



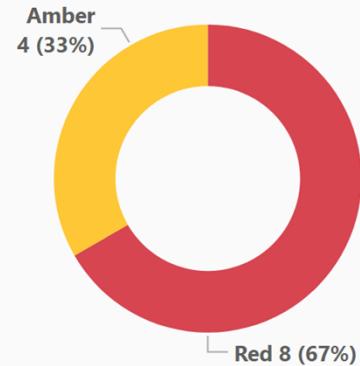
Strategic Risk Register - Summary - Q2 25/26

Select Register

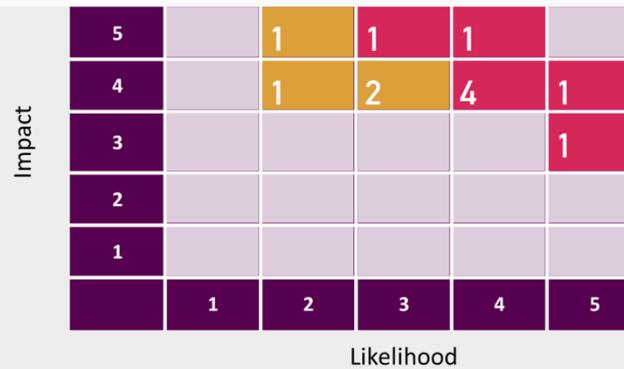
Strategic



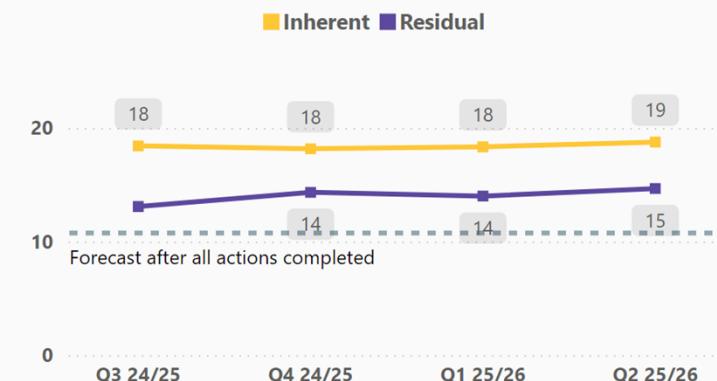
Risk Status



Risk Distribution



Average Risk Scores



Risk Title

Risk Title	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Strategic Risk Failure to safeguard vulnerable children	9	16	16	16
Strategic Risk: Cyber - Risk of loss from cyber attack	16	16	12	20
Strategic Risk: Directorate of Childrens Services (BFFC) - 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
Strategic Risk: Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change (Climate adaptation)	16	16	16	16
Strategic Risk: Failure to deliver zero carbon commitments (Climate mitigation)	15	15	15	15
Strategic Risk: Failure to fulfil our obligations under the PREVENT Duty	10	10	10	10
Strategic Risk: Failure to mitigate risks or manage issues, associated with health & safety, appropriately	15	15	15	15
Strategic Risk: Failure to retain and recruit staff	12	16	12	12
Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults	12	12	12	12
Strategic Risk: Information Governance - Failure to protect personal data	8	8	8	8
Strategic Risk: Risk to adherence to Care Act Statutory duties as residents are waiting in Adult Social Care	12	12	16	16
Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver a balanced budget as a result of demand pressures and achieving income targets.	16	20	20	20



Risk:
Strategic Risk Failure to safeguard vulnerable children

Register:
BFFC

Q2 25/26

Risk owner:
James, Lisa

16

Residual

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	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	3	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	3	4	4	4
Residual	9	16	16	16

Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 3 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions

9

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	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	29/09/2025	In progress
2	Multi-agency action plan to ensure timely, robust and good quality safeguarding processes are in place	30/01/2026	In progress
3	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	30/01/2026	In progress
4	Setting up Children's Improvement Board and recruiting an Independent Chair to drive improvement when children's services moves back into RBC	31/10/2025	In progress

