Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee

14 January 2026

Title	Reading Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2024/25
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Melissa Wise – Executive Director – Communities and Adult Social Care
Report author	Jo Purser – Deputy Director Adult Social Care Safeguarding, Quality and Practice
Lead Councillor	Paul Gittings – Lead Member Adult Social Care
Council priority	Safeguard & support the health & wellbeing of Reading's adults & children
Recommendations	That the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee endorse publication of the Reading Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2024/25.

1.   Executive Summary

1.1   This report is being brought forward to seek approval from Committee for the publication of the Reading Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2024/25 on the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) website. The Council hosts the West of Berkshire SAB, working in partnership with health, police, and local authorities to protect adults at risk. The report provides an overview of safeguarding adults activity in Reading for the period April 2024 to March 2025. It highlights key performance trends, demographic insights, achievements, and priorities for the coming year.

2.   Policy Context

2.1   Section 43 of the Care Act 2014 requires every local authority to set up a SAB with a statutory duty of the SAB being the publication of an Annual Report detailing its activities and effectiveness, which must be shared with key local bodies. Each of the three Local Authorities within the West of Berkshire SAB have agreed to publish their own report each year on the SAB website.

3.   The Proposal

3.1   The proposal is to publish the Reading Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2024/25 on the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) website in accordance with the Council's statutory duty.

Key messages within the report

3.2   Safeguarding Concerns and Enquiries

A safeguarding concern is any situation where someone believes an adult:

- Has care and support needs,

- Is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and

- Cannot protect themselves because of those needs.

Anyone; individuals, professionals, or agencies can raise a safeguarding concern.

A safeguarding enquiry is the process of looking into a concern to decide:

- What happened,

- What risks exist, and

- What actions are needed to protect the person and prevent further harm.
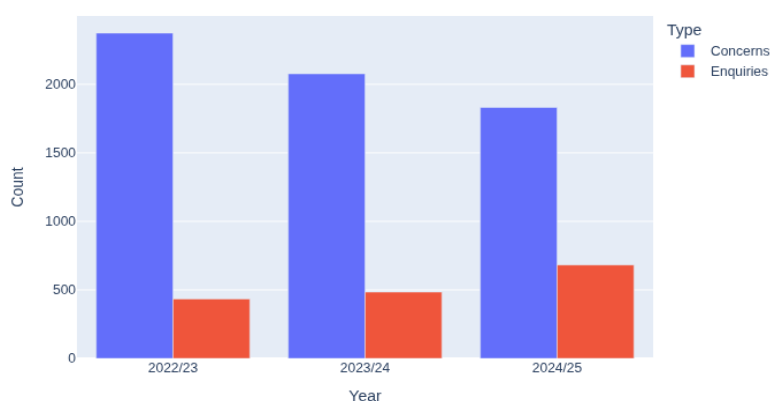
Enquiries can be:

- Proportionate Enquiry: A lighter-touch approach under Section 42 of the Care Act, often resolved through conversations or basic information exchange.

- Level 1, 2, or 3 Enquiries: Increasingly complex interventions, involving strategy discussions or meetings with relevant agencies. Level 3 usually applies to high-risk or criminal cases.

The Local Authority leads this process, coordinating agencies, delegating tasks, and ensuring quality assurance.

Activity (3-Year Trend)

Year	Concerns	Enquiries	Conversion Rate (%)
2022/23	2374	434	18
2023/24	2077	484	23
2024/25	1832	682	37

Safeguarding Concerns and Enquiries (2022-2025)

682 s42 Enquiries were opened this year which is an increase of 198 from the previous year (up 41%), with a conversion rate from Concern to s42 Enquiry of 37% (up 14% in the year) which is now higher than both the national average (Approx. 29%) and the South-East average (Approx. 34%) for 2023/24.

