly updates against the action plan are presented.
- The multi-agency Channel Panel which delivers bespoke support to individuals identified as being susceptible to radicalisation is also subject to an annual assurance by the Home Office. A self- assessment was submitted in May 2024 showing all five key areas of control fully met. The 2025 assurance was postponed because of the work being done on policy and guidance in respect of Channel following Southport. It has been announced that self-assessment annual assurance will be replaced by panel observations and feedback on learning and development needs.
- With the rising threat of influence from extremists on-line, a key aim is to raise local awareness in the community about keeping safe on-line.
- The Council's website has dedicated pages for Prevent and on-line safety aimed at children and young people. The website is updated with any new information as required. In 2023/2024 we ran a banner campaign in playgroups which remain in place and distributed QR code stickers to schools with a link to on-line safety information on the Council's website.
- Since 2023 we have run Facebook campaigns to raise awareness:
- Facebook campaigns ran targeting parents and carers with on-line safety information.

- Social Media Campaign in October 2024 (Hate Crime Awareness week). Facebook: reach 2,335 Twitter Reach: 3,252 people and accompanied by residents' newsletter article and February Safer Internet Day 2025 Reach: 814. In October 2025, a further campaign took place during Hate Crime Awareness week| 8 posts generated 7,359 impressions with an engagement rate of 0.8%.
- On November 2024 an on-line safety summit took place for young people and practitioners aimed at better understanding of what adults can do to help young people keep safe on-line. A digital goodie bag was produced for attendees including a video made by young people. In February 2025, a small group of young people taking part in work experience at the council produced a video about on-line safety. A year two Young People's Summit took place on 20 November 2025 with a new digital resource pack produced for attendees.
- From summer 2024 online safety posters have been displayed in GP surgeries and pharmacies.
- In January 2025 the Safer Reading Forum received a presentation on Prevent and the importance of on-line safety. Briefings are regularly offered for councillors and Safeguarding Leads in Schools. In June 2025, the Reading Voluntary Action Safeguarding forum received a presentation on Prevent and a discussion took place on on-line safety. In November 2025, secondary and primary school SEND teacher forums received a presentation on the importance of on-line safety in schools. Work is underway with the voluntary sector to hold a community and faith leaders meeting to discuss together how we can do more to raise awareness about keeping safe online and keeping venues safe to mitigate the risk of a terrorist attack.
- In March 2024, a new mandatory Safeguarding and Prevent course was launched for all staff to build knowledge and understanding about the Prevent Duty and spotting the signs of individuals being radicalised. The compliance rate was 85.4% in April 2025. The Prevent lead provides virtual training sessions for front line staff and councillors and briefings for businesses.
- In March 2024 and September 2025(Hydra) joint development days for all Channel Panel members took place for four Berkshire boroughs
- In 2023, there was a successful joint bid to the Home Office for funding which delivered training for the voluntary sector in April/May 2023
- A bid to provide a briefing video and resources package for the business sector has been submitted for 2024. The Home Office has provided a set of Communication assets to circulate to businesses.
- In 2025 a bid to develop knowledge and upskill Channel Panel member about Neurodivergence and pathways to support relevant cases in panel was approved and will start March 2026.
- Action Counters Terrorism operational and Prevent briefing sessions take place every year for pubs and retailers delivered by the Council in partnership with Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE). Sessions took place in Oct and November 2023, July 2024 and May 2025.
- Nationally, following the adoption of the On-line Safety Bill, the government commissioned a sprint review which was set out in their manifesto. This explored how we can improve responses to extremism including in the online space, to stop people being radicalised. The online space is specifically mentioned because its known encourage the spreading of extremist views, and this work has completed with actions announced by the Home Secretary in December 2024 including tackling on-line radicalisation.

