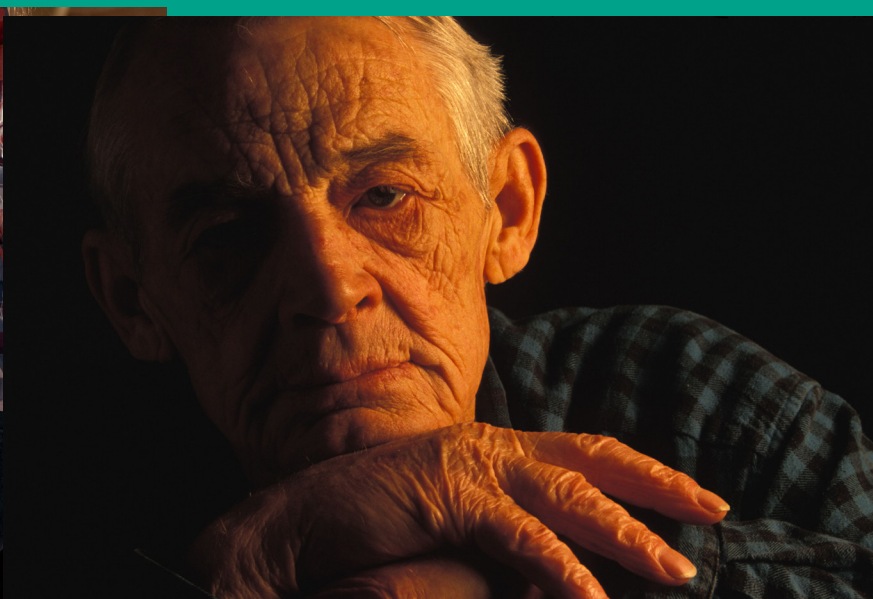


Safeguarding Adults Performance Annual Report 2024 / 25



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

Safeguarding Adults is a statutory requirement for West Berkshire Council and a core activity of Adult Social Care.

2024/25 has been an exceptionally busy year for the safeguarding service. Volumes of total concerns raised have increased by 25% as compared to 2023/24. However, the number of enquiries opened has remained relatively consistent with 2023/24 figures with a minor 0.5% decrease noted. This is significant when viewed through the lens of rising demand and a 12% increase in concerns received that met the threshold for a safeguarding response. As referenced in the 2023/24 report this follows a change in the period of time, we have allowed ourselves to determine whether to open an enquiry from 24 hours to 72 hours. This allows more time for gathering initial intelligence to establish whether a full enquiry is necessary.

The service continues to perform well in the functions of Making Safeguarding Personal, reducing or removing risk and the provision of advocacy.

This report takes account of the critical contribution to safeguarding adults that other services within the Council make and which is not captured in the statutory data contained within this document. The adult safeguarding piece within West Berkshire Council goes beyond Adult Social Care's statutory responsibilities and encompasses a wide range of services and teams working in tandem to safeguard adults at risk in the district.

The multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Forum in West Berkshire, or the operational arm of the tri-borough Safeguarding Adults Board, continues to work proactively to prevent abuse and harm. This group includes our colleagues from Public Protection, Children's Services and contributions from the Building Communities Together team, further demonstrating how activity that contributes to safeguarding across the district is captured in the overall provision of safeguarding to the residents of West Berkshire.

Applications for authorisations under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) increased by 12% this year as compared to 2023/24. This brings the number of applications received closer to the numbers received in 2022/23. Applications can fluctuate year on year and are reflective of movement across the Care and Nursing Home sector and hospital admissions. The resources available to meet this demand has remained unchanged for many years, which creates significant capacity issues. Therefore, the backlog of pending applications from 2024/25 represents 37% of total applications received during the reporting period. This is a reduction from the backlog carried forward from the 2023/24 period of 42% of applications received and this is positive.

In total, including the applications that were received in 2024/25 added to the backlog brought over from 2023/24, there was a requirement to assess and make an authorisation decision on 941 applications; a 6% increase in total authorisations required in 2023/24. Progress in making those authorisation

decisions remains hampered by resource challenges. 250, or 37%, are carried forward into 2025/24 to be assessed and authorised alongside any new referrals received in 2025/26.

Introduction

Safeguarding is a statutory responsibility for all Local Authorities and is a core activity for Adult Social Care.

Delivery of the safeguarding function is shared between the operational social care teams, (such as the Locality teams and Hospital Discharge team) and a small safeguarding team that provides a triage and scrutiny function, signing off all investigations and leading on investigations into organisational abuse and out of county placements. They also coordinate the response in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

This annual report evidences the key measures and trends used to monitor activity for Safeguarding Adults in West Berkshire to ensure risks are being identified and managed appropriately. Utilising the set of indicators and statutory reporting requirements for 2024/25, analysis of performance is used to produce this report.

This report also focuses on the activities of the safeguarding network in West Berkshire during the reporting year.

This report also highlights, where possible, the activities of other teams within the Local Authority that contribute to safeguarding adults but are not reflected in the statutory reporting.

Actions in 2024/25

We work closely with our colleagues in Care Quality, Commissioning and other teams within Adult Social Care to improve communication, service delivery and the quality of our enquiries and interventions. Learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and case audits continues to be part of the day-to-day activities and supports the development of best practice.

West Berkshire Council has continued to provide a timely and effective safeguarding service within an environment of increasing demand, workforce difficulties and a challenging financial position throughout 2024/25.

Networks

The Care Act 2014 required all Local Authorities to form a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to provide the strategic overview and direction of safeguarding, provide governance and quality assurance to the process. This includes the commissioning of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) when a person has died or

been significantly harmed and the SAB knows, or suspects, that the death resulted from abuse or neglect.