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 BFFC, 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 Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) 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

- Risks relating to children's services are managed by Brighter Futures for Children, who have their own risk management arrangements. 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. BFFC follows the 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 Joint Targeted Area Inspection (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 Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), 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 BFfC Board and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) 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.
- The Quality Assurance and Impact Committee (QAIC) is chaired by the Chair of the company and scrutinises the performance of the service on a monthly basis. From June 2025, membership was expanded to include the RBC Chief Executive Officer (CEO), RBC Section 151 Officer and a Department for Education (DfE) Improvement Advisor.
- 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 Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership (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 Quality Assurance (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



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Cyber - Risk of loss from cyber attack

Register:
DOR

Q2 25/26
20
Residual

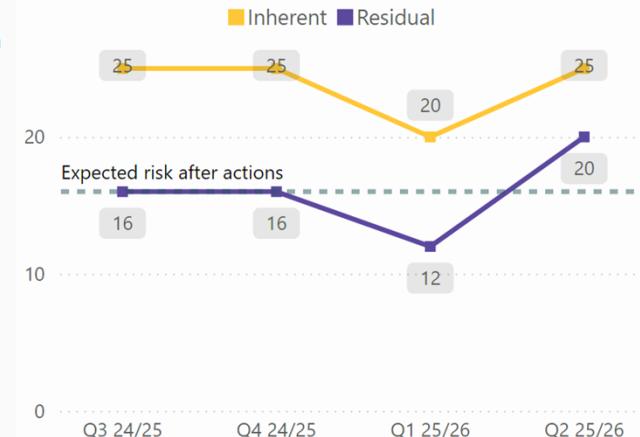
Cause

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 actions is exerting downward pressure on likelihood, this is balanced by worsening of the threat environment. (See first ever Government Cyber Security Strategy to step up Britain's defence and resilience - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)).

Potential Impact

Loss of service, loss of reputation, legal challenges, recovery costs.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	5	5	4	5
Inherent	25	25	20	25
Impact (Residual)	4	4	3	4
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	4	5
Residual	16	16	12	20

Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 4 and impact of 4.

Expected risk score after actions

16

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Implementation of Security information and Event Management (SIEM)	28/11/2025	Not started
2	Implementation of Defender 2	30/11/2025	Not started
3	Achieve Cyber Essentials Plus certification (delayed as a result of delays in legacy application replacement)	31/12/2025	Not started
4	Introduction of the Customer & Case Management new IT system to remove old software	31/12/2025	In progress

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 (RBC and BFfC) 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, Marks & Spencer's (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 the last quarter 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 BFfC and RBC.

Existing Controls

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 by both the Council and Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC). In place and ongoing.
- 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).
- Conduct Local Government Cyber Assessment Framework assessment and remediation plan
- 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 is planned for all managers on the 24th of September at the Team Talk session.

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 Directorate of Resources (DoR) services; Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS and Directorate of Communities and Adult Social Care (DCASC) to be completed - Action completed December 2024
- Carrying out actions from the ransomware simulation rehearsal April 2025.



Strategic Risk: Directorate of Childrens Services (BFtC) - 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.

Register:
BFtC
Risk owner:
Grady, Brian

Q2 25/26
16
Residual

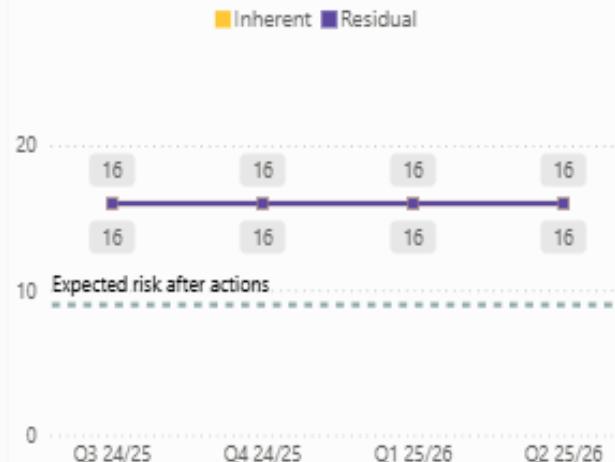
Cause

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.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 3 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions
9

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
▲			
1	New special school provision of up to 244 places to be available	31/12/2025	In progress
2	Additionally resourced provision places in the secondary phase	31/12/2025	In progress

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). Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) works in partnership with Reading Borough Council (RBC) and other stakeholders to discharge this duty. 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 BFFC 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.

