

Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board

Annual Report
2023 — 2024



“We are committed to continuous improvement, learning from experience, and enabling adults at risk of neglect and abuse to have a voice”

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Message

from the independent chair



I am pleased to present this year's annual report providing assurance that the Safeguarding Adults Board continues to demonstrate effective leadership, strong partnership working and a commitment to continuous learning and improvement to safeguard adults at risk.

Producing an annual report is a statutory duty for a safeguarding adults board and is an effective way of monitoring our progress against the board's strategic plan. It is a unique opportunity to reflect upon our achievements this year and to identify our future focus. This report provides the overview of the work that the Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) team and multi-agency partners have delivered in the past 12 months.

I am aware and acknowledge the complex challenges that we are all facing with high levels of demand across our systems and within local communities. During the past 12 months, I have seen even stronger commitment and engagement from our key partners, supported by the leadership of the three statutory partners; Greater Manchester Police, Bolton Local Authority and the NHS Integrated Care Board.

I have continued to play an active part in the regional and national safeguarding structures ensuring we influence safeguarding practice on a larger footprint, identify good practice and contribute to national policy. This extra role keeps Bolton at the forefront of emerging safeguarding practice and trends.

We have also developed effective relationships with Bolton Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Bolton BeSafe Community Safety Partnership to align overlapping strategic themes such as Domestic Abuse.

At the heart of our safeguarding system is a strong culture of constructive challenge, our ability to question, and assure ourselves of the effectiveness of our systems, policy, and practice. This also allows agencies to raise concerns about practice so that they feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously and appropriately addressed.

We recognise that effective quality and assurance processes will enable us to deliver a collaborative safeguarding system. This year we have continued to strengthen our Safeguarding Effectiveness subgroup, intelligence processes and sharing information. The combined use of organisational data and good intelligence will enable us to be forward looking and respond quickly to new safeguarding trends and increase our effectiveness to safeguarding adults.

We have had a busy year with Safeguarding Adult Reviews, identifying key lessons and ensuring learning is embedded in everyday practice. This is a core function of the Board and, by understanding and sharing the learning identified, we work to prevent similar occurrences from happening in the future

Looking forward, we will strengthen our work with a new and revised three-year strategic plan, setting out clear objectives, and a detailed delivery plan. We will also develop a sharper focus on Evidence, Assurance, Impact and Learning to reflect what outcomes are important to adults at risk, their carers, as well as the adult safeguarding workforce.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank the adult workforce and the partners of our Board for their continued support and commitment. Together, we can ensure that all adults at risk, and their carers, can live a life free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Neil Smith
Independent Chair for Bolton Safeguarding
Adults Board

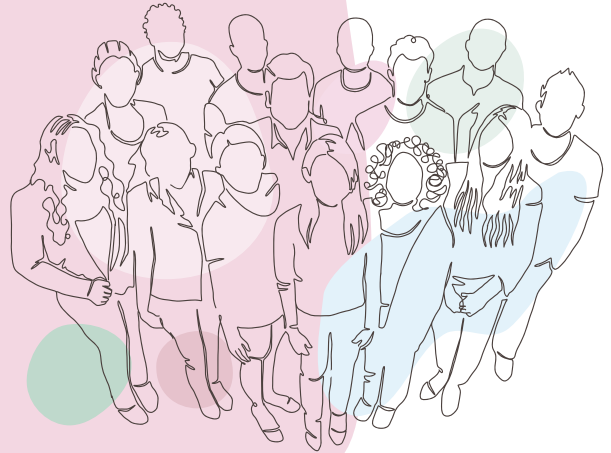
Who is the Safeguarding Adults Board?

The Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) is established in line with the duties set out in Section 43 of the Care Act 2014, as the statutory mechanism for agreeing how partner agencies cooperate to protect adults at risk, prevent neglect and abuse and promote the wellbeing of adults in its area.

The Board meets on a bi-monthly basis and attendance is monitored.

In Bolton the membership of the Board is:

- Bolton Borough Council – Adult Services, Community Safety and Housing
- Bolton CVS (Community and Voluntary Services)
- Bolton NHS Foundation Trust
- National Probation Service
- Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust
- Northwest Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Bolton Public Health
- Elected Member Adults and Wellbeing
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services
- Legal Services (advisor to the Board)



In Bolton, we work closely together with all to safeguard any adult that is at risk of harm or exposed to harm through abuse, exploitation, violence/threat or neglect, as defined in legislation, and guidance to prevent and reduce the harms, whilst supporting individuals to take and maintain control over their lives.

Vision of the BSAB



To achieve this vision, the Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board will:

Ensure the voice of the adult and their carers are at the centre of all we do, creating a culture where safeguarding is everybody's business, and good safeguarding practice is a priority.

In doing so, the six safeguarding principles will be actively promoted through the partnership work.

The six safeguarding principles

- 1. Empowerment:** Supporting and encouraging people to make their own decisions with informed consent.
- 2. Prevention:** It is better to take action before harm occurs, working together on any new or emerging safeguarding issues, themes, and trends.
- 3. Proportionality:** The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- 4. Protection:** Supporting and providing representation for those in the greatest need.
- 5. Partnership:** Working with all agencies and the Bolton community in recognition that safeguarding is everyone's business. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting safeguarding issues.
- 6. Accountability:** Accountability and transparency by ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding practice across all single agency members of the BSAB and wider organisations working with adults at risk, and their carers, and as a Board seeking assurance in how we are currently performing in meeting our statutory duties, with a sharp focus on real time learning and embedding a learning and improvement culture.

Core duties of the Board

The Care Act, 2014 sets out three core duties that the Board must undertake:

1. To develop and publish a strategic plan, setting out how we will meet our objectives and how our member and partner agencies will contribute

The strategic plan sets out our safeguarding adults' objectives, showing what we need to do to achieve these, and how we plan to do it. The plan is based upon a range of intelligence, evidence, learning, and the voices and lived experience of adults at risk, children, their carers, and the Bolton community.

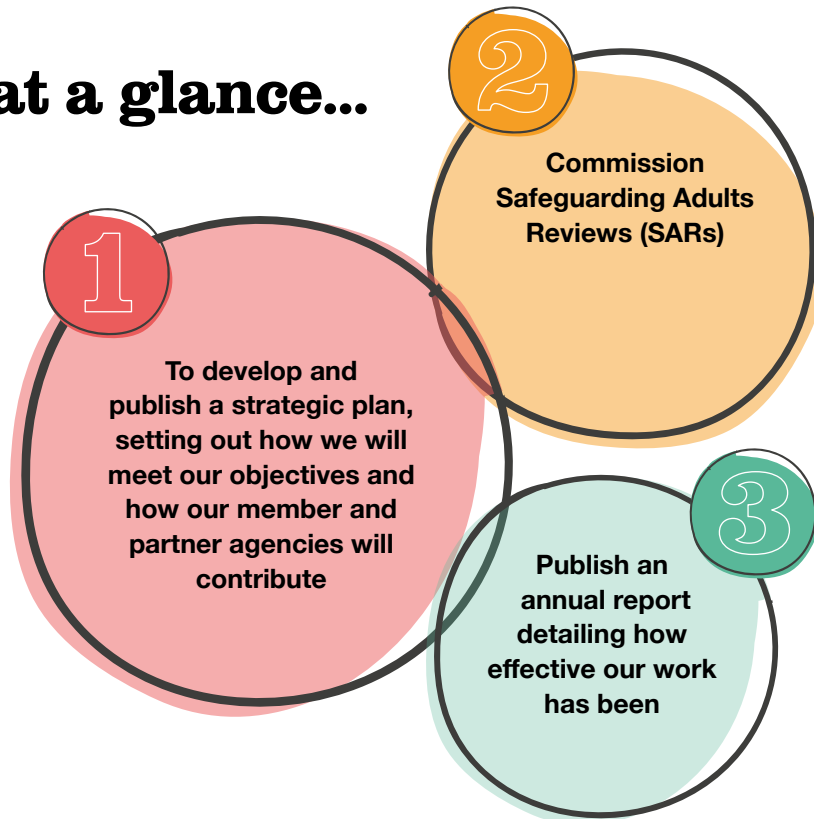
2. Commission Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)