West Berkshire Council is a member of the West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board; a tri borough Board in partnership with Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council alongside other key stakeholders including, but not exclusively, Thames Valley Police, Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust and the Integrated Care Board which covers Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The SAB has produced its own annual report which can be viewed on its website [Home | West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

The safeguarding strategy was updated during the 2023/24 reporting period and can be found via this link. [SAB-Strategy-2025-2026-V.1.0.pdf \(sabberkshirwest.co.uk\)](#) outlines what the Board aims to achieve in the next 12 months. The Board has also identified the strategic priorities that shapes its work. These were reviewed as part of the strategy review in March 2025 and are detailed in the strategy document. For the period 2024/25 the priorities were:

- Priority 1: Embedding a good understanding of the Mental Capacity Act within the practice of statutory partners.
- Priority 2: Serious violence and exploitation, understanding the gaps from an adult safeguarding perspective.
- Priority 3: Fire safety – to address the learning from the fire safety SAR in January 2024 and to improve awareness across the West of Berkshire around the increased risk of fire for vulnerable people.
- Priority 4: The Board will continue to carry out the following business as usual tasks in order to comply with its statutory obligations.

The Board has approved a Business Plan for 2025/26. A copy of the Business Plan current as at the 01.04.25 can be found at [SAB-Business-Plan-25-26-V.1.0.pdf](#)

The local Safeguarding Adults Forum that is operational in West Berkshire continues to operate as a multi-disciplinary forum working to prevent the occurrence of abuse or harm locally.

West Berkshire Council – Safeguarding Activity Outside of ASC Teams

It is important to reflect that there are other teams operating within West Berkshire Council that contribute to the safeguarding of all adults in the district. Their activities are not captured within the volume data captured below as they are not directly connected to safeguarding enquiries under the Care Act. Notwithstanding their roles are important and their contribution to the safeguarding agenda vital.

Public Protection

The Public Protection Partnership is a key member of the Safeguarding Adults Operational Forum. This forum is a West Berkshire Council forum only and is the operational arm of the Safeguarding Adults Board.

One area of work they are very active in is the prevention of scams and fraud against residents in West Berkshire. Their activities include investigation of scams, installation of call blockers and door cameras, challenging banks on behalf of residents who have lost money to try and recoup monies lost and raising awareness in the local community of current scams and how to protect yourself. This is not an exhaustive list.

During the 2024/25 reporting year the team:

- Responded to 56 complaints of scams resulting in £135,000.00 being saved.
- Submitted six bank challenges totaling over £80,000.
- 8 call blockers installed for residents. It is estimated each call blocker may have saved the resident £2000 per year.
- 10% of scams complainants received a follow up, ensuring they were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint and providing additional information and advice to increase their confidence in being able to spot and avoid potential scams in the future.
- Undertook activities to raise awareness including at parent council assemblies and various social groups such as the Women's Institute.
- Delivered seasonal campaigns including holiday scams, used cars, loan sharks, 12 scams of Christmas and romance scams.

Building Communities Together

This team attends the monthly Mini Maps (multi-agency problem solving) meeting alongside representatives from the police, housing associations, Youth Justice Support Team, Public Protection Partnership, Housing and Berkshire Youth. The meetings focus on those locations, young people, adults and addresses of concern regarding anti-social behaviour, county lines, housing and environmental health issues. This enables a multi-agency approach, identifies the most appropriate lead agency and ensures that safeguarding and other vulnerabilities are addressed/considered. Adult Social Care link in with this process where appropriate.

Coordination of the Serious Violence Reduction steering group, the Domestic Abuse Board, including any Domestic Homicide Reviews, and the Council's Prevent duties all sit within this team, the majority of which have associated Strategies and action plans which are monitored at the relevant partnership meetings throughout the year.

Children's Services and Youth Justice Support Team

Our partners in Children's Social Care and Youth Justice Support undertake work to identify and support children who are shortly to be 18 and have been, or are considered to be, at risk of exploitation.

Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC) is a multi-agency panel that meets monthly. The panel is co-chaired by a Children's Service Manager and a Thames Valley Police Inspector. There are a range of professionals from children's services, health, education, probation, police, youth services and adult transition team.

The EMRAC meetings are used to review the indicator tool and risk assessment of all children at risk of exploitation. The meeting is a multi-agency forum to review the risk and look at what measures need to be in place to assist in reducing risks, these include considering the children turning 18 years old.

During 2024/25 there were 12 children either assessed at risk of child sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation. During the EMRAC meetings those children who did not have a transition plan were highlighted and their social worker referred to the adult transition team to undertake an assessment to identify any support they may require as an adult. Having the transition worker as part of EMRAC enables joined up plans and clear information sharing. All children aged 17 who had been assessed as requiring support had clear transition plans in place.