As of Q3 2024, all planned Additionally Resourced Provision Places have been delivered for the new academic year, and we have made progress on identifying a school site for the key action, a new special school, even though this is not yet finalised and confirmed. However, the risk rating remains unchanged due to the ongoing financial pressures.

Existing Controls

- 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
- 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
- Brighter Future for Children and 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, including identification of preferred options and engagement with schools who are identified as preferred options. This was 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 Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education (ACE) Committee in January 2025.
- 40 more 'Additionally Resourced Provision' places in North and East Planning Area. June 2025



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to adapt to the impacts of climate change
(Climate adaptation)

Register:
DEGNS
Risk owner:
Gee, Emma

Q2 25/26
16
Residual

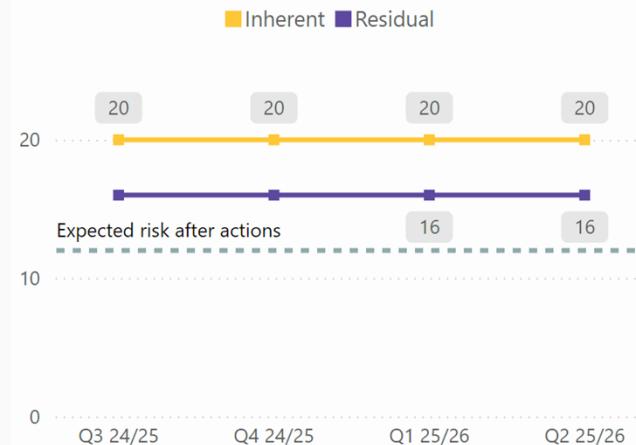
Cause

Inadequate planning and preparedness and long-term planning to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Potential Impact

Climate change impacts (hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters, and more extreme weather events) have a range of negative social, economic and environmental consequences, up to and including loss of life, as well as amplifying other risks (e.g. to public health, economic security, service continuity, infrastructure and supply chains). Action to adapt can reduce impacts, though the likelihood of such impacts occurring remains high, and generally rising in the coming decades, in the context of global warming which is 'baked in' as a result of historic emissions.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	20	20	20	20
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Residual	16	16	16	16

Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 4 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions

12

Specific Actions Required

Actions	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)	30/03/2026	Not started
2	Continue to roll-out Carbon Literacy training to priority cohorts of senior officers and members throughout 2025/2026	30/03/2026	In progress
3	Incorporate adaptation measures into the Town Centre and Public Realm Strategies	30/03/2026	In progress
4	Work with partners to launch and deliver the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy Action Plan	19/11/2025	In progress

Background Information

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 aren't currently the resources to drive this work through so the risk won't effectively be mitigated.

Existing Controls

- 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): 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.



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to deliver zero carbon commitments (Climate mitigation)

Register:
DEGNS
Risk owner:
Gee, Emma

Q2 25/26
15
Residual

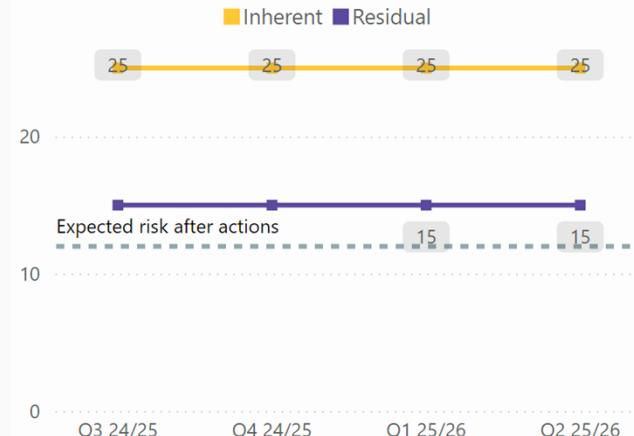
Cause

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).