Under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014, Safeguarding Adults Boards are the statutory body required to undertake Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs). The aim of every SAR is to review the multi-agency practice that may provide invaluable insights to promote effective learning and improvement action to prevent future deaths or serious harm occurring again.

3. Publish an annual report detailing how effective our work has been

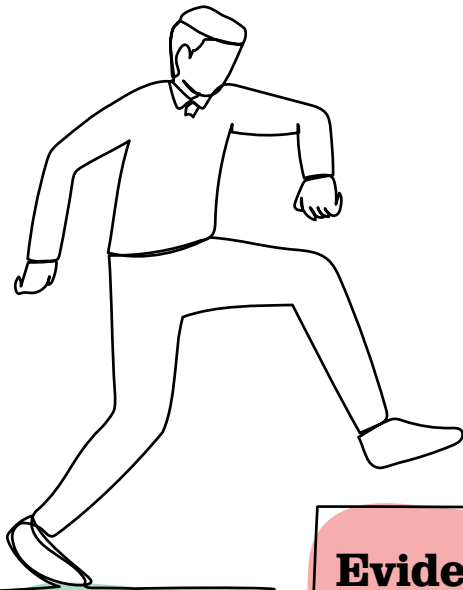
The annual report is a public report that details how we have all worked together to deliver the strategic plan each year and provides assurance from our wider partners on how they have contributed to safeguarding in Bolton.

Core duties at a glance...



BSAB strategic priorities

To support the vision and the safeguarding principles, the Board identified four areas that they were accountable for:



Assurance

Overseeing the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements

Evidence

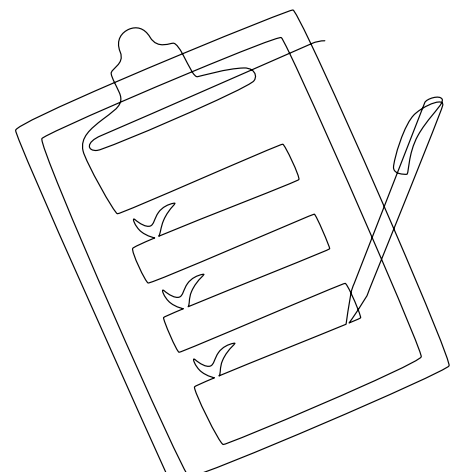
Continuing to develop an intelligence and evidence led approach

Impact

Strengthening the links between our safeguarding arrangements and the lived reality and experiences of adults at risk and their carers

Learning

Further developing a strategic local learning framework



Progress against our strategic priorities

- The BSAB Constitution and Governance is in place which details the arrangements, roles and responsibilities.
- Specific work is undertaken by the BSAB's subgroups which are accountable to the full board. The Board also has the authority to commission task and finish groups according to any identified needs.
- The BSAB induction booklet is in place for Board members, which has a clear statement of purpose, objectives, and functions of the Board.
- Board meetings take place with representation and contribution from partners.
- There are national footprints through independent chair networks and business manager networks. This is shared with the Board through board meetings.
- The Safeguarding Effectiveness Group is established with partnership representation. The Group's purpose is to review data and share intelligence to identify any themes and learning.
- A data scorecard has been developed which includes data from each partnership. This is presented as part of the Safeguarding Effectiveness Group and at BSAB meetings.
- The data and outcomes of learning have been used to inform the three-year strategic plan and the development of policies, procedures and guidance.
- The strategic plan has been developed and agreed by all partners of the Board. Progress against the strategic priorities will be monitored as part of the sub-group arrangements, with the Board being accountable for the progress.
- Publication and links with the national SAR library.
- A programme of events available to professionals took place during National Adult Safeguarding Week in November 2023.
- The BSAB launched a campaign on What is abuse and how to report it. This includes business cards, leaflets and posters. There were also several talks about Keeping yourself safe.
- The number of SAR referrals has increased over the year compared with previous years, with two statutory SARs being commissioned.



Partnerships

The Care Act places a duty on three statutory safeguarding partners: the Local Authority, Police, and the Integrated Care Board to work together with other relevant agencies to safeguard adults at risk.

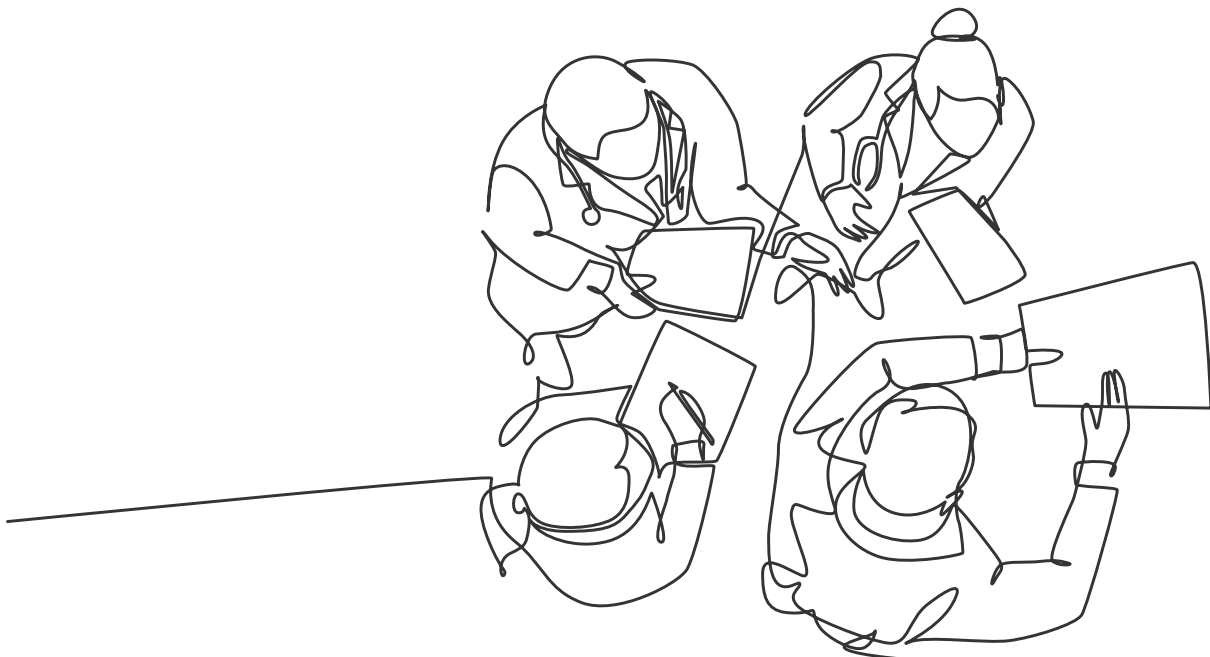
Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board has a strong and effective partnership which involves these statutory partners and wider partners. Our governance structure ensures that our safeguarding arrangements provide strong collaboration, scrutiny, assurance, accountability and drive safeguarding across the whole Board.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – but different organisations and professionals have specific roles in relation to safeguarding adults at risk of harm. Along with ensuring all individual duties are met, our statutory partners and wider partners actively contribute to the work of the Board.