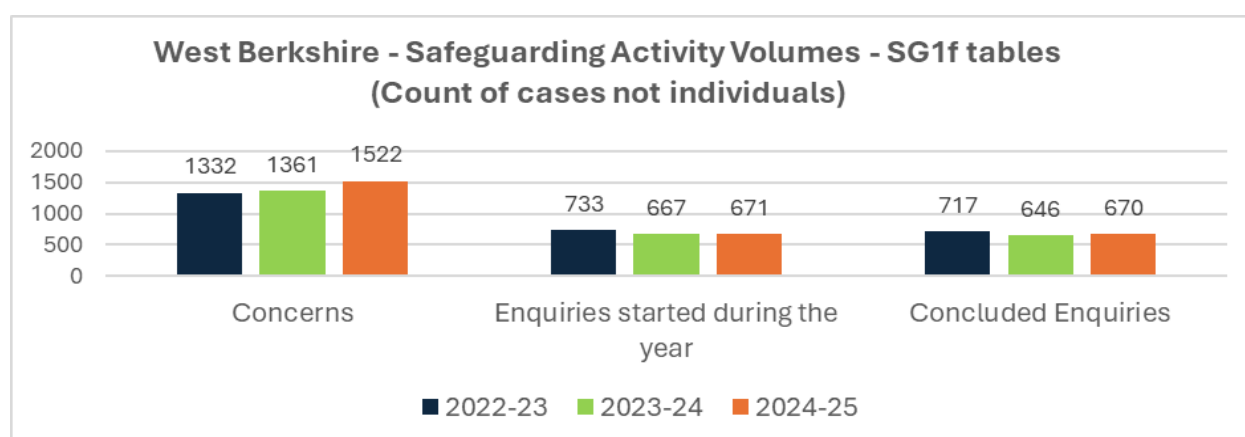
Safeguarding activity - Volumes and Performance

Concerns and S42 Enquiries

Table 1 – Safeguarding activity for the reporting period 2022/23 – 2024/25

| | Concerns | Enquiries started during the year | Concluded Enquiries | Concern to Enquiry Rate |
|---------|----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 2022-23 | 1332 | 733 | 717 | 55% |
| 2023-24 | 1361 | 667 | 646 | 49% |
| 2024-25 | 1522 | 671 | 670 | 44% |

Graph 2 – Safeguarding activity for the reporting period 2022/23 – 2024/25



For 2024/25:

- 1522 concerns were opened.

This is an increase in the concerns recorded in 2023/24 of 12%. This is a significant increase in the number received in 2023/24. Analysis of the sources of reporting and/or types of cases being referred in as a safeguarding concern has not identified any one specific cause of the increase. The pattern of referral sources of concerns received during the 2024/25 reporting period remain consistent with 2023/24 – just in greater quantities. We are mindful that West Berkshire's population, like many areas, is aging and with greater numbers of adults who remain living in the community with deteriorating health and greater demand on Adult Social Care resources may be contributing to the greater numbers of concerns raised from all sources

- 671 S42 enquiries were opened.

This represents a 0.5% decrease compared with 2023/24, which is of note when compared to the 12% increase in concerns raised. As referenced in the 2023/24 annual report, the service made a change to the length of time it allowed to make the initial statutory decision on whether a concern required an enquiry from 24 hours to 72 hours. This was to facilitate more robust decisions made, based on greater information than the additional timeframe allowed. This change was made towards the end of the 2023/24 reporting period and therefore 2024/25 represents the first full year of that change to process. We have seen concerns that might previously have been referred for an enquiry resolved more quickly. As previously reported, most decisions are still made within 24 hours, but this extended timeframe provides flexibility around that decision making, leading to more effective and appropriate decisions. We continue to routinely audit the decision-making process to assure ourselves of the quality of that decision making, consistency and accuracy.

In addition to concerns reported statutorily, the safeguarding team receive additional notifications where there is immediate clarity that safeguarding thresholds are not met (often social welfare concerns from providers), these are referred on to the relevant Adult Social Care or Mental Health teams to review and take any appropriate action but are not reported statutorily. In 2024/25 there were 2187 additional notifications received. That represents a 36% increase in notifications received during 2023/24 which is substantial. Therefore, a total of 3709 concerns and notifications were received and reviewed during the 2024/25 reporting period; an overall increase of 25% in total volumes compared to 2023/24. As referenced above, the pattern of referral sources and nature of abuse types being reported are broadly consistent in respect of percentages. There are just greater numbers. Notwithstanding there is anecdotal evidence of increasing cohort of individuals being referred for safeguarding where excess alcohol consumption or use of illicit substances are a feature of cases where self-neglect is identified. We are linking in with our partners in Public Health, Drug and Alcohol services and housing colleagues, working together at both operational and strategic level to properly clarify the nature and scope of the issue and find or open up pathways to appropriate support and/or treatment.

The Care Act 2014 (**Section 42**) requires that each local authority must make enquiries, or cause others to do so, if it believes an adult is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect. An enquiry into a concern should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect, and if so, by whom. These are known as, and reported as, S42 Enquiries

We monitor the % of concerns that subsequently require a S42 enquiry. This is known as the conversion rate. During 2023/24 the conversion rate was calculated to be 44%. Whilst this has been a decrease of 5% over the % of conversions recorded in the 2023/24 reporting year, we believe the reduction is as a result of the change in time we now allow to make the initial statutory decision, referred to above. 2024/25 represents the first full year of that change in process. We continue to remain an outlier amongst our peer authorities because of the changes we made to the triage and recording process we made in 2021/22.

Concluded Enquiries are dependent upon the number of enquiries opened in a year. 2024/25 saw a slight increase of 3% in closures as compared to 2023/24 which is broadly consistent with previous volumes in this activity.

Individuals with safeguarding enquiries

Age group and gender

Tables 2 and 3 display the breakdown by age group and gender for individuals who had a S42 safeguarding enquiry opened in the last four years. Please note this data relates to **individuals** only and does not repeat enquiries. Therefore, these totals will differ from the total number of s42 enquiries opened.