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Inherent	25	25	25	25
Impact (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Likelihood (Residual)	5	5	5	5
Residual	15	15	15	15

Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 4 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions

12

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	New capital bids to continue decarbonisation of capital assets (under consideration)	29/09/2025	In progress
2	Climate training roll out to priority cohorts (officers and members) to continue through 2025/2026	30/03/2026	In progress
3	Publish climate emergency strategy with partners 25-30	19/11/2025	In progress
4	Influencing government policy through ADEPT, Blueprint Coalition and other bodies. (ADEPT - Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport)	30/03/2026	In progress
5	Climate emergency communication campaign implemented	30/03/2026	In progress
6	Heat Network detailed project development	31/12/2025	In progress
7	Solar Investment Programme	31/12/2025	In progress
8	Reading Bus Depot Electric Vehicles	30/09/2025	In progress
9	Levelling up Fund Decarb of Hexagon and Civic	30/03/2026	In progress

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.

Existing Controls

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 2020-2025, which includes action plans for all key policy areas (endorsed by Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (SEPT) Committee November 2020). Implementation ongoing and review of Strategy for the period 2025-2030 is underway. This process was initiated with a successful 'Reading Leaders' Summit on Climate' on 22nd March 2024 at the start of what Reading Climate Change Partnership is framing as the 'Year of Climate Engagement'.
- 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 and delivery ongoing.
- 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 2024.
- 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 includes significant investment designed to directly or indirectly 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

- While the Council's revenue budgets for dedicated work on climate change are modest in isolation, 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 build ownership of key actions via a review of the Climate Emergency Strategy which is now underway with a view to updating the Strategy for the period 2025-2030. Reading Climate Change Partnership Board has now implemented this engagement plan and Dialogue Matters won an award for their Reading project. This included a programme of events at the Reading Climate Festival (8-21 June 2024 & 7-21 June 2025) and a series of 3 deliberative events with key stakeholders planned for June, September and November 2024 now completed. A draft strategy has now been published for final stakeholder feedback ahead of consultation in Summer 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 58% 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 has been broadly 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 72.7% cut since 2008/2009 but the most recent report shows an increase of 1.2%. Further investment will, however, be needed to meet the net zero by 2030 target and without this the gap between target and actual will widen. Monitoring and reporting on an annual basis is in place. Awaiting new government data for 2023 emissions - due end of June 2025.

- RBC emissions for 2024 will be available from November 2025.

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 which are in the process of being implemented, including:

- 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 has been updated and re-issued for the 2024-2025 Service Plans.
- 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 new government have made some resources available through retrofit for which RBC have just joined the Portsmouth led Consortium, offering some 2250 retrofits per annum across 31 Local Authorities in the South. For Reading, this represents approximately 0.1% of the housing stock, which is 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. Currently preparing a capital bid for the Town Hall.



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

Register:
DOR
Risk owner:
Yates, Jackie

Q2 25/26
10
Residual

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. 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 15 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.

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.

Risk Status

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

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Raise awareness across organisations and communities about the increasing threat from extremist and fascinatation with violence influence on social media and gaming platforms	30/03/2026	In progress
2	Monitor community tensions to understand and mitigate risks to vulnerable groups and the wider community	30/03/2026	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	30/03/2026	In progress
4	Ensure the local Reading Channel Panel is an effective and knowledgeable working partnership in managing individuals referred for support	30/03/2026	In progress
5	Cases adopted by the panel are offered appropriate and targeted support on a voluntary basis	30/03/2026	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	30/03/2026	In progress

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

- 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 will be presented to 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.
- 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

- On 20 November 2024, an on-line safety summit took place in Reading's Town Hall 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 further summit is now in planning stage for November 2026.
- 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 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, a joint development day for all Channel Panel members took place for four Berkshire boroughs with a further Hydra training day will take place on 23 September 2025.
- 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.
- 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:
DOR