Leadership and Independent Chair

The Independent Chair provides the support and additional reassurance that the Board has some independence from the local authority and other partner organisations.

The chair has a critical role to lead collaboratively, give advice, support and encouragement, but also to offer constructive challenge and hold main partner agencies to account and ensure that interfaces with other strategic functions are effective, whilst also acting as the spokesperson for the Safeguarding Adults Board.



What's been delivered

Adult Social Care

Strategic Development and Neighbourhood

Collaboration - This year has marked a significant shift in the operational landscape with the reduction of neighbourhood footprints from nine to six. This reconfiguration has enhanced the cohesion of multi-agency working and strengthened partnerships through the co-location of Adult Social Care (ASC) with key stakeholders. By streamlining neighbourhoods, we have created a more focused and integrated approach to delivering adults services, fostering improved communication and collaboration across agencies. This alignment not only supports the Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board's strategic priorities but also reflects our commitment to delivering timely and effective interventions for those most in need.

Responding to Increasing Demand - The ASC service has continued to experience an increase in demand, driven by a growing complexity of needs and a rise in safeguarding concerns. Despite these pressures, the service remains dedicated to supporting the Board's strategic priorities by ensuring robust responses to safeguarding referrals and working collaboratively to protect the most vulnerable adults in our communities. Key contributions have included active support for Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), which have been vital in addressing complex safeguarding challenges and promoting safer outcomes for individuals at risk.

Promoting the Principles of Making Safeguarding

Personal - At the heart of our safeguarding approach remains the commitment to the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). ASC practitioners continue to work closely with individuals to achieve their desired outcomes, ensuring that safeguarding processes are inclusive, empowering, and centred on the person's needs and wishes. This focus not only aligns with our statutory responsibilities but also reinforces our dedication to promoting dignity, independence, and choice. By prioritising individuals' voices and outcomes, we continue to build trust in safeguarding processes and deliver meaningful support to those who need it most.

Strengthening Quality Assurance and Practice Development

- This year, ASC has made considerable progress in developing a comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework for social care practice. This framework allows us to identify key themes for improvement and celebrate areas of good practice. It has provided invaluable insights into practice trends, enabling a more focused approach to workforce development and service delivery enhancements. By embedding this framework into everyday practice, we aim to ensure consistency, accountability, and continuous improvement in safeguarding interventions, all while upholding the principles of quality and person-centred care.

We continue to be actively involved in sector lead improvement through Director of Adult Social Services (ADASS) networks including DoLS and MCA.

To ensure good practice and maintain high standards in safeguarding, safeguarding is a part of our case audit process. Regular audits of case files are conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and adherence to safeguarding process and making safeguarding principles. These audits involve a review of case documentation, decision-making processes and outcomes, to identify areas for improvement and share best practice. Feedback is provided to practitioners and managers to ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver safeguarding services.

As the statutory lead for Adult Safeguarding, our Adult Safeguarding Team continues to collaborate effectively with the co-located Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to ensure a robust and coordinated multi-agency response to safeguarding concerns.

Bolton Integrated Care Board

Bolton Integrated Care Board (ICB) at Place has sustained a robust partnership with the Safeguarding Adults Board and its subgroups, driving forward the safeguarding strategy in close coordination with the Community Safety Partnership, Domestic Abuse Board, and Prevent Board. The ICB continues to extend strategic support to its partners, providing guidance and assistance to Primary Care GP Practices, the nursing home sector, and the broader health and care system. Bolton's designated strategic safeguarding team also consistently seeks assurance under NHS Greater Manchester contractual standards from commissioned healthcare providers, actively engaging in safeguarding board initiatives to protect Bolton's residents.

The ICB leads three Greater Manchester (GM) safeguarding delivery groups: Statutory Safeguarding, Systems Learning, and Systems Assurance. These groups are aligned with GM ICB safeguarding priorities in Bolton to strengthen place-based effectiveness.

In 2023-2024, Bolton ICB integrated the core values of Collaboration, Compassion, Inclusion and Integrity into its safeguarding strategies. These values have underpinned each action taken to safeguard vulnerable adults, reinforcing partnerships with local agencies to maintain the highest standards of care and safety.

Key Activities and Achievements:

Collaboration with Children's Social Care:

The Safeguarding Adults team works closely with Children's Social Care to address safeguarding issues that span across both adults and children, including those young people in transition. This collaboration ensures a holistic approach to safeguarding within families and communities.

Partnership with Greater Manchester Police:

Daily triage of referrals in partnership with Greater Manchester Police allows for timely and appropriate actions to safeguard individuals. This partnership enhances our ability to respond swiftly to safeguarding concerns and initiate necessary interventions.

Triage and Action:

Referrals are triaged daily, ensuring that each case is assessed promptly. Actions are taken to safeguard individuals while Section 42 investigations are carried out.

This process ensures that immediate risks are mitigated and thorough investigations are conducted to protect vulnerable adults.

Adult Social Care remains dedicated to providing a strong, coordinated multi-agency response to safeguarding concerns. Through our collaboration with Children's Social Care and Greater Manchester Police and partners, we continue to safeguard vulnerable individuals and uphold our statutory responsibilities. We look forward to building on these achievements in 2024-2025 and addressing the challenges ahead to ensure the safety and well-being of all adults in our community.

Greater Manchester Police

Greater Manchester Police continue to strive to provide the best response possible to victims of domestic abuse.

Towards the end of 2024, Greater Manchester Police committed to creating dedicated domestic abuse teams to improve our overall response – not just speed of attendance but improving safeguarding effectiveness and proactively targeting repeat domestic abuse offenders.

Greater Manchester Police are committed to identifying and safeguarding those in the community who may be vulnerable and at risk of being exploited. One particular emerging theme is "Cuckooing" which refers to criminals taking over the home of a person and exploiting them for an often-criminal gain.

Bolton neighbourhood teams work closely with officers from specialised organised crime teams and strategic partners to tackle this highly impactful and devastating issue. The last 12 months have seen an increase in intelligence sharing and proactive work to raise the profile of this activity, disrupt offenders and keep vulnerable members of our community safe.

The Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector Care

Bolton Community Voluntary Sector (CVS) has continued to promote the need to safeguard adults at risk across the sector. They also provide basic level training throughout the year to different organisations. We have continued to promote the need for safe recruitment, appropriate policies and training, risk assessment and volunteer management with our safeguarding in the VCSE sector session and by using the organisational health check which forms part of the Bolton Mark. Our individual support for groups offers tailored advice on how organisations can be well-run, safe and sustainable.

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust has enhanced its governance processes to ensure safeguarding is embedded as everyone's responsibility.

The Trust's Safeguarding Committee meets quarterly to monitor compliance with training and receives assurance from the Corporate Safeguarding Team and Clinical Divisions that the Trust is fulfilling its statutory duties and regulatory requirements.

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust is committed to supporting the Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board in ensuring a combined approach with partners to empower and support adults who may be at risk, thereby contributing to the Board's strategic objectives.

The Trust's key safeguarding achievements include:

- Completing a full-service review in line with the NHSE Safeguarding Assurance Framework.
- Developing a business case to identify for additional, dedicated project support for Safeguarding.
- Improving oversight of performance to monitor themes and trends in safeguarding referrals.

The Trust remains committed to driving improvements and embedding a 'think family' approach, whilst ensuring a personalised safeguarding approach for each individual and their family.

Community Safety

Community Safety continues to take a lead role in supporting the work on domestic abuse, providing policy and project support to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

Key highlights include:

- Safe accommodation – New provision and contracts are in place to support victims suffering domestic abuse ensuring compliance with Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- Authentic voice – Bolton has been successful in collaborating with Safe Lives on a multi-site pilot aimed at embedding authentic voice into the local coordinated community response.

- Perpetrator programmes – Individuals have been supported through the Inner Strength and Inner Peace programmes.

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS)

GMFRS continues to strengthen internal safeguarding arrangements so that all our staff and volunteers are best equipped to identify and refer safeguarding concerns for members of the community and our own personnel. The service has commissioned a suite of online training courses to help staff and volunteers gain a more in depth understanding of specific safeguarding themes, such as Modern Slavery, Domestic Abuse and Adult Neglect.

GMFRS has made system improvements so that all safeguarding activity is recorded digitally. Quality assurance is a key focus for future development and the service will be investing additional resources to ensure the referrals and information submitted to safeguarding partners is of a good standard.

The GMFRS Prevention Manager continues to act as the single point of contact for safeguarding partners in these areas and is an active member of BSAB and various subgroups.

Healthwatch

Healthwatch's remit is to listen to the community about their experiences of using health and social care services. They also provide information, advice and signposting to the public.

Healthwatch Bolton is working more closely with the BSAB to share intelligence about people's experiences of using health and care services. This assists the BSAB to have a wider picture of what people are experiencing in Bolton, and to provide assurance that health and care services are meeting the needs of the community.

Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust (GMMH)

GMMH has an established safeguarding structure led by the Chief Nurse. Strategic and operational safeguarding arrangements are delivered and supported by the Corporate Safeguarding Team and locality Safeguarding Leads.

Work is continuing to progress in relation to the Trust's Improvement Plan which includes safeguarding aspects. Progress is being made in relation to a review of the safeguarding system, training, compliance, policies and guidance to support staff to effectively safeguard.

Key achievements include:

- Launch of a Trust-wide patient safety newsletter which includes a section for safeguarding learning, developments and guidance.
- Implementation of an incident reporting system which will ensure triangulation of information relating to safeguarding complaints and incidents.
- Trust-wide learning events held following incident reviews to share learning.
- Establishment of Patient Safety Incident Groups which includes safeguarding.

Public Health

Bolton's Public Health directorate have continued to progress several work areas that contribute to the BSAB priorities.

These include:

- Data and intelligence work which is supporting the strategic and tactical work of several key interdependent partnerships.
- Producing Mental Health and Ageing Well Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA).
- Working with local partners and colleagues from across Greater Manchester to promote suicide awareness and the prevention of suicide.
- Further developing the substance misuse recovery network 'Next Steps' which aims to reduce stigma around addiction and dependency and to raise awareness of the value of lived experience in a range of developments.

Probation

In 2023-2024, public protection was the central focus of the Probation Service's work, and we continued to fulfil this objective by working with partners to reduce the impact of crime on victims. This is achieved by the successful delivery of sentences of the court but there is also an acknowledgement that to achieve this, we cannot work in isolation but in collaboration with key statutory and non- statutory partners. The Probation Service's commitment to collaborative working is reflected in attendance and contribution to all local multi agency Boards including the BSAB, Domestic Abuse Steering Group, MARAC, and the chairing of the re-established

Bolton Reducing Reoffending Board where the BSAB priorities are reflected.

In the last 12 months, we have continued to consolidate staffing numbers and, with this increase in local staffing, there has been an added expectation to deliver positive outcomes. A key component of this work has been a concerted drive to ensure that at the point of pre-release and at sentence, domestic abuse checks and safeguarding checks are prioritised. This has been achieved and was reflected in recent external audit work examining pre-release planning concerning the new Standard Determinate Sentence⁴⁰ (SDS40) early release initiative. Moving forward the challenge is to ensure the collation of this information is incorporated more routinely into assessments and the management of the person on probation.

This recent audit work also highlighted the excellent Bolton practice in relation to Touch Point Management (risk review meetings with managers) with a TPM being held substantially higher than the regional average.

In relation to wider performance context, we have continued to deliver amidst ongoing challenges and Bolton Probation Delivery Unit (PDU) was identified as the best performing PDU in the Greater Manchester region with all teams assessed as outstanding in the last performance quarter.

Locally, we have promoted and monitored the use of the domestic abuse and safeguarding registrations in probation recording systems. This ensures that at first glance, it can be identified which known adults are at risk and why.

The importance of undertaking home visits has also been prioritised during the last 12 months. The scheduling of home visits is dependent upon risk assessment and tier and must be undertaken either within three weeks of release / start of Order or six weeks. Work has also been completed to ensure staff are familiar with the home visiting policy which identifies what to look out for within home visits and how to identify any signs of neglect or safeguarding concerns.

The completion of mandatory training has also continued to be monitored with both domestic abuse and safeguarding adults being core components of a staff member's learning. Completion of mandatory learning is now aligned with the Competency Based Framework for all staff members. The need to work in a trauma informed way continues to be emphasised with additional training on neurodiversity prioritised.

Department for Work and Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) realise that there are many people claiming benefits who are also considered vulnerable and in need of special care, support or protection to ensure that they can access the public services they require from the department. The DWP can implement safeguarding processes to provide additional support to safeguard adults. Additional support is provided for customers at serious risk of harm, neglect or abuse through our network of frontline operational colleagues and Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders (ACSSLs). ACSSLs coach and mentor DWP colleagues across our services to support customers experiencing or at risk of vulnerability.

We have a departmental network of over 450 national visiting officers who provide visits for customers requiring additional support to access our benefits and services. We have an established a Six Point Plan for DWP colleagues to follow when they identify a customer who may be at risk of harming themselves. This helps to ensure the customer is given the appropriate support and may involve notifying emergency services where they are at immediate risk. The Six Point Plan is under continuous review to ensure it aligns with current thinking on mental health.

The DWP are committed to ensuring the best possible service is aligned with partners wherever possible to safeguard adults.