This is a positive change for Reading as our higher conversion rate evidences the targeted work, we have done to reduce the 'out of scope' referrals, clarifying criteria and raising awareness. As a result, inappropriate concern referrals have fallen significantly whilst more concerns raised meet the Care Act criteria or warrant intervention, meaning staff and agencies are identifying genuine risks rather than unnecessary referrals. It also indicates staff and partners understand safeguarding responsibilities and are raising concerns appropriately, which reflects good training and compliance. Ultimately, more enquiries mean more opportunities to investigate, plan, and prevent harm, reducing the likelihood of abuse continuing or escalating.
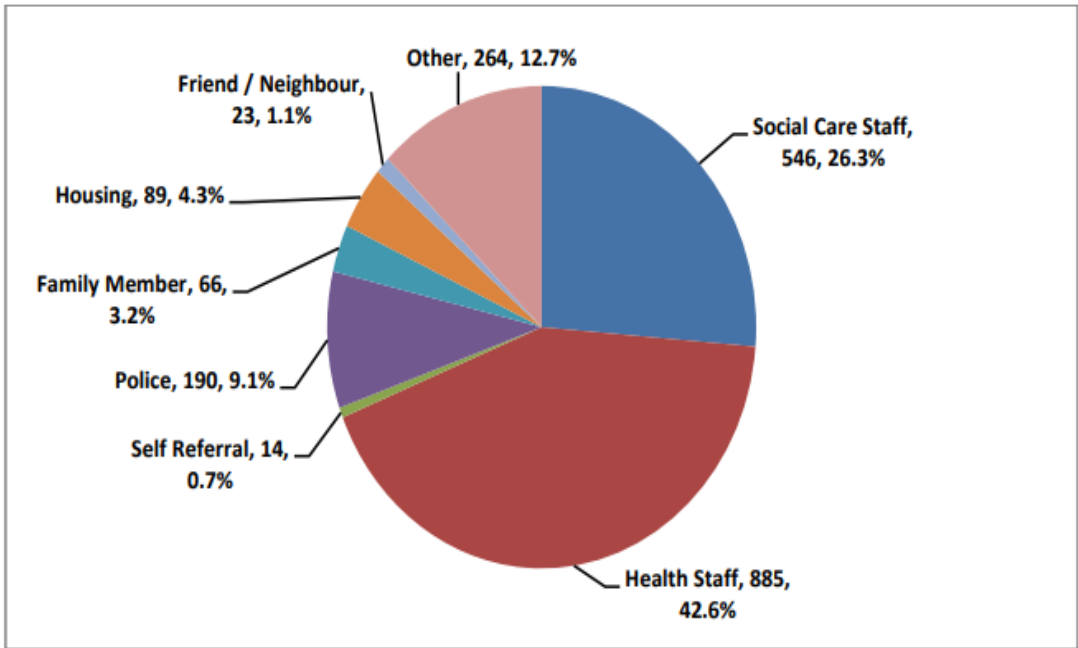
This conversion rate also makes Reading slightly higher compared to the other West Berkshire authorities for 2024/25 and on a par with other current comparator averages such as the South-East ADASS Q4 2024/25 benchmarking (Approx. 36.2%).
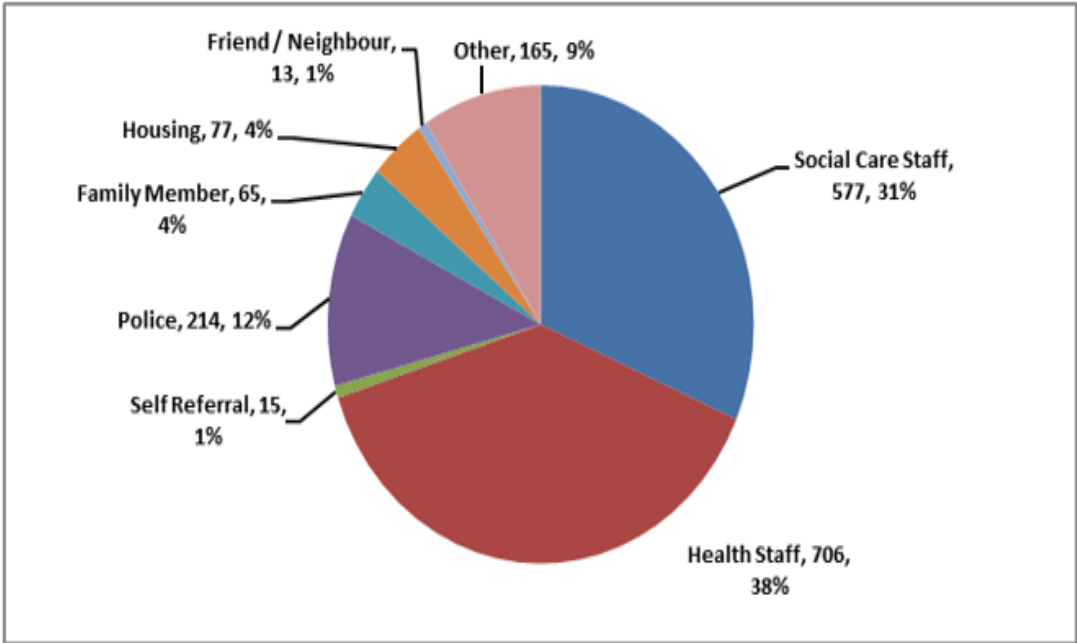
3.3 Referral Sources (2024/25)