Risk owner:
Duffield, Louise

Q2 25/26

15

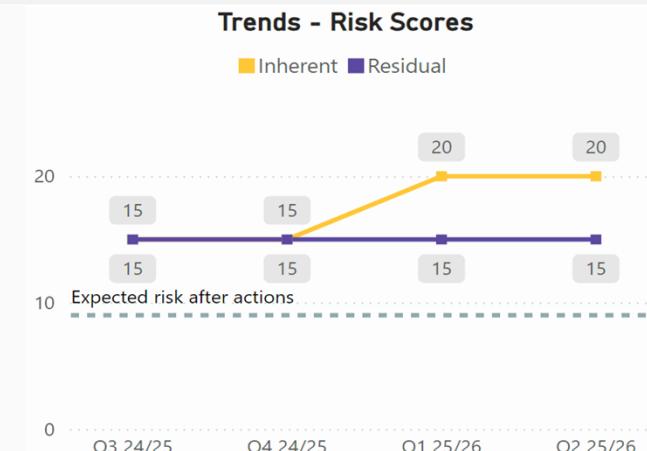
Residual

Cause

Ineffective health and safety policies, structures or culture.

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.



Risk Status

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

Risk Type	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Impact (Inherent)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Inherent)	3	3	4	4
Inherent	15	15	20	20
Impact (Residual)	5	5	5	5
Likelihood (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Residual	15	15	15	15

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 3 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions
9

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Water Safety: Develop an overarching plan with partners. Focus on learning from recent incidents and working with Partners and education to increase awareness of the risk	28/11/2025	In progress
2	Health and safety controls of contractors are in place and monitored. Central list of contractors to be generated	29/09/2025	In progress
3	Internal Service Level Agreements are reviewed and updated to ensure that specifications for work are sufficiently detailed with adequate time allocated in advance of the work to be able to design safety controls.	29/09/2025	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.	30/03/2026	In progress
5	Mandatory and job specific H&S training is completed	30/03/2026	In progress
6	Suitable health surveillance is undertaken with appropriate controls put in place.	30/03/2026	In progress
7	Work equipment inspection and maintenance is carried out by competent individuals	31/10/2025	In progress
8	Clarity between property teams as to their roles and areas of responsibilities – Corporate Property Services, Housing Property Services and Adult Social Care.	30/11/2025	In progress
9	Water Safety - Recommendations received from Fire Service for rescue equipment at specified locations. Action plan to be developed post Risk Assessment report received	29/09/2025	In progress
10	Water Safety - Directorates to complete actions identified in RoSPA Report	29/09/2025	In progress

Background Information

A number of health and safety incidents have occurred over the last few months (2024) that on investigation have found shortfalls in compliance. Areas of weakness were 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.

There has been an increase in water safety incidents involving the waterways within the Borough.

The Q2 2024/2025 Inherent score has reduced due to continued senior management focus in the area and now more established H&S Controls.

The Q1 2025/2026 Residual score has remained the same because of a number of issues which have come to light following audits and investigations.

Existing Controls

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. 30 of 33 Codes of Practice reviewed and updated (June 2025).
- 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 (monthly).
- 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 Boards Action Logs (June 2025).
- Housing H&S Action Plan agreed and being worked on. 2025



Risk: Strategic Risk: Failure to retain and recruit staff

Register:
DOR

Risk owner:
Cook, Kathryn

Q2 25/26

12

Residual

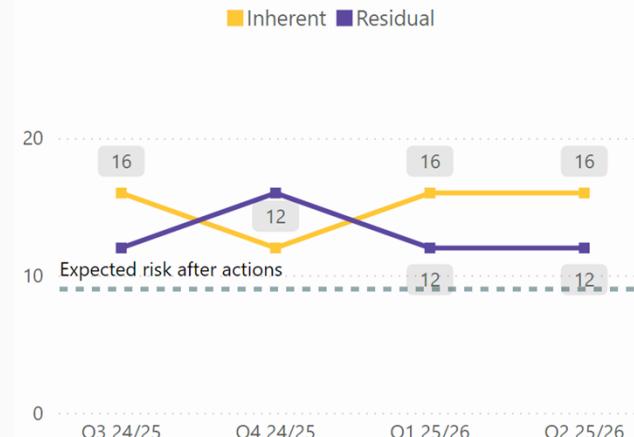
Cause

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.