Making safeguarding personal

Case study

Mrs O, a 77-year-old white female, has lived in Bolton all her life. She has multiple health issues and lives with her son. Her son suffered a stroke and is alcohol dependent.

The Adult Safeguarding Team received a referral from Bolton Council Early Intervention Team (EIT). They reported that Bolton at Home had raised concerns about the state of the property due to Mrs O's hoarding. The worker from the EIT had also witnessed the son being verbally threatening to his mother and demonstrating controlling and coercive behaviours. Mrs O disclosed the relationship with her son had been like this for 13 years and he had previously set fire to her belongings on the driveway.

The case was triaged and proceeded to a Section 42 Care Act 2014 safeguarding enquiry under the category of domestic abuse inclusive of emotional/psychological, physical, and financial abuse.



What needed to be done?

A safeguarding enquiry commenced working with Mrs O to ascertain her wishes, views and what she wanted the outcome of our intervention to be. It was paramount that agencies worked collaboratively to ensure we collectively safeguarded Mrs O whilst balancing her wishes and feelings.

What happened?

Social Workers from the EIT and Safeguarding Adults Teams met initially with Mrs O and her son. During this meeting, the workers witnessed the son being 'off hand' with his mother.

Due to the concerns raised, it was important that Mrs O was spoken to independently of her son without increasing any further risks. Therefore, the safeguarding social worker spoke with Bolton Foundation Trust health

colleagues and arranged for a meeting to take place during a regular health clinic appointment which Mrs O attended independently.

This enabled the completion of the DASH paperwork (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment). The GP was also made aware of the concerns and it was agreed that if Mrs O was unable to contact the social worker for any reason, she could request a GP appointment and the social worker would meet her at the surgery.

The completion of the DASH initiated allocation of an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) provided by our CVS partner, Fortalice.

The case was presented at MARAC (Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference) which resulted in the allocation of a Greater Manchester Police officer. Due to the

sensitivity of the situation, Mrs O did not wish to pursue criminal charges against her son. It was important that the police officer listened and supported other agencies to prevent Mrs O's withdrawal from support.

A referral was also made to Bolton at Home Safeguarding Team who in turn reassigned the case to their domestic abuse team. A referral was also made to Independent Living Service, Visual Impairment Team to support her needs and increase independence.

Mrs O was offered a women's refuge but declined, wishing to remain in her property until a new property could be sourced. The tenancy was in Mrs O's name, with her son as an occupant.

As part of risk management, all professionals felt that it was important not to alert her son to the concerns raised. Mrs O's ex-husband was aware of the concerns and supportive of her move away from her son.

Through partnership working, the social worker was able to secure a move to a bungalow in a local area which Mrs O expressed an interest in. Her move was co-ordinated and she moved shortly after, with her personal items and without the knowledge of her son. Following the move, Mrs O said she felt "safe and secure in my new home and I am grateful for all the support I have received".

Bolton at Home also continued to support the son to access his own property in his own right.

Mrs O felt her outcomes had been met and no longer required the involvement of the Adult Safeguarding Team or Adult Social Care. She now lives independently in the community.

Who was involved?

- Bolton at Home Housing and Safeguarding Teams
- Early Intervention, Adult Safeguarding and Independent Living Service, Visual Impairment Teams, Bolton Council
- Greater Manchester Police
- The Chair of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment meeting
- General Practitioner (GP)
- Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate, Fortalice
- Bolton Foundation Trust

How did you overcome any difficulties along the way?

By sharing responsibility, listening, respecting each other and recognising each agency's role, Mrs O was able to be at the heart of all discussions and actions and everyone understood this, working towards one outcome – to ensure safety and making safeguarding personal.



Learning – Safeguarding Adults Reviews

Adult Safeguarding Reviews (SARs) play a critical role in identifying systemic gaps and opportunities for improvement within safeguarding practices.

Mandated under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014, SARs must be conducted when an adult with care and support needs suffers serious harm or death, and there is concern that agencies involved could have worked more effectively to prevent this outcome. The reviews aim to promote a culture of continuous learning, ensuring that safeguarding practices are robust, person-centred, and equitable.

Emerging Themes

Protected Characteristics and Mental Capacity

A recurring theme in SARs is the need for greater recognition of an individual's protected characteristics, such as age, race, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity. These characteristics, in the Equality Act 2010, shape the lived experiences and vulnerabilities of adults at risk. The lack of cultural understanding and failure to consider intersectionality can result in inequitable safeguarding responses. Similarly, the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) are not always applied consistently across partnerships. Challenges include inadequate assessments and failure to understand fluctuating capacity, and the need to carry out assessments that are robust. These gaps compromise the ability to empower individuals to make informed decisions or act in their best interests when they lack capacity.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

The MSP approach, embedded in the Care Act 2014, emphasises tailoring safeguarding interventions to an individual's outcomes and preferences. SARs often reveal instances where safeguarding processes are overly procedural, overlooking the person's voice and autonomy. Emerging lessons stress the importance of building trust and engaging in meaningful conversations with adults at risk to co-produce solutions that reflect their aspirations and cultural identities.

Learning Areas for Improvement

Mental Capacity Across the Partnership: SARs identify the need for more robust, multi-agency training on the Mental Capacity Act 2005, emphasising practical application, supported decision-making, and recognising capacity fluctuations. Agencies must collaborate to ensure shared accountability for capacity assessments and decision-making processes.

Recognition of Protected Characteristics: Agencies must improve their understanding of the diverse needs of individuals through culturally sensitive practice and anti-discriminatory approaches. This includes embedding equality and diversity training, auditing safeguarding cases for equity, and addressing systemic biases within services.

Strengthening MSP Principles: Embedding Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) principles requires a relentless focus on placing individuals at the heart of the safeguarding process, ensuring that interventions reflect their unique needs, preferences, and outcomes. This involves moving away from procedural and risk-averse approaches to a model that prioritises engagement, and empowerment. Effective MSP practice is characterised by meaningful conversations that explore what safety and well-being look like to the individual, ensuring their voice drives the safeguarding process. It also emphasises the importance of timely advocacy, particularly for those with communication needs or diminished capacity, to uphold their rights and autonomy. Strengthening MSP requires a systemic culture shift across partnerships, supported by trauma-informed practice, accessible information, and robust training to equip professionals with the skills to balance protection with respect for personal choice. By focusing on these areas, agencies can deliver safeguarding interventions that are not only legally compliant but also deeply person-centred, fostering trust and long-term outcomes that individual's value.

The Safeguarding Landscape

What we know about our community

Bolton has a population of 302,383 with 10,444 adults receiving care and support from the local authority and 4,331 adults receiving long-term support. We also know that one in four adults will experience at least one mental health problem and 56% of our population live in an area that is among the 30% most deprived nationally.