- As noted in previous reports the majority of enquiries continue to relate to older people - the 65 and over age group accounted for 61% of individuals who had an enquiry in 2024/25 with only a marginal % drop on previous years.
- In this year's reporting, the 18 - 64 age group accounted for 38.5% of individuals who were subject of an enquiry as compared to 36% in 2023/24, with the 85+ age group accounting for 24% of open enquiries; a reduction from 32% in 2023/24. The numbers are not significant so conclusions cannot be reliably drawn, but we will monitor this demographic.
- Cases in which age is not known generally relate to concerns referred in that meet the criteria for a safeguarding enquiry, but the person referred withdraws consent to participate before actual age is ascertained.
- We continue to be consistent with the national averages relative to safeguarding enquiries and gender distinctions. We are not required to report on transgender as a distinct subset but record instead the gender an individual identifies with.

Table 2 – Age group of individuals with safeguarding enquiries opened, 2022/23 – 2024/25

| Table SG1a Opened s42 Enquiries | Number of individuals by age | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|-----|---------|-------|
| | 18-64 | 65-74 | 75-84 | 85+ | 95+ | Unknown | Total |
| 2022/23 Total | 214 | 68 | 160 | 141 | 31 | 1 | 615 |
| 2023/24 Total | 219 | 69 | 116 | 151 | 41 | 2 | 598 |
| 2024/25 Total | 230 | 71 | 151 | 116 | 27 | 0 | 595 |

Table 3 – Gender of individuals with safeguarding enquiries opened, 2022/23- 2024/25

| Table SG1b Opened S42 Enquiries | Number of Individuals by gender | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Not known | Total |
| 2022/23 | 258 (42%) | 357 (58%) | 0 | 615 |
| 2023/24 | 271 (45%) | 327 (55%) | 0 | 598 |
| 2023/24 England | 58930 (42%) | 81520 (58%) | 630 | 141080 |
| 2024/25 | 260 (44%) | 335 (56%) | 0 | 595 |

Primary support reason

Table 4 shows a breakdown of individuals who had a safeguarding enquiry opened by Primary Support Reason (PSR).

Table 4 – Primary support reason for individuals with a safeguarding enquiry opened (SG1c)

| Table SG1d Opened S42 Enquiries | Number of Individuals by PSR - Note individuals can have more than one PSR | | | | | | | | Total |
|--|---|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------|
| | Physical Support | Sensory Support | Support with Memory & Cognition | Learning Disability Support | Mental Health Support | Social Support | No Support Reason | Not Known | |
| 2022/23 | 227 (36%) | 3 (0%) | 72 (12%) | 73 (12%) | 46 (7.4%) | 6 (1%) | 196 (31%) | | 623 |
| 2023/24 | 203 (34%) | 1 (0%) | 72 (12%) | 81 (14%) | 49 (8.2%) | 8 (1%) | 186 (31%) | | 600 |
| 2023/24 England | 56,125 (39%) | 1,515 (0%) | 11,945 (8%) | 16,675 (12%) | 18,030 (12%) | 6,595 (5%) | 23,705 (16%) | 9,745 (7%) | 144,335 |
| 2024/25 | 185 (31%) | 1 (0%) | 55 (9%) | 54 (9%) | 62 (10%) | 11 (2%) | 227 (38%) | - | 595 |

2024/25 - S42 enquiries opened for 'No support reason' continues to be relatively high but broadly consistent with previous reporting years. We remain an outlier as compared to the England average, and this may be indicative of a different interpretation of guidance. As we reported last year, guidance relative to data collection requires that a PSR should not be assessed as part of the safeguarding process. There continues to be a high number of S42 cases that have no support reason as the PSR, indicating a high number of safeguarding enquiries opened for individuals who do not have an adult social care service provided through West Berkshire Council.

Recording in respect of known PSR's indicates consistency with previous years and, whilst they fluctuate slightly year on year, they remain within the parameters of previous reporting periods.

Case details for concluded enquiries

Type of alleged abuse

Table 5 shows concluded enquiries by type of alleged abuse.

The most common types of abuse for 2024/25 remains neglect and acts of omission at 26% which whilst consistent with previous reporting years has reduced since 2022/23 and is a little below the average England %. It remains that workforce challenges and shortages across the care sector continue to have a negative impact on this particular domain.

It is noted that there are marginal increases in the % of physical, psychological and financial abuse types recorded for 2024/25. Those abuse types are features of domestic abuse which has also seen a marginal increase in the reporting year. Multiple abuse types can be recorded for a single case, and it is possible there is a link between those subsets of abuse.

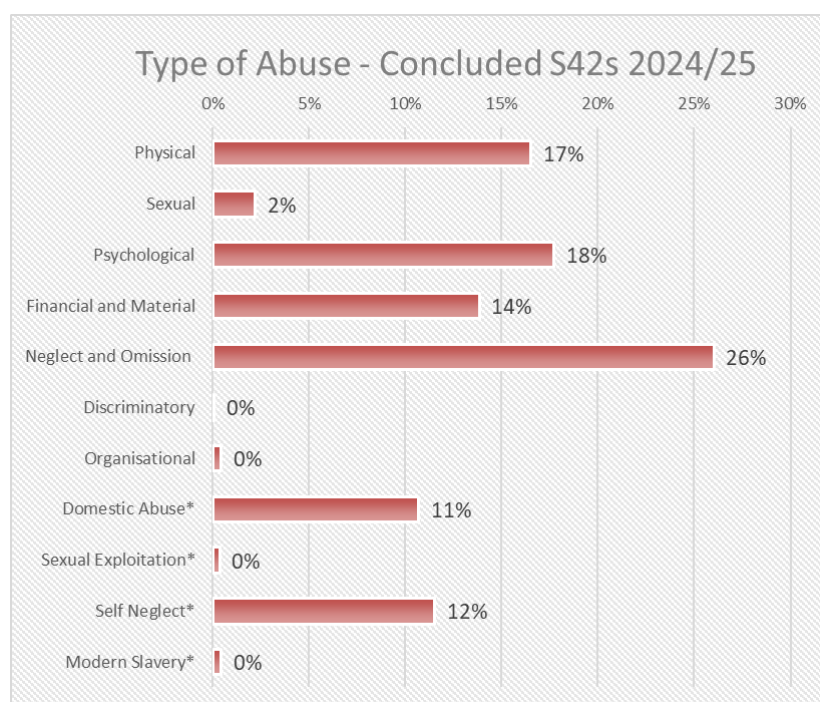
The percentage of cases recorded as self-neglect referenced in the last two annual reports following increases, appears to have stabilised. Notwithstanding, cases of self-neglect, of which there were 125, are complex, resource intensive and require significant input to make even a slight difference to the level of risk presented. As noted earlier, the number of cases recorded as self-neglect that present with excess alcohol consumption and/or illicit substance use as a feature, has anecdotally increased presenting even greater complexity for a worker.