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 3 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions

9

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
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	30/03/2026	In progress
2	Developing closer links to the University in order to attract appropriate recruits, particularly in relation to hard to fill roles.	30/03/2026	In progress
3	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).	28/11/2025	In progress
4	Disability statement and action plan	29/09/2025	In progress
5	Anti racism statement and Action Plan launch	31/10/2025	In progress

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

Reading Borough Council

- 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 decreased to an average of 61 days (July 2025). Success rate of recruitment has increased to 83% (July 2025). 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 2024 were encouraging with the council receiving the second highest application numbers on record, and calendar year to date the number of job applications has increased by a further 53%. 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 continue 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. The practicality of introducing an annual Apprenticeship Awards ceremony is being explored (currently anticipated to align with Apprenticeship week).
- 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 2024 survey ran throughout June, closing the first week of July. Questions asked were identical to previous surveys (to enable tracking of responses over time). A corporate action plan has been developed alongside action plans for each Executive Director (ED) area. Progress with implementing these actions is being monitored by Corporate Management Team (CMT). BFFC (Brighter Futures for Children) matched the RBC (Reading Borough Council) survey in December/January and now has a detailed action plan specific to the Company. Two pulse surveys were launched in 2025 to understand how staff feel about 1:1s and supervision and Bullying and Harassment. Areas that require action are now included in our staff survey action plans. We continue to communicate to all staff to let them know about the progress being made in delivering the action plans. The next all staff survey is expected to be launched in November 2025.
- 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 has changed reflecting the important role of service 'voice' in a newly constituted 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 the Chief Executive. This strategy aims to ensure RBC is an employer where everyone can do their best work and can thrive. This is expected to have a positive impact on retention and on recruitment. The year two action plan is currently being delivered, which has included publication of an inclusive recruitment guide and delivery of inclusive recruitment sessions for managers.

- The latest Leadership Development Programme has now been completed. This programme is designed to ensure managers deliver high quality, inspiring leadership and role model the Team Reading Leadership Behaviours. Work will commence in Q3 to identify proposals for 2026/2027.
- 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. Local Government Association (LGA) negotiate on RBC behalf. This is a rolling year on year process.
- Developed an engagement framework for the council to ensure an engaged workforce - includes the development of staff groups and the staff awards. A new long service recognition event is held regularly to celebrate those with 30+ years employment with the Council.
- BFfC: A recruitment and retention proposal has been completed to convert the high number of agencies into permanent hires. June 2025
- Continued deployment of the new approach to work experience following a successful trial in 2023 - providing opportunities for school children to understand the opportunities available in local government and gain work experience. June 2025
- Reverse mentoring pilot launched in June 2025 with 5 members of the Corporate Management Team (CMT).



Risk:
Strategic Risk: Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults

Register:
DCASC

Q2 25/26
12
Residual

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.