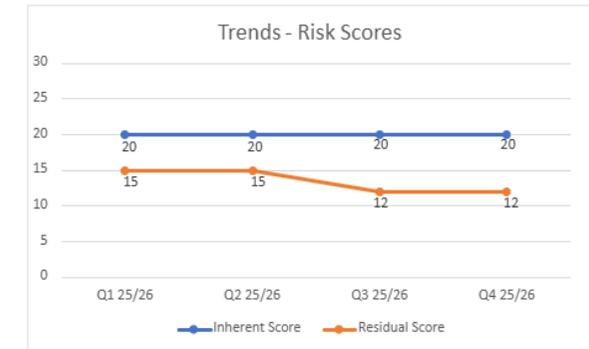| Risk	**Strategic Risk: Failure to mitigate risks or manage issues, associated with health & safety, appropriately**	**Register: Strategic** **Risk Owner: Louise Duffield**	**Residual Score 12**

		Risk Scores				
Risk	Failure to mitigate risks or manage issues, associated with health & safety (H&S), appropriately	**Risk Type**	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
		Impact Inherent	5	5	5	5
Cause	Ineffective health and safety policies, structures or culture.	Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
		Inherent Score	20	20	20	20
Potential Impact	Risks include unsafe working practices, lack of robust processes and required procedures, inadequate reviews of Health and Safety risks to required timescales. Resulting in elevated risks of harm to staff, and civil and criminal litigation being taken against the Council.	Impact Residual	5	5	4	4
		Likelihood Residual	3	3	3	3
		Residual Score	15	15	12	12

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required			
	Title	**Date for completion**	**Status**
1	Completion of Directorate H&S Action Plans (2025-2028)	31/03/2028	In Progress
2	High risk work equipment inspection and maintenance is carried out by competent individuals	31/12/2026	In Progress
3	Outcome of Internal Audit findings to be implemented	31/10/2026	In Progress
4	Compliance audits and fire risk assessments: Where actions for improvement have been identified evidence is provided to demonstrate that the action has been completed.	31/03/2027	In Progress
5	Mandatory and job specific H&S training is completed	31/12/2026	In Progress
6	Suitable health surveillance is undertaken with appropriate controls put in place.	31/12/2026	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**9**

Background Information

Areas of weakness had been found in risk assessments, safe operating procedures, training, records and local management's monitoring of activities. One incident resulted in an intervention from the Health & Safety Executive who identified breaches in legislation including failing to plan and risk assess activities.

Q3 2025/26 Wider range of controls in place across the Council.

Existing Controls in Place

Existing controls in place:
- Priority changes are being implemented and a full review of the health and safety model across the council has been initiated.
- Health & Safety (H&S) Policy and Codes of Practice in place. As of February 2026, only two COPs remain outstanding.
- Building Compliance meetings to review process and systems. Action Plan for Housing Repairs in place and progressing (July 2025).
- Health and Safety Boards (Committees) at Directorate and Corporate Level meeting every quarter. Unions present. Monitoring of health and safety data occurs at these meetings.
- Corporate health and safety team in place and compliance teams within Property Services and Housing Property Services.
- SharePoint site set up to record directorate data. H&S intranet page makes all Codes of practice (COP's) available to all staff.
- New audit process and programme in place which focusses actions on higher risk service areas. Programmed Audits being completed (July 2025).
- H&S Training programmes in place across the council. (Corporate and high-risk service areas)
- Water Safety Partnership (WSP) established involving numerous various partners which meets regularly.   Action Plan in place. (July 2025)
- In-depth review of health and safety policies, structures and culture across the council completed.
- Corporate Property Services undertake 'Building Compliance' Audits of corporate properties with register maintained and actions monitored.
- Automated workflows within Directorate Action Logs to ensure actions are completed. Progress monitored by Health and Safety Boards.
- Risk assessments monitored at H&S Boards (quarterly) and CMT (quarterly).
- Zero Tolerance Policy is in place. Action Plan implemented. Revised banning process for the most serious offenders being developed. (July 2025)
- Core health and safety training now has a mandatory refresh every two years. Programme for next 12 months launched. (August 2025)
- SharePoint site set up for storage and tracking of risk assessments, self-audits and Directorate Health & Safety Board's Action Logs (June 2025).
- Housing H&S Action Plan agreed and being worked on. 2025
- Internal Audit carried out audit of H&S governance across the council - draft report provides 'reasonable assurance'.
- Water Safety - Recommendations received from Fire Service for rescue equipment at specified locations. Action plan to be developed post Risk Assessment report received.
- New schools online training courses launched (February 2026)
- Lone worker device re-tender approved and being rolled out across the council (February 2026)
- Water Safety: Working group with partners set up and an outline plan developed.
- Health and safety controls of contractors are in place and monitored. Central list of contractors generated.

