

**30 January 2019**

**Joint targeted area inspection  
(JTAI) of the multi-agency response  
to domestic abuse in Durham –  
Action Plan**



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**Report of Margaret Whellans, Corporate Director of Children and  
Young People's Services, Durham County Council**

**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update following the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the Multi-Agency Response to Domestic Abuse in Durham and to present the Improvement Action Plan for information.

**Executive Summary**

- 2 Between 9 and 13 July 2018, four separate Inspectorates undertook a joint inspection of the multi-agency response to domestic abuse in Durham. The inspection team was made up of 15 inspectors from the following:
  - Ofsted
  - Care Quality Commission
  - HMI Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
  - HMI Probation
- 3 The inspection included a 'deep dive' focus on how all agencies worked together to respond to the needs of children of all ages living with and experiencing domestic abuse.
- 4 Key findings from the inspection are contained within a letter which was provided to all key partners (Appendix 2) and includes a number of strengths, one area for priority action and a number of areas for improvement.
- 5 The Corporate Director of Children's and Young People's Services is the lead officer and was required to work with Chief Officers of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to provide a response to the joint inspectorate with a written statement of proposed actions. The JTAI Improvement Action Plan was submitted on 3 December 2018.

## **Recommendation**

- 6 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:
- (a) Note the information contained within this report and the JTAI Improvement Action Plan.

## **Background**

- 7 During the inspection, inspectors spent time in our front of house First Contact and multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), they met with senior and middle managers from across the partnership, with front-line practitioners across all agencies and they also spoke to children and families. They inspected a large number of case files of children who had experienced domestic abuse, 7 of these were in-depth “deep dive”.
- 8 Inspectors acknowledged the challenging nature of the multi-agency inspection and the complexities that exist for agencies working with families experiencing domestic abuse, where there is often more than one victim and risk assessment and decision making is often complex because domestic abuse is not the only risk factor and also because the impact upon children of domestic abuse is not always immediately apparent.
- 9 The JTAI process does not provide an overall “grade”. These inspections identify multi agency strengths in practice and areas for improvement.

## **The JTAI Improvement Action Plan**

- 10 Both during and immediately after the JTAI the LSCB Executive Group and its partners worked closely together to address the areas Inspectors identified as requiring improvement.
- 11 Careful consideration was given to the outcome of the inspection by all partners and a detailed Improvement Action Plan has been finalised and is attached to this report (Appendix 3).
- 12 The Inspection findings have been grouped into 5 Key Improvement Areas as follows:-
1. Priority Action to Improve Strategy Meetings
  2. Front Door/Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASH)
  3. Safeguarding Practice and Workforce Development
  4. Leadership & Management
  5. Voice of the Child
- 13 The Action Plan includes the expected impact of actions together with a programme of scrutiny and audit that will provide assurance that the desired impact has been achieved.

## **Governance & Monitoring:**

- 14 The LSCB Executive Group will hold responsibility for the overall monitoring and scrutiny of the Action Plan. By receiving quarterly reports, they will hold to account, challenge and scrutinise the actions of individual partner agencies and partnership groups to ensure actions are having the desired impact on outcomes for children in County Durham.
- 15 Individual partner agencies and partnership groups will be required to report quarterly to the LSCB Executive Group on the progress of actions and the outcome of assurance activity. The first of these will be provided in January 2019.

## **Conclusion**

- 16 This report summarises the outcomes of the JTAI Inspection into the multi-agency response to domestic abuse in Durham.
- 17 All partners worked closely together both during and after the Inspection to address the key findings and to develop a comprehensive action plan designed to robustly address all areas of improvement identified by the joint inspectorate.
- 18 The strategic governance of the JTAI Improvement Action Plan and the commitment of all partners to provide scrutiny and challenge provides assurance of a robust focus on ensuring good progress is made and children and families are supported to achieve good outcomes.

## **Background papers**

- JTAI Inspection Report

## **Other useful documents**

- JTAI Improvement Action Plan

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The Joint Inspection was carried out under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. The Local Authority, as the Lead Agency, is required to provide a written response to the findings.

### **Finance**

Actions to address capacity issues identified by inspectors will be required, wherever possible, to be delivered within existing resource

### **Consultation**

None.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

An equality impact screening assessment has been carried out to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **Human Rights**

None.

### **Crime and Disorder**

The criminal justice agencies, including Police, NPS, CRC and YOS, to take required actions to work in partnership to address and tackle the impact of domestic abuse upon children.

### **Staffing**

The JTAI letter identifies the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is under-resourced to deal with the volume of referrals received. The action in response is that a review of the MASH will be carried out. The review may have staffing implications depending upon the outcome and any actions to address capacity and volume. These will be issues for the partnership to address collectively.

### **Accommodation**

None.

### **Risk**

There is a risk that the actions identified do not deliver the required improvement in safeguarding practice and outcomes for children and families do not improve. The LSCB Executive Group will receive quarterly reports on progress from all partners contributing to the plan and remedial action will be identified and taken where actions are not delivering the required impact.

### **Procurement**

A procurement process may be required to facilitate independent scrutiny and overview of the delivery of the JTAI Improvement Action Plan and provide assurance that the required impact has been achieved.

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## **Appendix 2: Report of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection**

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DURHAM JTAI  
REPORT.24 AUGUST 2

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## **Appendix 3: JTAI Improvement Action Plan**

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JTAI IMPROVEMENT  
ACTION PLAN.FINAL.3