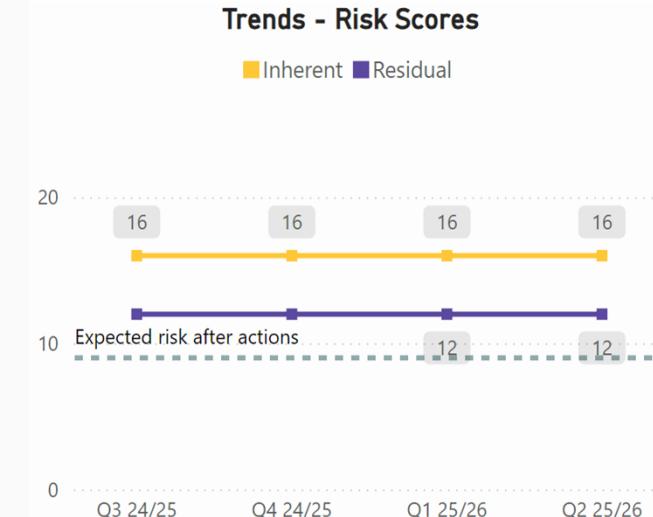
Potential Impact

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 Status

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

Risk Type	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
	24/25	24/25	25/26	25/26
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	3	3	3	3
Residual	12	12	12	12

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 3 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions
9

Specific Actions Required

Actions	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.	29/09/2025	In progress
2	Move the Safeguarding function to the Advice & Wellbeing Hub to streamline the customer journey. Stabilisation of the teams required first to enable successful transfer of 1) staff into new team and 2) people currently engaged in the safeguarding process.	29/09/2025	In progress

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 Review's 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

- 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: Information Governance - Failure to protect personal data

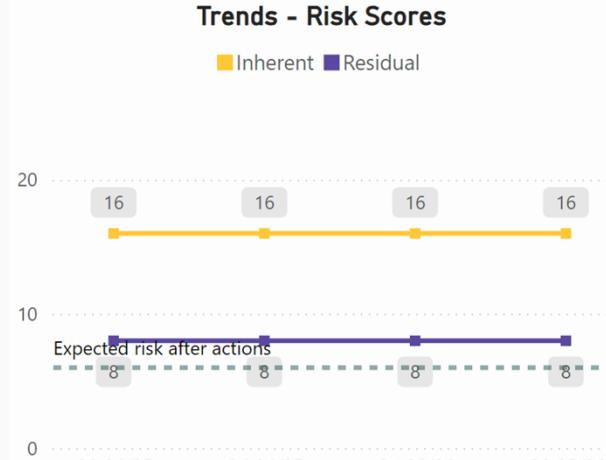
Cause
User error, lack of policy guidance and procedures, failure of system reminders, staff workloads resulting in insufficient care and attention to detail.

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

Register: DOR
Risk owner: Graham, Michael (AD Legal & Dem)

Q2 25/26
8
Residual

Trends - Risk Scores



	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Residual	8	8	8	8

Risk Scores

Risk Type	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26
Impact (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Inherent)	4	4	4	4
Inherent	16	16	16	16
Impact (Residual)	4	4	4	4
Likelihood (Residual)	2	2	2	2
Residual	8	8	8	8

Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 2 and impact of 3.

Expected risk score after actions **6**

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Information Sharing Protocols to be reviewed by Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN)	29/09/2025	In progress
2	Records of Processing Activities (ROPA) being further developed by Data Protection Officer and will help to identify Information Asset Owners within Services.	29/09/2025	In progress
3	Cascade of compliance requirements now through the Information Governance Champions Network (IGCN). This is being rolled out from Autumn 2022. Now underway in the Directorate of Adult Care and Health Services (DACHS) and Brighter Futures for Children	29/09/2025	In progress
4	Roll out of annual refresher training for Information Governance	29/09/2025	In progress

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.

Existing Controls

- 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.



Risk:

Strategic Risk: Risk to adherence to Care Act Statutory duties as residents are waiting in Adult Social Care