Safeguarding adults' collection return 2023-2024

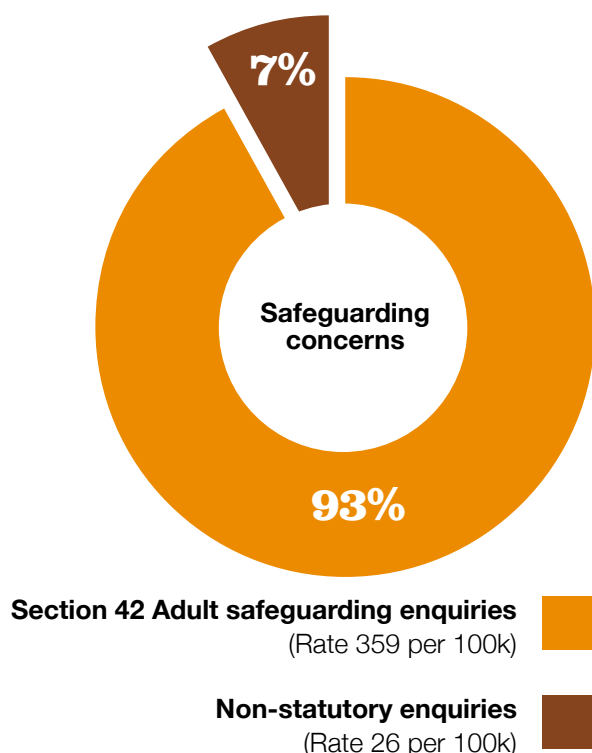
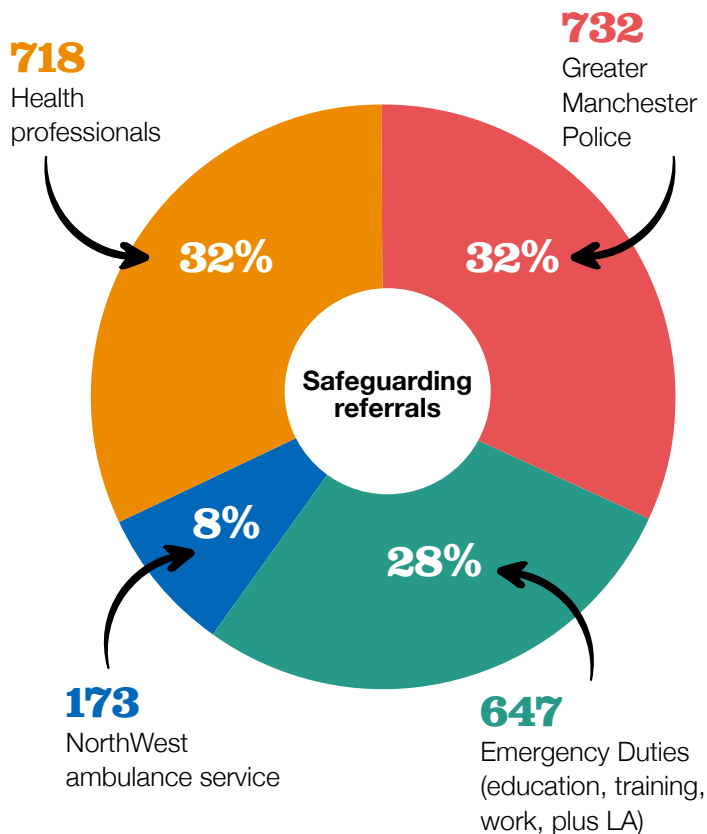
During 2023-2024, adult social care received 1,568 safeguarding concerns, which represents a small decrease of 26 concerns compared to the rate in concerns in 2022-2023 demonstrating some stability in the rate.

Over the last five years, there has been an increasing trend analysis of concerns of safeguarding of adults at risk. In 2022, the Directors of Adult Social Care report: Spring Budget Survey 2022 evidenced nationally significant levels of need for help and support in local communities. The longer-term impact of the pandemic and wider societal factors such as the cost of living are continuing to attribute to the increase.

In keeping with previous years, the number of safeguarding referrals made can be seen in the chart. The highest number of referrals received was from Greater Manchester Police (32%) and Health professionals (32%). Other referrals made were from education / training /workplace (including the Local Authorities Emergency Duty Team) and the NorthWest Ambulance Service.

The chart shows the number of safeguarding concerns that resulted in a Section 42 safeguarding enquiry as well as concerns that resulted in non-statutory enquiries (known as 'other safeguarding enquiries').

Across NorthWest ADASS, Bolton have higher referral rates and higher conversion rates compared with the GM region. In relation to repeat safeguarding concerns the average over the NW region is 8.9% compared with Bolton's rate of 3.0%.



Section 42 Adult safeguarding enquiries
(Rate 359 per 100k)

Non-statutory enquiries
(Rate 26 per 100k)