A referral is the mechanism by which a concern is raised. For professionals, the required route is via an online Safeguarding Referral form, via email or via the care recording system (mosaic) and submitted to the Safeguarding Adults Team. For members of the public an online form can be completed. If a referrer states that they are raising a safeguarding concern, then it is recorded as such but in the event the person is raising an issue, but has not suggested it is a safeguarding concern, then the Council's Safeguarding Adult Team use professional judgement to deciding whether to take it forward as a concern or not.

The tables below show referral sources from 2023/24 and for 2024/25.

Safeguarding Concerns by Referral Source - 2023/24

Pie chart: Other, 264, 12.7%; Social Care Staff, 546, 26.3%; Health Staff, 885, 42.6%; Self Referral, 14, 0.7%; Police, 190, 9.1%; Family Member, 66, 3.2%; Housing, 89, 4.3%; Friend / Neighbour, 23, 1.1%

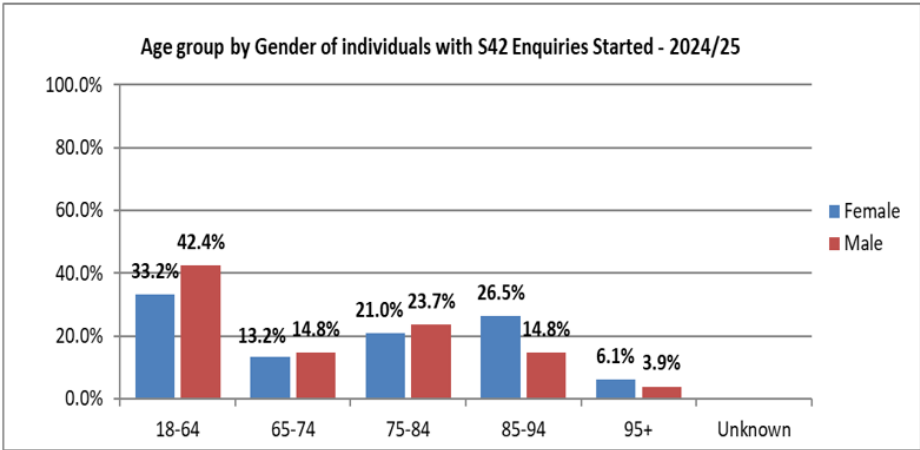**Safeguarding Concerns by Referral Source – 2024/25**

The largest percentage of safeguarding concerns for 2024/25 were once again referred from 'Health' staff although there was a drop of 4.1% over the year.

'Social Care Staff' were the next biggest source of referrals and saw a rise of 5.2% since 2023/24. The 'Social Care' category encompasses both local authority staff such as Social Workers and Care Managers as well as independent sector workers such as Residential / Nursing Care and Day Care staff. The 'Health' category relates to both Primary and Secondary Health staff as well as Mental Health workers.

The 'Police' (11.7%) are the next largest source of Concerns received. They have risen by 2.6% over the period. Thames Valley Police have continued with more robust safeguarding training practices, and this is having a positive effect on the quality of referrals as well as slowing down the number submitted.

The work RBC has undertaken with the fire service as a result of safeguarding adult reviews recommendations has seen an increase in the number of referrals received from the Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (included in other). Social care staff have also increased their referrals due to a new safeguarding manual launched, increased training and a new duty system implemented within the adult safeguarding team which provides a quicker response from the safeguarding team.
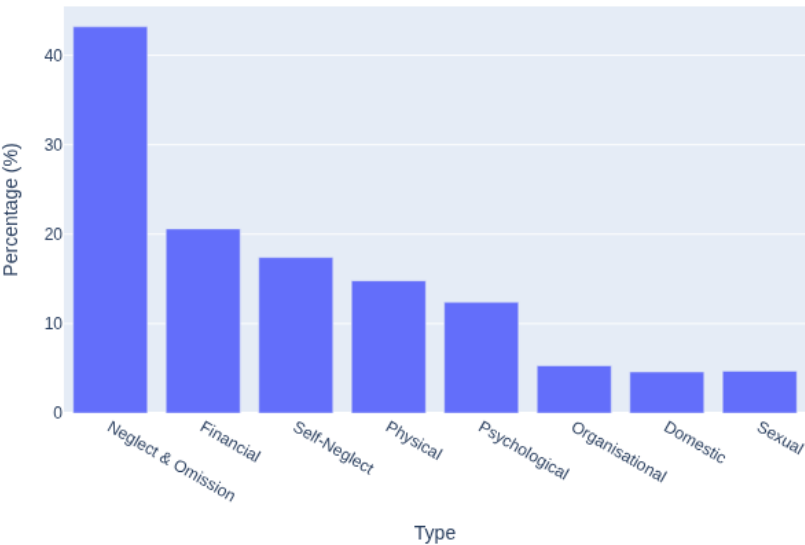
3.4   Enquiries by Age and Gender

