



Children and Young People Select Committee

Report title: Joint Targeted Area Inspection action plan

Date: 15 June 2023

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Donna Simeon, Head of Strategy and Improvement

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of the report is to update the Committee on the outcome of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) which took place in November 2022 and the subsequent actions to be undertaken by the Authority, and partners, to improve the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

07 - 25 November 2023 – Joint Targeted Area Inspection took place.

31 January 2023 – JTAI Letter published

11 May 2023 – Partnership action plan submitted to Ofsted

1. Background

- 1.1. Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) are part of Ofsted's 'Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services' (ILACS) framework. JTAI inspections are focused on specific themes and areas of children services and review the multi agency approach to safeguarding children and young people. The agencies in scope of the inspection alongside the Local Authority are, Health Services and the Police. As such, JTAI inspections are carried out by inspectors from three different inspectorates, 1) Ofsted, 2) Care Quality Commission (CQC) and 3) His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- 1.2. On 07 November 2023 we were notified of the unannounced inspection. The theme/area of the inspection was [the multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk \(or the 'front door'\) of child protection](#). The inspectors were on site at a number of locations across the borough for one week, this included Laurence House, Lewisham Police Station and University Hospital Lewisham. Inspectors met with staff from across the three partner agencies, as well as school staff, children and parents; these meetings took place face to face or online.

2. Summary of inspection findings

- 2.1. A summary of the findings from the JTAI were [published](#) on 31 January 2023 and positively reflected the significant efforts that services have made to improve whilst working together to respond to the needs of children and families in the borough.
- 2.2. *'The partners know their services well and have an accurate understanding of the collective local and national challenges they face. Shared priorities that are informed by the experiences of local children and their families are communicated across the partnership and inform renewed strategic and operational plans. Committed staff, managers and multi-agency teams are working proactively in a complex multifaceted and demanding environment. A resolute focus on protecting children living with neglect and parental domestic abuse and children who are criminally and sexually exploited or missing from home is beginning to ameliorate children's circumstances before risk of harm escalates...'*
- 2.3. *'The partnership supports vulnerable adolescents well, providing a variety of*

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specialist services that meet their needs. Tenacious child-centred practice with children and young people by skilled practitioners in the child exploitation safe space teams is making a real difference to reducing risks and protecting them from further harm...

2.4. *'Schools are valued and respected partners and are an integral part of the decision-making process...*

2.5. *'Skilled and committed frontline early help, social care and health practitioners, police officers and school staff work extremely hard to provide effective support to vulnerable children and their families and to prevent risk and harm escalating...*

2.6. The findings also noted that whilst we have made great strides to improve services and work collaboratively for the benefit of our young community, we are still acutely aware that there is further work to do and accordingly the letter noted eight areas for improvement across the partner agencies:

'Leaders are fully aware that they have more to do together to ensure that children receive consistently effective help and protection...

What needs to improve?

■ *The length of time children spend in police stations out of hours.*

■ *Staffing capacity in the emergency duty team, the police missing persons unit and the referral and assessment teams.*

■ *The inclusion of all relevant professionals in meetings and their access to pertinent information about children and their families.*

■ *Internal and external information-sharing systems in all agencies, so that appropriate individuals and organisations receive the correct reports and decisions following the outcome of referrals, strategy meetings, child protection investigations and assessments.*

■ *Systems to track the invitations, attendance and contributions of all partners at strategy meetings.*

■ *Timeliness of completion and sharing of multi-agency hospital discharge and protection plans prior to the birth of vulnerable babies.*

■ *Adult mental health services' child safeguarding and risk-assessment practice.*

■ *The LSCP's understanding about the impact of multi-agency training.*

3. Action Plan

3.1. As a result of the areas identified for improvement, partner agencies have worked

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together to agree a plan to drive improvement (see Appendix B).

- 3.2. The Local Authority actions will be monitored to ensure quality and timeliness, monthly in the Director's Management meeting.
- 3.3. Responsibility for the overarching partnership actions is with the - Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) Executive which meets bi-monthly.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. Note the content of the report and Action plan in Appendix B

5. Policy Context

- 5.1. This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):

- Cleaner and Greener
- A Strong Local Economy
- Quality Housing
- Children and Young People
- Safer Communities
- Open Lewisham
- Health and Wellbeing

- 5.2. In particular, this report is closely aligned to priority 'Children and Young People' because it showcases the work, plans and ambitions the directorate has, in collaboration with partners, to support the wellbeing and development of Children and Young People in the borough.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. N/A

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. N/A

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. N/A

9. Climate change and environmental implications

- 9.1. N/A

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10. Crime and disorder implications

10.1. N/A

11. Health and wellbeing implications

11.1. N/A

12. Background papers

12.1. [The multi-agency response to identification of initial need and risk \(or the 'front door' of child protection\)](#)

13. Glossary

13.1. [Link to Oxford English Dictionary here.](#)

Term	Definition

14. Report author(s) and contact

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15. Appendices

15.1. Appendix A – JTAI letter from Ofsted

15.2. Appendix B – Action plan following Inspection

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