Demographics

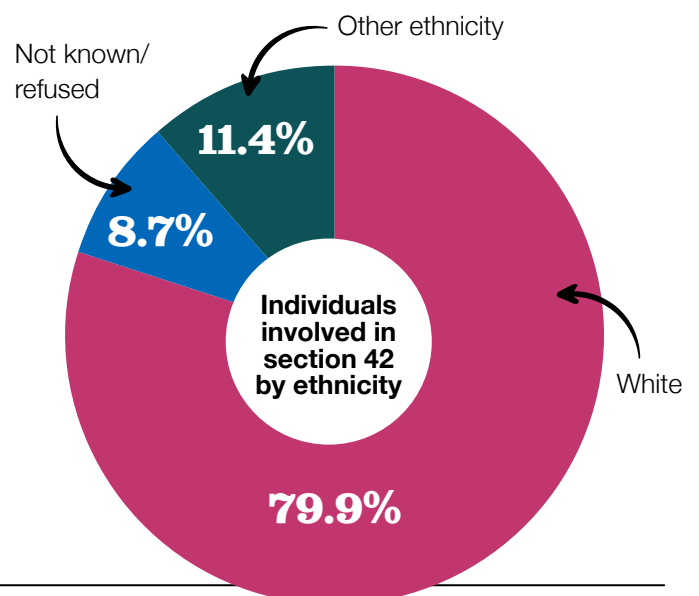
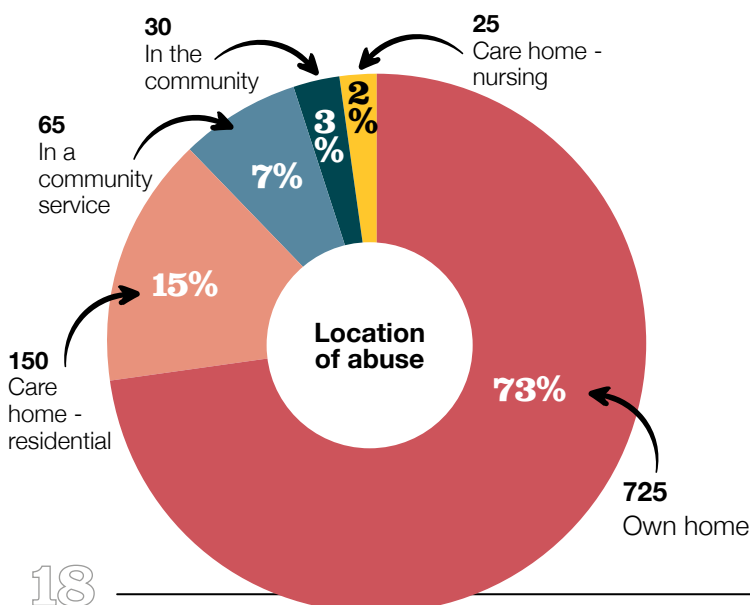
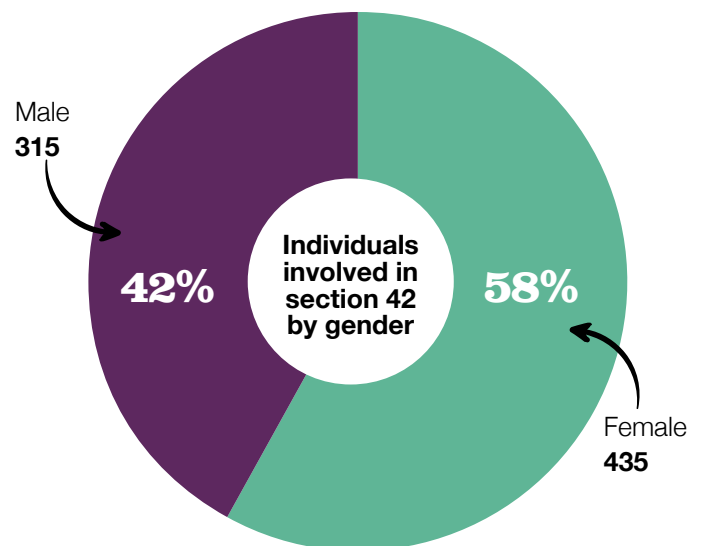
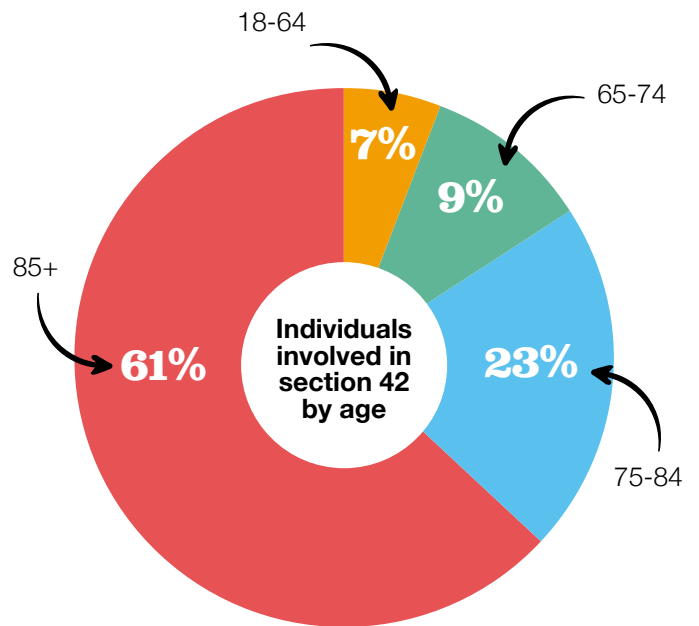
The majority of safeguarding concerns involved adults aged 85 and older, with females experiencing more abuse than males. According to the World Health Organization, about 1 in 6 people aged 60 and older globally experienced some form of abuse in community settings over the past year. By 2030, Bolton is projected to experience an increase of over 5,000 in its older adult population.

Neglect and Acts of Omission were ranked as the highest category of abuse.

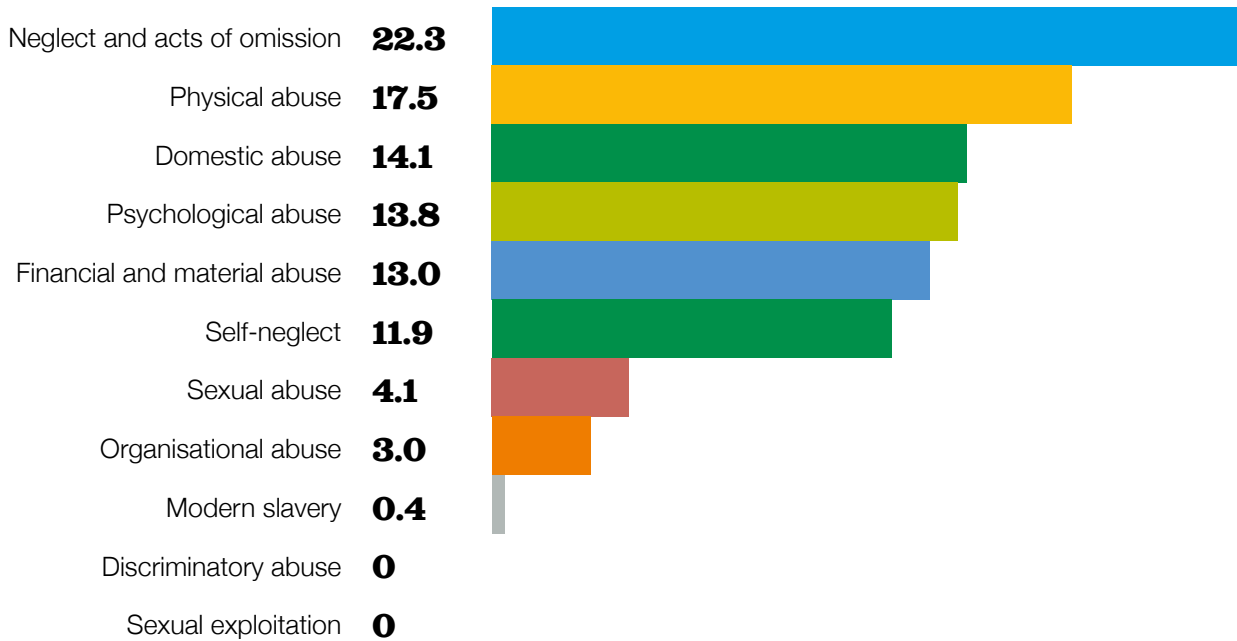
The World Health Organization indicates that the location of abuse is notably high in institutions like nursing homes and long-term care facilities. In Bolton, the most common location for abuse is the individual's home, followed by care homes. Adults of white ethnicity were the most overrepresented group; this is representative of the population of Bolton.

A further analysis of the remaining ethnic groups is essential to develop a thorough understanding of our communities and understand how various factors such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, and social issues like poverty, affect adults at risk and their carers.

