

# Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## Joint Targeted Area Inspection of services for “Children living with Domestic Abuse”

### Progress Update

**Presentation:** Michael Banks  
Independent Chairperson  
Local Safeguarding Children’s Board

*Altogether better*



# JTAI – A Reminder....

- Multi-Agency response to Children Living with Domestic Abuse in County Durham
- 72 Key Findings:-
  - 29 Strengths
  - 1 Priority Action
  - 42 Areas for Improvement

*Altogether better*



# SINCE WE LAST MET....

- Multi-agency Improvement Action Plan, approved by partnership and Cabinet. Submitted 3 December 2018. Emphasis on joint ownership and accountability
- Oversight and Governance by LSCB Executive Group
- Detail driven by 3 partnership working groups
  - Multi Agency Safeguarding Delivery Group (MASDG)
  - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Board
  - DASVEG
- 5 thematic improvement areas:-
  - Improve Strategy Meetings
  - Front Door/MASH
  - Safeguarding Practice & Workforce Development
  - Leadership & Management
  - Voice of the Child
- 108 Actions, 62 by December 2018
  - 45 Green; 6 Amber; 11 Timescales Revised

*Altogether better*



# 1. Priority Action - Strategy Meetings

- Strategy Meetings:
  - held when children are considered to be at potential risk of harm
  - Key partners come together swiftly (24 hours) to share information and knowledge about the child and family
  - Social Work Team Manager makes decision regarding next steps based on assessment of risk
- Inspectors identified
  - Variability in thresholds for convening Strategy meetings;
  - The time it took to convene meetings
  - Attendance of partners
  - Records of meetings not always shared

*Altogether better*



# PROGRESS TO DATE

- Single Point of Contacts Identified for each agency to ensure invitations can be circulated to the right person quickly to facilitate engagement
- Dial-in facilities available in all areas to improve efficiency and access to Strategy Meetings for all;
- Briefings have been held with all key staff to ensure there is good knowledge and understanding of the Strategy Meeting process
- Actions to improve the swift circulation of key decisions following Strategy Meetings have been implemented and improvements are beginning to be noted & performance monitoring and oversight is provided by the MASDG

*Altogether better*



## 2. Front Door/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- MASH under resourced compared to volume
- Strengthen Governance
- Joint decision making on next steps
- Strengthen information sharing with criminal justice agencies
- Strengthen Operation Encompass
- Apply thresholds consistently
- Health Front Door – A&E – safeguarding practice requires strengthening

*Altogether better*



# PROGRESS TO DATE

- A review of MASH has been undertaken. Key developments include:-
  - 3 additional Children's Social Care posts to enhance resource;
  - Pilot of Multi Agency Safeguarding Team within the MASH – evidence of improved information sharing and joint decision making
- MASH Board reports regularly to LSCB Executive so that challenge and review takes place
- Criminal Justice Agencies have identified Single Point of Contacts to facilitate swift access to and sharing of information
- Briefing sessions and audits delivered to Health Front Door staff to strengthen safeguarding practice
- A process implemented for oversight of decisions regarding MARAC thresholds
- Commissioning to extend Operation Encompass agreed and evaluation of Operation Encompass led by Teeside University expected January 2019

*Altogether better*



# 3. Multi Agency Safeguarding Practice

- Chronologies & consideration of cumulative risk to children of multiple incidents of DA
- Delays within the system of response
- Improve the quality of assessments and plans
- Multi Agency challenge is not sufficiently strong
- Over-reliance on adult victims to keep children safe
- Improved focus on perpetrators to change

*Altogether better*





# PROGRESS TO DATE

- Multi-agency audit programme reviews practice improvement – reports to MASDG and LSCB Executive Group on areas for improvement
- Multi-Agency Challenge Pledge has been developed for approval and circulation across the partnership
- Training of 400+ frontline police to improve decision making and response to Domestic Abuse incidents
- Awareness raising for staff of perpetrator programmes and referral routes
- Ongoing focus on the quality improvement of assessments and plans

*Altogether better*



## 4. Leadership & Management

- Improve multi-agency auditing and monitoring of practice
- Management oversight
- Impact of “strategic intent” not yet fully realised
- Strengthen multi-agency challenge & scrutiny (via Local Safeguarding Children’s Board)

*Altogether better*



# PROGRESS TO DATE

- Multi- and Single-Agency Audits carried out and improvement actions identified within agencies
- Safeguarding supervision workshops for Health managers to improve management oversight
- Actions to improve recruitment and retention within Children's Social Care – impact on stability and improving caseloads
- Transition to Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements to improve governance and scrutiny of frontline safeguarding practice

*Altogether better*



## 5. Voice of the Child

- Little evidence of children's voices recorded on their files
- Children's views not taken into account when assessing vulnerability and risk
- Needs of unborn babies not considered early enough

*Altogether better*



# PROGRESS TO DATE

- Clear focus on unborn children through establishment of Pre-Birth Team
- Renewed focus on Voice of the Child through all single- and multi-agency training programmes and in audits
- Improved use of National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) for children with Child Protection Plan.

*Altogether better*



# OFSTED FOCUSSED VISIT – JANUARY 2019

- Ofsted focused visit took place 10-11 January 2019
- Awaiting published report from inspection – 4 February 2019
- Verbal feedback provided confirmed an improving picture of practice seen since August in relation to the identification of risk, timeliness of assessments, stability in the workforce and performance management
- Inspectors also advised that the pace of improvement needs to be maintained.

*Altogether better*



**ANY QUESTIONS**