Register:
DCASC

Risk owner:
Mehmi, Sunny

Q2 25/26

16

Residual

Cause

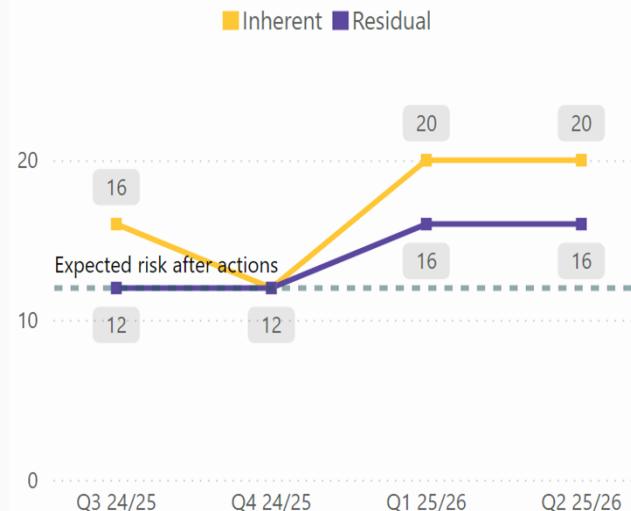
Increased demand which outstrips staff capacity. Lack of capacity in the various teams to meet the complexity of demand

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

Trends - Risk Scores



Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 3 and impact of 4.

Expected risk score after actions

12

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Deep Dive into the Social Care AWB (Advice Well Being) processes and forms to determine effectiveness	29/09/2025	In progress

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 councils 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

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. Staff absences add to the capacity issues.
- '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



Risk:

Strategic Risk: Unable to deliver a balanced budget as a result of demand pressures and achieving income targets.

Register:
DOR

Risk owner:
Carter, Darren

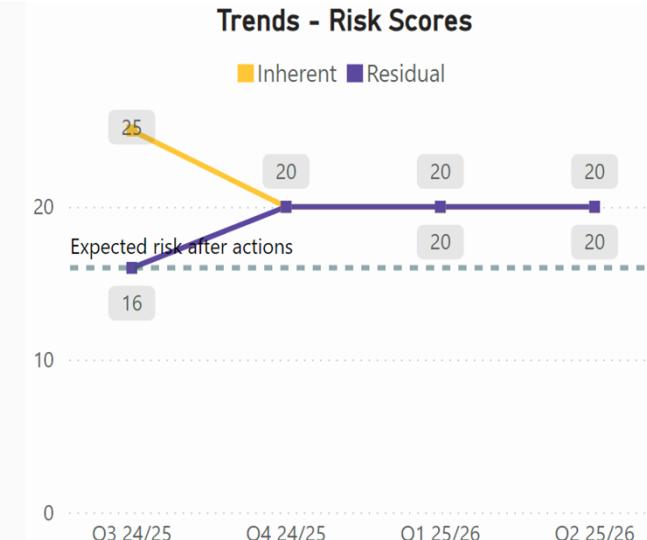
Q2 25/26
20
Residual

Cause

Demand pressures in social care and homelessness and increasing complexity of need, combined with uncertainty about future funding.

Potential Impact

The unplanned overspend in 2024/25 was funded through a drawdown from reserves, with a further drawdown required to balance the 2025/26 budget. Work is now underway to close the forecast budget gap for 2026/27. The continued use of reserves in this way is not sustainable.



Risk Status

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

After all planned actions are complete it is expected that residual scores will be a likelihood of 4 and impact of 4.

Expected risk score after actions
16

Specific Actions Required

Actions	Title	Date for completion	Status
1	Business case submissions are due to be presented to CMT for review and challenge in mid August, with any follow up actions required to be completed in September ahead of budget challenge sessions with Lead Members in early October 2025	31/10/2025	In progress

Background Information

The 2024/2025 Quarter 4 Performance & Monitoring Report is an adverse net variance of £9.305m which is an improvement of £1.313m from Quarter 3. The 2025/2026 Quarter 1 forecast is an adverse variance of £4.180m.

The budget report presented to Policy Committee and Council in February 2025 included a budget gap for 2025/2026 of £2.7m that is being funded from earmarked reserves, with a forecast budget gap of £10.9m in 2026/2027.

Following the publication of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the consultation document Fair Funding 2.0, the current estimated budget gap is now £7m, which is an improvement on the previous forecast but work remains to identify sustainable savings proposal to close the gap. All directorates have been working on proposals to close this budget gap as part of the 2026/2027 business case submission process. These business cases are due to be reviewed and challenged by Corporate Management Team (CMT) in mid-August, with any required follow up actions to be completed by late September ahead of budget challenge sessions with Lead members in early October 2025.

Existing Controls

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