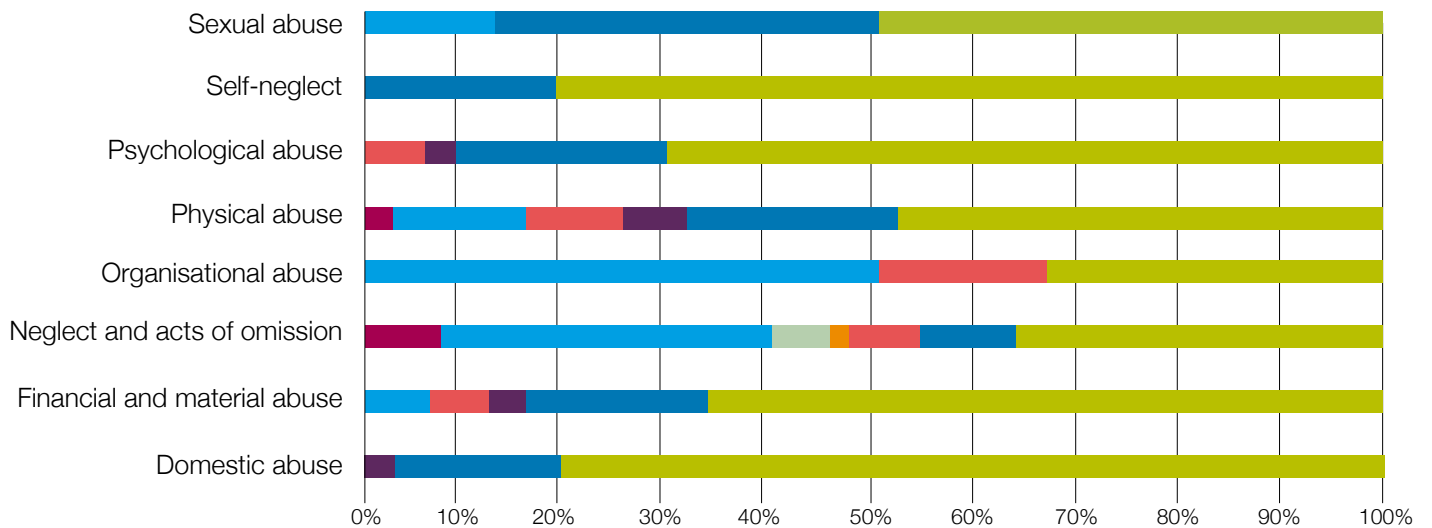
Over the next three years, we will start implementing the three key priorities of our 2024-2027 strategic plan. This includes improving engagement and representation of underrepresented groups and focusing on addressing higher levels of abuse, such as financial abuse, domestic violence, and self-neglect.



Types of abuse by percentage













Type of abuse vs location and reported numbers



- Key:**
- Own home
 - In a community service
 - Care home (residential)
 - Acute hospital
 - Care home (nursing)
 - Hospital mental health
 - In the community
 - Others
 - Hospital community

Comparison with 2022-2023

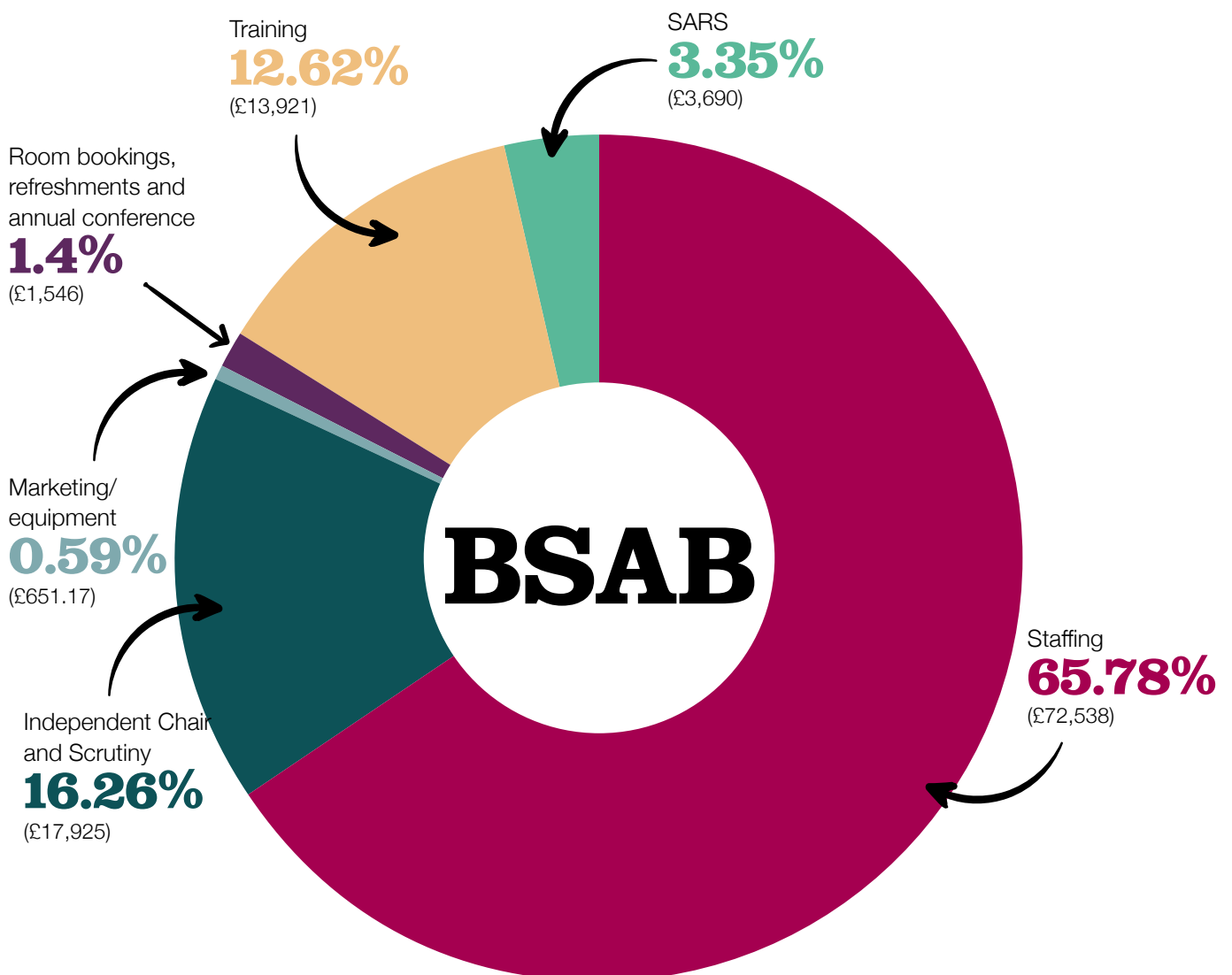
Over the past year, there has been a relatively small increase in the prevalence of domestic and physical abuse in Bolton. Whilst the rise is modest, the Board recognises that any increase has a significant impact on individuals and families within our community. The Board is committed to addressing this by safeguarding our residents and working with partners to reduce the prevalence of domestic and physical abuse in the Borough.

%	Type	Trend
3.22 %	Neglect and acts of omission	
2.02%	Physical abuse	
1.97%	Domestic abuse	
2.06%	Financial abuse	
1.07%	Self-neglect	
0.75%	Sexual abuse	
0.77%	Organisational abuse	
<1	Modern slavery	
<1	Discriminatory abuse	
<1	Sexual exploitation	

Financial summary

The Local Authority, Greater Manchester Police and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Bolton Locality have continued to fund the BSAB.

Other organisations have contributed 'in kind' to the Board, by allowing access to venues free of charge, and contributing to the Board's sub-groups, recognising that the Board continues to operate on a relatively small and carefully managed budget.



Priority areas 2024-2027

The Bolton Safeguarding Adults Board has identified three key priority areas that underpin the work of the partnership in delivering the vision for Bolton people:



These are detailed within the three-year strategic plan (2024-2027) which will be further supported by a detailed 'live' business plan which will evidence progress made against actions and identify which subgroup will be leading on the task.



For further information about the arrangements, to share your experiences of Safeguarding in Bolton get in touch via our website:



www.bolton.gov.uk



or call

01204 337000