When looking at Age and Gender together for 2024/25 the number of Males with enquiries is larger in comparison to Females in those age groups from 18 until 84. After 84 years of age the number of Males in each age group drops away. The largest proportion of enquiries is still in the 18-64 age group for both genders although Males make up 42.4% compared to Females 33.2%. Those Females in the 85-94 age group make up 26.5% of their total compared to only 14.8% in the Males group. Whilst this position hasn't changed from 2023/24 the comparison of enquiries for males and females and the difference across age groups doesn't appear to be reflected in our neighbouring authorities so further investigation into this needs to be carried out in 2025/26.

3.5 Types of abuse in Concluded Enquiries

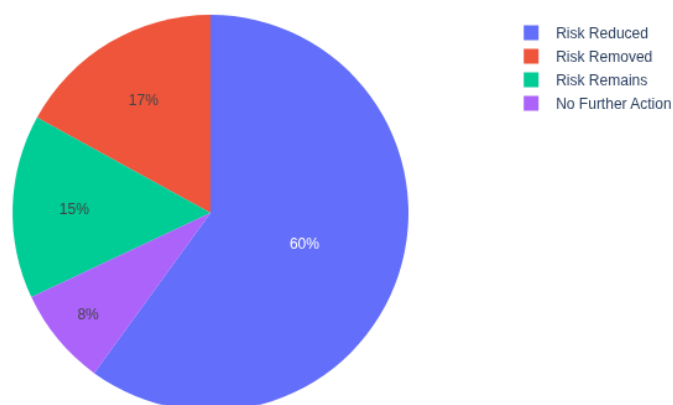Types of Abuse in Concluded Enquiries (2024/25)

The most common types of abuse for 2024/25 were for 'Neglect and Acts of Omission' (43.2%), 'Financial or Material Abuse' (20.6%), 'Self Neglect' (17.4%) and 'Physical Abuse' (14.8%). The top five recorded types of abuse in Reading align with the national picture. In 2024–25, the most commonly recorded type of abuse in England was neglect and acts of omission, accounting for 40.8% of all identified risks.

'Neglect and Acts of Omission' is still the largest abuse type in the year for Reading and has increased by 8%. 'Organisational' has also risen by 1.9% although only makes up the 6th largest group (abuse type in only 5.3% of cases).

Types of abuse in concluded cases remains consistent with figures in 2023/24. However, there has been a decrease in 'Financial or Material' cases (down 4%) and now makes up 20.6% of abuse types which is the 2nd largest group. 'Psychological' has also seen a fall in numbers and makes up 12.4% of abuse types (down 6.6%). There has also been a slight fall in 'Domestic' (down 2.7%) although this only makes up 4.6% of the cases and is only the 7th largest group.

3.6 Outcomes of concluded enquiries

Outcomes of Concluded Enquiries (2024/25)

Legend:
- Risk Reduced
- Risk Removed
- Risk Remains
- No Further Action

(Pie chart values: 60%, 17%, 15%, 8%)

'Risk reduced' has increased due to teams increased intervention and creatively looking how risks can be managed whilst ensuring outcomes/wishes are met. 'Risk remains' has increased which reflects applying making safeguarding personal in supporting individuals who wish to continue making risky decisions however measures are undertaken to review safeguarding's and other mechanisms to monitor on-going risk. In the new mosaic safeguarding module, which launched in April 2025 practitioners can complete a risk assessment and provide detail on why risk remains.

3.7   Achievements in 2024–25

During 2024–25, the Council made significant strides in strengthening its safeguarding framework. A major achievement was the successful clearance of the backlog of safeguarding enquiries, which had previously posed challenges to timely intervention.

The introduction of a new duty system and the launch of a comprehensive safeguarding manual provided staff with clear guidance and improved operational efficiency. The implementation of the Mosaic module and an embedded feedback form enhanced case recording, allowed for better quality assurance. The Council also saw a notable increase in Persons in Position of Trust (PiPOT) referrals, rising from just 4 in the previous year to 26, reflecting improved awareness and compliance.