It remains that the % recorded for some categories of abuse are but a small fraction of abuses perpetrated in the community that do not reach the door of safeguarding. This report needs to be considered in conjunction with the work undertaken by colleagues in Public Protection, Building Communities Together, Youth Justice Support and Children and Families teams who also address abuse perpetrated towards the adult population in West Berkshire, many of whom will be vulnerable. Safeguarding is everyone's business, and the Council works across services to tackle abuse at source.

Table 5 – Concluded enquiries by type of abuse

| Type of Risk | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2023/24 England | 2024/25 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
| Physical | 195 (18%) | 161 (16%) | 18% | 179 (17%) |
| Sexual | 26 (2%) | 24 (2%) | 4% | 24 (2%) |
| Psychological | 186 (17%) | 157 (16%) | 12% | 192 (18%) |
| Financial and Material | 117 (11%) | 127 (13%) | 13% | 150 (14%) |
| Neglect and Omission | 319 (29%) | 276 (28%) | 32% | 282 (26%) |
| Discriminatory | 4 (0%) | 5 (0%) | 1% | 1 (0%) |
| Organisational | 52 (5%) | 3 (0%) | 5% | 5 (0%) |
| Domestic Abuse* | 90 (8%) | 88 (9%) | 7% | 116 (11%) |
| Sexual Exploitation* | 5 (0%) | 7 (0%) | 1% | 4 (0%) |
| Self Neglect* | 94 (9%) | 125 (13%) | 8% | 125 (12%) |
| Modern Slavery* | 1 (0%) | 2 (0%) | 0% | 5 (0%) |

Graph 2 - Type of abuse 2024/25 by concluded enquiries



Location of alleged abuse

As in previous years, the primary location of abuse is in a person's own home with a total of 60% in the 2024/25 reporting year as compared to 63% in the 2023/24 reporting year and entirely consistent with earlier reporting periods although

somewhat above the England average which has been considered in previous annual reports.

There has been little change during 2024/25 in the % of abuse alleged in the location categories as compared to those reported during 2023/24 with only very minor fluctuations across locations.

Table 6 – Location of abuse by concluded enquiries

| Location of Abuse | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | 2023/24 England | 2024/25 |
|---|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Own Home | 60% | 63% | 46% | 60% |
| In the Community (excluding Community services) | 2% | 3% | 5% | 2% |
| In a Community Service | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% |
| Care Home - Nursing | 11% | 8% | 9% | 11% |
| Care Home - Residential | 15% | 12% | 23% | 11% |
| Hospital - Acute | 0% | 0% | 4% | 1% |
| Hospital - Mental Health | 5% | 5% | 3% | 5% |
| Hospital - Community | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Other | 4% | 4% | 6% | 6% |

Source of risk

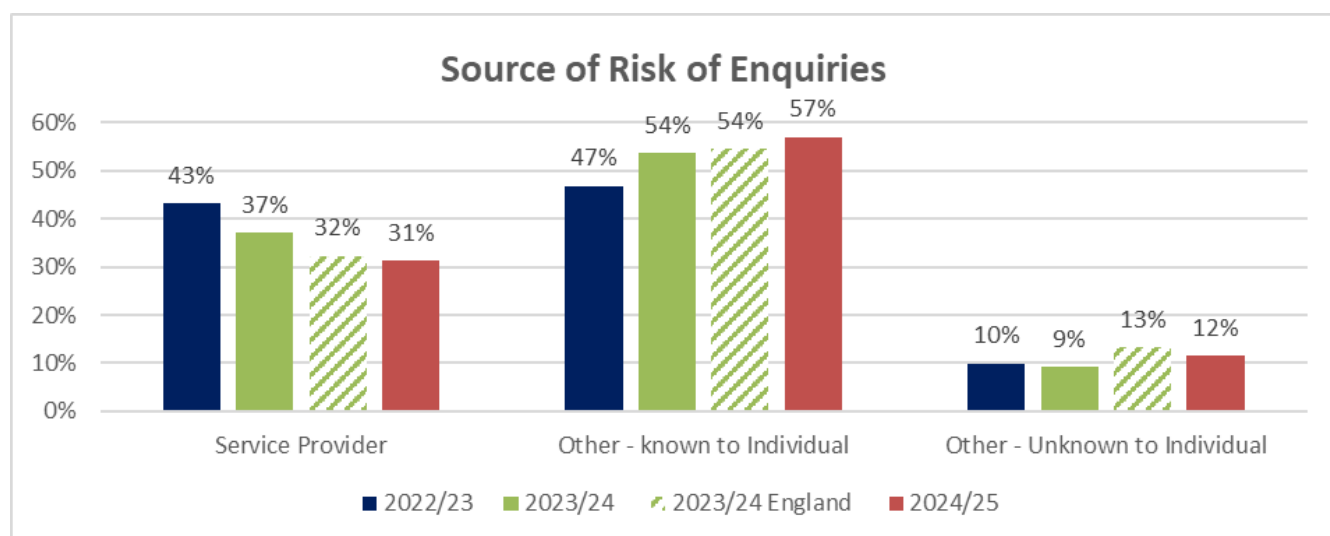
Graph 3 relates to the source of risk for concluded enquiries.