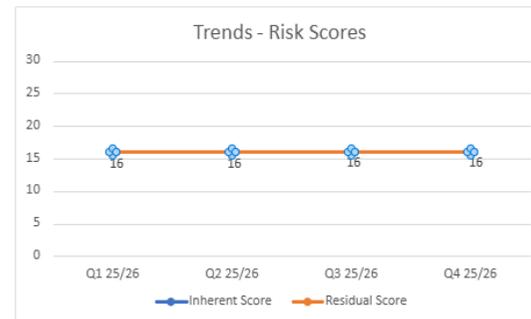| Risk	**Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable children**	**Register: Strategic** **Risk Owner: Lisa James**	**Residual Score** **16**

Risk	Child, young person or children experiencing a serious incident, near miss or death
Cause	High level of risk to a child, including unforeseen risk, inadequate risk assessment and management, lack of or poor safeguarding response, failure to provide adequate health and safety measures.
Potential Impact	Harm, injury or death of person(s) to whom Children's Social Care has a duty Children experience serious harm and negative long-term impacts Potential of legal claim for negligence, corporate manslaughter Reputational damage Media coverage

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Impact Inherent	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Inherent	4	4	4	4
Inherent Score	16	16	16	16
Impact Residual	4	4	4	4
Likelihood Residual	4	4	4	4
Residual Score	16	16	16	16

Trends - Risk Scores

Risk Status

Treat the risk – agreeing to implement further controls to change the nature of the risk

Specific Actions Required			
	Title	**Date for completion**	**Status**
1	Review multi-agency safeguarding arrangements	31/10/2026	In Progress
		Predicted Score	**9**

Background Information

Our role is to safeguard vulnerable children and protect and support children who have been subject to neglect, abuse, exploitation or harm outside the home.

In the Directorate of Children's Services, there has been an increase in the number of children referred into the service with more complex needs who require an immediate safeguarding response. A large proportion of the workforce consists of newly qualified social workers and overseas workers, requiring higher levels of support, supervision and management oversight. The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans (CPP's) has increased and service delivery is mostly at the higher end of complexity and intensity, with practitioners working with high numbers of children.

Q1 - 2025/26 -There has been a lack of progress in the timeliness and quality of practice for children in need and children in need of protection, which has resulted in an increase in the residual risk score, until additional mitigations have embedded and there is sustained evidence of impact.

Q1/2 2025/26 update: In March 2025 Reading received a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), a partnership inspection of the impact of domestic abuse on children under 7yrs. The JTAI findings resulted in a 'Priority Action' for the partnership. Single and multi-agency rapid improvement plans were put in place immediately to respond to the findings of the inspection. Whilst rapid improvement has been achieved, it is imperative that measures are embedded and impact is evidenced and sustained before the risk score can be reduced.

Any serious harm, injury or death of a child is referred to BWSCP (Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership), through any of the partnership agencies (social care, health, police or education). For RBC Children's Services a Serious Incident Notification (SIN) is made to Ofsted, a Rapid Review (RR) follows and a recommendation is made to the National Safeguarding Panel (NSP) if a Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) should be undertaken or if local learning would suffice to ensure learning is adequate and risk is mitigated. CSPR's are published and local learning reviews are shared with the wider partnership to ensure actions are taken to mitigate risk and learning positively impacts on practice.

Existing Controls in Place

- Safeguarding practice is governed by statute and is highly regulated and inspected by Ofsted.
- Local guidance and practice expectations are set out locally, in accessible format. Children's Services follows local policies and procedures, as set out by Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BWSCP), alongside local practice guidance, where appropriate.
- In April 2024 an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by Ofsted graded children's services as Requires Improvement, with 'Good' sub judgements for children looked after and care leavers. An action plan was in place to deliver against the areas for improvement, and these actions have now been aligned with the JTAI findings and action plan.
- The fostering service was graded as Good in July 2024.
- The Youth Justice Service (YJS) was inspected in September 2024 and judged as Inadequate. An Improvement Plan is in place that is driven by the partnership Youth Justice Board (YJB). Positive progress is being made against the action plan, endorsed by the National Youth Justice Board who provide additional oversight and scrutiny.
- An extra familial risk/contextual safeguarding pathway for adolescents has been established to provide support for young people exposed to exploitation risks, potential gang affiliation, criminality and risk outside of their family. A dedicated team, Reconnect, delivers a bespoke service to these children and has close links with the missing children team - to understand and respond to associated risk.