Training remained a priority, with over 620 staff completing fire safety training and 101 staff receiving specialist training on mental capacity, ensuring that frontline practitioners are equipped to manage complex safeguarding scenarios effectively.

3.8   Priorities for 2025–26

Looking ahead, the Council has identified key priorities to build on the progress already achieved in the last year.

Priority 1: Continued enhancement of the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) approach, ensuring that safeguarding interventions remain person-centred and outcome focused.

Priority 2: Raising awareness of PiPOT across all agencies will be a major focus in 2025/26. It has been acknowledged like most local authorities and partner agencies; the Council need to raise the profile of PiPoT both as a directorate and corporately to recognise the need to raise a PiPoT referral. Past referrals have led to significant improvements and well-being in a person's life. Specialised training and general awareness workshops will be undertaken in 2025/26.

Priority 3: The development of transitional safeguarding pathways to support young people moving into adulthood.

Priority 4: Preventative work will remain at the forefront, with targeted initiatives addressing hoarding, self-neglect, and exploitation.

These priorities reflect a proactive strategy aimed at reducing risk, promoting independence, and improving the overall safeguarding experience for adults at risk. To support these priorities, we will continue our investment in workforce development, which is essential, particularly in areas such as MSP, PiPOT, and mental capacity training. Strengthening community engagement will also be critical to ensuring that safeguarding services remain inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse populations.

4.   Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1   The work of the Safeguarding Adults Board and the achievements and priorities outlined in the report, strongly align with the overarching priority "Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children" because they directly contribute to creating safer environments, reducing harm, and promoting independence and dignity.

5.   Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1   There are no environmental and climate implications relevant to this report.

6.   Community Engagement

6.1   This is an information only report and therefore no community engagement was undertaken.

7.   Equality Implications

7.1   This is an information only report and no changes to services are proposed, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not relevant.

8.   Other Relevant Considerations

8.1   None

9.   Legal Implications

9.1   There are no legal implications to this report.

9.2   The publication of the Reading Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2024/25 enables the Council to evidence the following safeguarding duties under the Care Act 2014.

Section 42 Duty – Make Enquiries

Local authorities must make enquiries (or cause them to be made) if they believe an adult has care and support needs (whether or not these are being met), is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs, is unable to protect

themselves. The purpose of the enquiry is to decide what action is needed to protect the adult.

Lead a Local Safeguarding System

Local authorities must lead a multi-agency safeguarding system that; prevents abuse and neglect, responds quickly when it occurs, works collaboratively with health, police, housing, and other partners.

Establish a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

Every local authority must set up an SAB with core members that include the Local authority, NHS (Integrated Care Board), Police and develop and implement a joint safeguarding strategy.

Commission Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)

When an adult dies or suffers serious harm due to abuse or neglect and there is concern about multi-agency failings, the SAB must arrange a SAR to learn lessons and improve practice.

Provide Independent Advocacy

If an adult is the subject of a safeguarding enquiry or SAR and has substantial difficulty in being involved, the local authority must arrange an independent advocate (unless there is an appropriate person to support them).

Share Information

Relevant organisations must share information with the SAB when requested to support safeguarding work.

Apply the Six Principles of Safeguarding

Empowerment – supporting informed decision-making,
Prevention – acting early to stop harm,
Proportionality – least intrusive response appropriate to risk,
Protection – supporting those most in need,
Partnership – working with communities and agencies,
Accountability – transparency in safeguarding practice

10.   Financial Implications

10.1   The SAB is hosted by Reading Borough Council, under a partnership arrangement where funding contributions for the service are made by each partner. The total expenditure budget for the service is £205k, which is predominantly staff resource (both employed by RBC and on an interim consultant basis).

10.2   The table below outlines the annual contribution per partner for the 25-26 financial year, with total contributions c£120k. All partners are billed annually.

Partner	% Contribution	£ Contribution
Reading BC (Host)	16.07%	£19,204.40
West Berkshire Council	16.07%	£19,204.40
Wokingham BC	16.07%	£19,204.40
BOB ICB	16.07%	£19,204.40
Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust	9.52%	£11,376.40
Royal Berkshire Hospital	9.52%	£11,376.40
Thames Valley Police	16.66%	£19,909.75

Timetable for Implementation

11.1   Not applicable.

11.   Background Papers

12.1   None

Appendices

1.   Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2024/25