The majority of concluded Safeguarding enquiries involved a source of risk known to the individual whether that be a friend, family member or care giver – unpaid or paid, only 12% were ‘unknown’ in 2024/25; in line with the England average and only slightly above the 2023/24 percentage.

In 31% of cases the source of risk was a service provider. The service provider support category refers to any individual or organisation paid, contracted or commissioned to provide social care. This is a decrease as compared to the 2023/24 percentage and helpfully aligns West Berkshire with the national average once again.

Notwithstanding the reduction, we continue to have effective self-reporting by local providers, and this is indicative of continued transparent and open relationships between the safeguarding team and providers. Self-reporting continues to link into a wider intelligence matrix coordinated by the Council's care quality team which informs the training offer to local providers.

Graph 3 – Concluded enquiries by source of risk 2022/23 – 2024/25



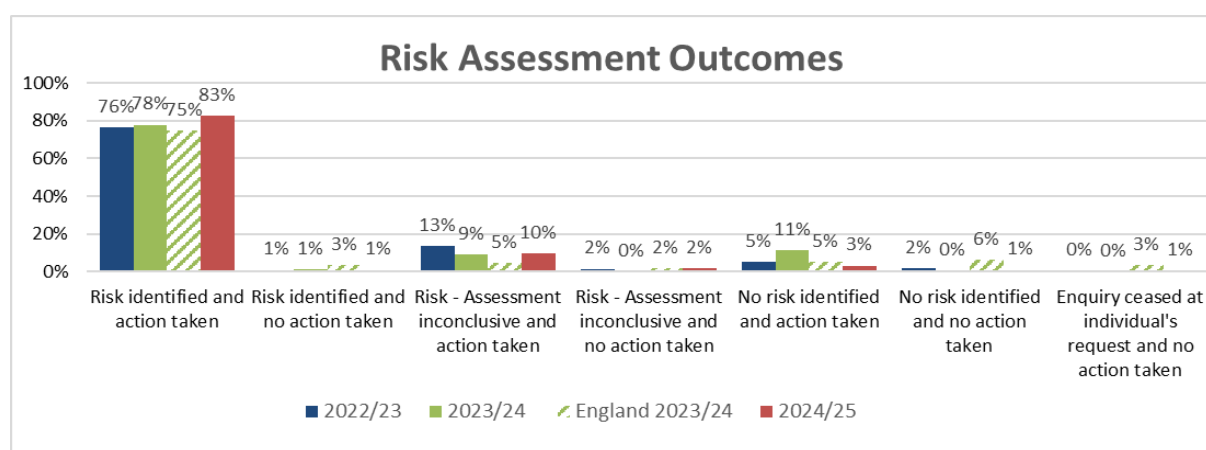
Risk Assessment Outcomes, Action taken and result

Management of risk data is drawn from the 670 concluded enquiries.

In this reporting year where a risk was identified, action was taken in 83% of cases, building positively on the 78% recorded during the 2023/24 reporting period. In 13% of cases closed, where either the risk was inconclusive or no risk was identified, actions were taken to better support the person at the centre of the safeguarding enquiry.

Risk identified but no action taken accounts for just 1% of cases as it has done during the last three reporting years; there are times where an individual can refuse support / intervention and have the capacity to make such decisions.

Graph 4 – Concluded enquiries by risk outcomes 2022/23 – 2024/25

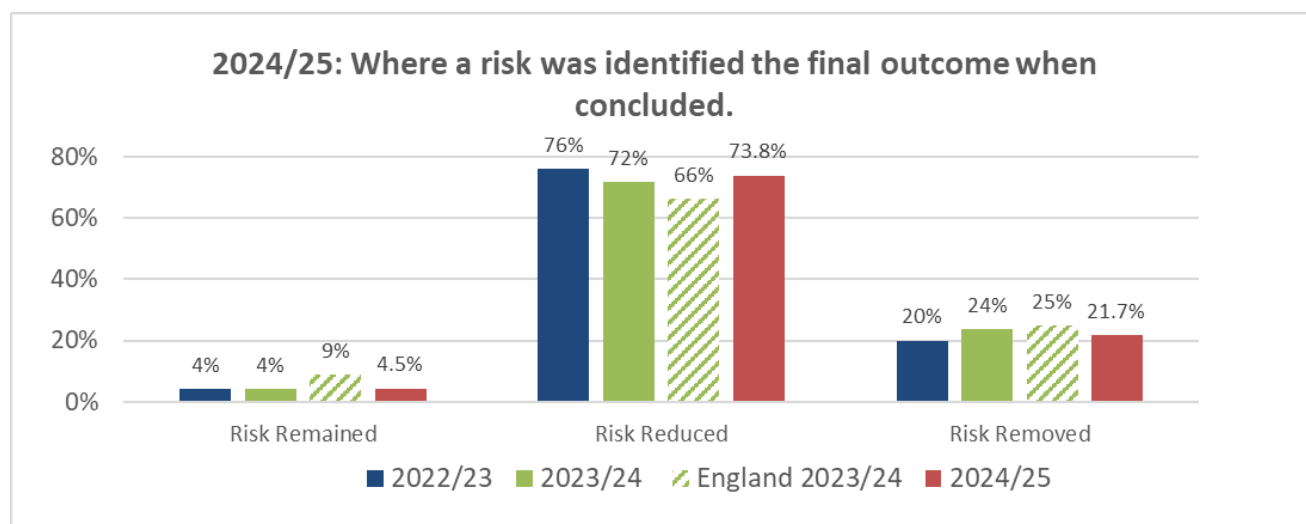


Outcome of concluded case where a risk was identified

Graph 5 shows the final outcome where a risk was identified. (Relates to 670 concluded enquiries)