- The leadership of Community Safety and Children's Services, work in partnership with Thames Valley Police (TVP), the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Integrated Care System (BOB ICS), and the Berkshire West Adolescent Risk Group (BWARG) to ensure an effective safeguarding response to the risks of extra-familial harm, exploitation and serious violence.
- All staff receive mandatory training to assess safeguarding risks when commencing employment, with regular refresher training which is mandatory and reported to the directorate Management Team on a quarterly basis.
- Supervision is crucial to provide clear guidance and decision making for children. Managers attended supervision workshops at the end of 2024 and in 2025 managers were assigned a more senior manager as a mentor to strengthen supervision skills. Performance reports support the monitoring of compliance to the supervision policy, and the quality of supervision is scrutinised through audits and remains an area of ongoing focus.
- A new Foundations in Practice programme has been rolled in Autumn 2025 out, for all social work staff and managers, spanning practice and supervision knowledge and skills.
- CSIB (Children's Services Improvement Board) was launched in November and is independently chaired on a 6 weekly basis to ensure our improvement journey is on track and delivering against our Rapid Improvement Plans
- Following the 2025 JTAI Children's Services receive oversight from a DfE Improvement Advisor, report on progress to the DfE and receive 3-4 monthly Monitoring Visits by Ofsted (first one in November 2025).
- A multi-agency partnership group, chaired by the DfE Improvement Advisor, oversees the progress of a multi-agency improvement plan to safeguard children.
- External auditors scrutinise practice, identify and share learning to develop practice and build on areas of strengths.
- The Performance and Quality Assurance frameworks, including audits and performance meetings across teams and services, provide forums to identify and address safeguarding risks. Both the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) have been reviewed, and a new Performance Framework and Quality Assurance Program have been launched (June 2025)
- Quarterly learning reviews provide a forum to share learning from practice and complaints, including serious incidents and safeguarding risks and to mitigate future risks.
- A Need-to-Know process is in place to alert senior managers to risks for individual children and to provide assurance as to how those risks are to be mitigated.
- All referrals are screened, risks assessed and prioritisation decisions made in Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA). This is well established and subject to dip-sampling and auditing to ensure robust, consistent application of threshold decision making.
- The Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP) Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Oversight Board was established in 2024 to hold all partners to account for consistent service delivery that meets children's safeguarding needs.
- Learning from Safeguarding Practice Reviews or local learning reviews is used to improve practice across Children's Services and multi-agency partners. Monitoring of the quality of commissioned providers, including foster carers and children's homes, takes place through our Commissioning team and through our Independent Reviewing Officers to ensure that children are safeguarded and any identified improvements are made.
- The Edge of Care Service was established in 2025 to prevent children from becoming looked after, reduce escalation of risk and to support children to remain or return home where it is safe to do so.
- Increased partnership understanding and awareness of safeguarding duties and procedures by reissuing BWSCP policies and procedures in March 2025.
- In the context of multiple improvement plans it is essential for systems leaders in Reading to have a coherent and integrated oversight of improvement across children's services; and for the interdependencies across children's services to be fully understood. Senior leaders have introduced an Integrated Improvement Plan for Children's Services and a Rapid Improvement Plan for Children's Social Care. June 2025
- A multi-agency JTAI plan has been created with partners and is scrutinised and monitored through weekly meetings overseen by the Director for Transformation, Improvement and QA (interim) and the Executive Director of Children's Services (June 2025)
- Rolled out the refreshed Early Help Strategy and our response to the national Families First Partnership Programme through the One Reading Partnership to ensure that needs are met across the partnership to drive the delivery of Family Hubs. June 2025
- Rapid improvement plan in place to address risk in the Together for Families service to positively impact on the timeliness and quality of practice and reduce the number of children practitioners are working with - Completed Action - December 2025

- Setting up Children's Improvement Board and recruiting an Independent Chair to drive improvement when children's services moves back into RBC - Completed Action - December 2025
- Pinecroft Shared Care children's home has been inspected to be Outstanding by Ofsted.
- Cressingham have been inspected to be Good by Ofsted.
- 3 new Children's Residential Care Homes will be launched in 2026.
- Strengthening the front door to ensure that need is met by Family Help and/or universal/community services at the earliest opportunity preventing escalation of need and risk.
- Multi-agency action plan to ensure timely, robust and good quality safeguarding processes are in place.