Positively, risk was removed for 21.7% of cases and reduced for a further 73.8% of cases, with risk assessed as remaining for only 4.5% of cases. Where risk remains, cases are reviewed to understand why, and common themes continue to be connected to hoarding behaviours or other forms of self-neglect and abuse within families where an individual will make a capacitated decision not to engage with offered support.

Graph 5 – Concluded enquiries by result, 2022/23 – 2024/25



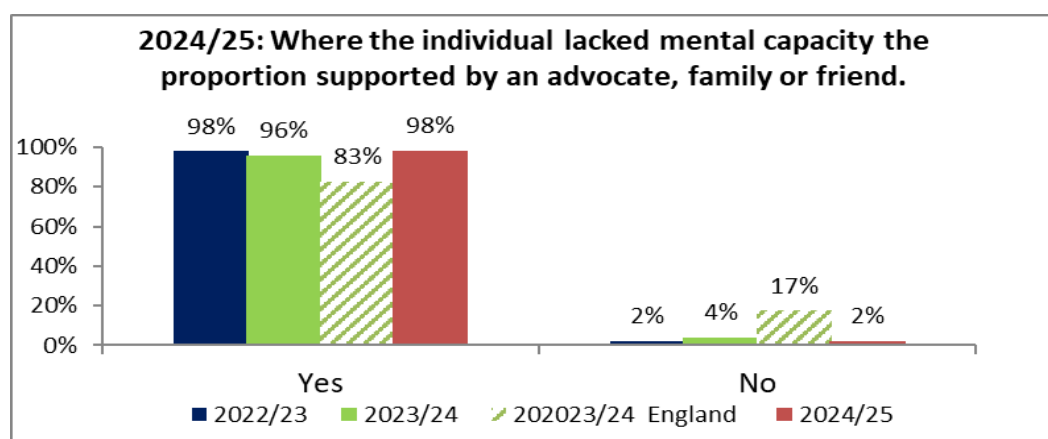
Mental Capacity and Advocacy

To achieve good outcomes for individuals subject to a S42 enquiry, it is important to hear their voice. There is a statutory requirement to ensure all adults subject to a S42 safeguarding enquiry who lack capacity are provided support by an independent advocate or appropriate other (family or friend).

In 2024/25, where the individual lacked mental capacity to participate in a safeguarding enquiry, 98% were supported by a paid advocate, family or friend. This reverses the slight decrease experienced in 2023/24 aligning us with performance in 2022/23 and higher than the national average.

As previously reported, each case for whom an advocate should have been provided, but wasn't, is rigorously reviewed every quarter. We challenge where appropriate, but also recognise that sometimes a one size fits all approach to advocacy does not always work well. We will continue to monitor this area of work closely.

Graph 6 – Concluded enquiries by advocacy provision, 2022/23 – 2024/25



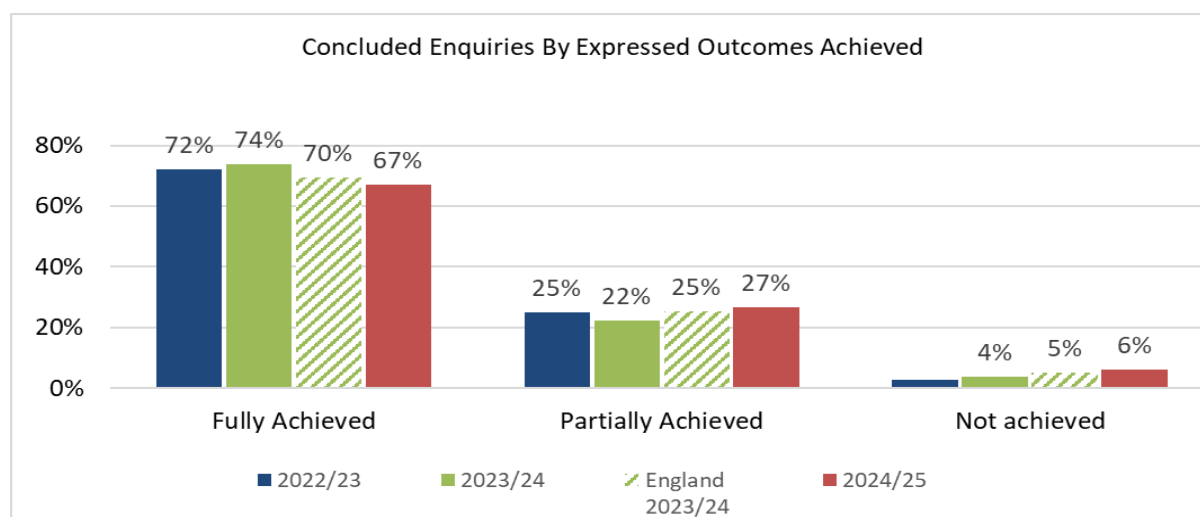
Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is designed to improve the experiences and outcomes for adults involved in a safeguarding enquiry and its principles are enshrined in the Care Act 2014.

A personal response to a safeguarding incident will mean different things to different people and a desired outcome will also be different and may not always be achievable either in part or in full. Therefore, obtaining data for outcomes will always present challenges. In 2024/25, 92.5% of all clients for whom there was a concluded case were asked about the outcomes they desired (either directly or through an advocate). This is consistent with 2023/24 when 93% were asked about their desired outcomes.

Of those who were asked and expressed a desired outcome, 67% were able to achieve those outcomes fully, with a further 27% partially achieved. This is reasonably consistent with previous years.

Graph 7 – Concluded enquiries by expressed outcomes achieved.



Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

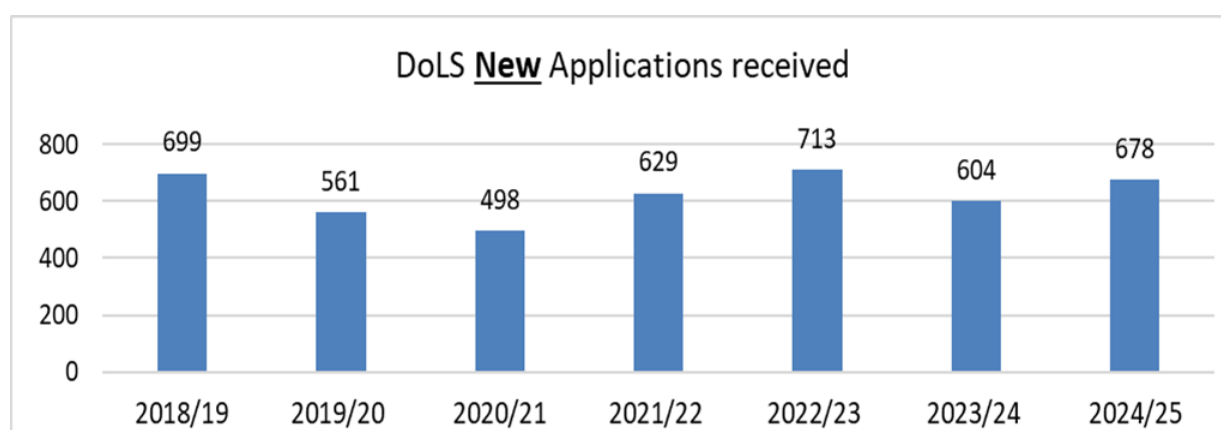
The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is an amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and applies in England and Wales only. The Mental Capacity Act allows restraint and restrictions to be applied – but only if they are in a person's best interests.

Extra safeguards are needed if the restrictions and restraint used will deprive a person of their liberty. These are called the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. DoLS authorisations must be applied for by care homes, nursing homes or hospitals (The Managing Authority) where they believe a person is living in circumstances that amount to a deprivation of liberty and that person lacks the capacity to consent to their care, treatment, and accommodation, in order to prevent them from coming to harm. They apply to the Local Authority (The Supervisory Body) whose role is to arrange for the person's circumstances to be assessed in order to determine whether to grant or refuse to authorise for those circumstances. Those living in other settings must have their deprivation considered by the Court of Protection and do not feature in the figures reported below.

The graph below shows the volume of applications from hospitals, care homes and nursing homes received during the 2024/25 reporting period as compared to previous years.

There were 678 new applications received during the reporting year. This represents a 12% increase in the applications received during the 2022/23 reporting year. This brings the number of applications received closer to the numbers received in 2022/23. Applications can fluctuate year on year and are reflective of movement across the Care and Nursing Home sector and hospital admissions. The resources available to meet this demand has remained unchanged for many years which creates significant capacity issues.

Graph 8 – Total number of new DoLS applications received 2018/19 – 2024/25



As at the 31.03.25, the status of applications is reported.

The number of 'pending' applications that we are reporting for 2024/25 is marginally lower than in the 2023/24 reporting year, but as a proportion of applications received

during the year it represents a 5% decrease on the percentage carried forward from 2023/24. Of the 678 new applications received in 2022/23: -

- 37%, 250 applications are Pending
- 34%, 233 applications are Not Granted
- 29%, 195 applications have been Granted

The resources made available to manage this function have not increased for many years, and it becomes more difficult to meet greater demand for the service. However, the team excelled in 2024/25 by completing 691 of the 941 applications demanding a decision. 941 comprised of 678 applications received plus the 263 applications pending from the 2023/24 backlog.

Alongside a number of other local authorities, we continue to use an adapted version of the ADASS prioritisation tool on receiving DoLS referrals, this does mean that some referrals which are not identified as high priority may be awaiting assessment when their circumstances change.

The Future

We will review the priorities and associated actions of the local Safeguarding Adults Forum to ensure we are aligned, where appropriate, to the Safeguarding Adults Board priorities for 2025/26 and that the actions we take meet the needs of West Berkshires residents.

We will continue to develop and maintain working relationships with our colleagues across the Council and with key stakeholders across the district to improve the safeguarding services for our residents and ensure they remain relevant.

We will review our methods of obtaining feedback from those we support with safeguarding enquiries with the express intention of improving the rate of return and quality of responses to enable the service to develop appropriately to meet the needs of residents.

We will continue to work closely with our partners in the Safeguarding Adults Board contributing to the work of sub-groups and responding to Safeguarding Adult Reviews designed to improve outcomes and aid in prevention.

We will continue to focus on our business as usual, ensuring our residents and our providers receive a good quality, responsive and effective service despite the constraints and challenges experienced by all providers of public services.

We will work collectively with relevant partners to meet any challenges presented by the Local Government Reorganisation agenda to ensure adult safeguarding services remain a priority and can continue to be delivered effectively to all residents whenever and wherever needed.