

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION

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Summary

This report sets out the key findings from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) and how the council and partners have responded to the report.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 In January 2016, the government published guidance on a new inspection framework known as the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). The JTAIs are joint inspections carried out by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of the Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation. JTAI assess how effectively agencies are working together in their local area to help and protect children. Each set of joint inspections also evaluates the multi-agency response to a particular issue or theme. The theme for September 2017 to September 2018 was the response to children living with Domestic Abuse.

2. Background

2.1 In June 2018, 16 JTAI inspectors spent three weeks assessing Medway’s response to protecting children who live with Domestic Abuse. The inspection looked at three key areas: front door and assessment; partnership and leadership and a deep dive into social care cases with involvement of partner agencies.

- 2.2 The inspection began with an offsite deep dive inspection into strategies, policies, partnership minutes as well as individual case audits. The inspectors then spent a week in Medway conducting interviews and case reviews. Verbal feedback was given to senior leaders from across Medway Statutory agencies.
- 2.3 The final report was published on 3 August 2018 and Medway was required to respond with a Written Statement of Action by 12 November 2018.

3. Key findings

- 3.1 The published report highlighted key strengths of the partnership as well as areas for improvement. Some of the key strengths highlighted include:
- The shared commitment across the partnership to tackle Domestic Abuse (DA)
 - The effectiveness of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in reducing risk
 - The strength of joint working between the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Youth Offending Team (YOT)
 - Improvements to school safeguarding processes
 - The local authority's willingness to develop and improve through dialogue with partners and learning from inspections
 - Robust early help arrangements that focus on early intervention and prevention.
 - Proactive leaders in health actively addressing gaps and prioritising DA training and leadership roles
 - Prioritisation by Kent Police of vulnerability, who seek to innovate in relation to child-centred policing across the force.
- 3.2 Areas for improvement can be classified into 5 key categories:
- MASH – some elements of the MASH were having a positive effect but inspectors found that whilst those with an immediate and urgent risk received a good response via the MASH, the front door arrangements did not always gather sufficient information quickly enough meaning some children were left with unassessed risk.
 - Performance information, monitoring and evaluation – inspectors felt senior leaders were not receiving sufficient data to be able to identify risk in the system and be assured that services were working robustly.
 - Partnerships – whilst it was clear that there was a strong shared commitment across the partners, it was reported that partners needed to be more challenging to each other.
 - Training – though there is a strong broad range of training available, Medway needs to better measure the impact of training.
 - Workforce: recruitment and retention of social workers needs to be improved to ensure children have continuity of care.

4. Progress since inspection

4.1 Outlined below are some of the changes we have already delivered since the inspection in June 2018:

4.2 MASH

- To ensure the right information is gathered to inform timely and well matched decisions in relation to risk and need of children about whose welfare there are concerns, there is now consistent, stable multi-agency representation in the MASH five days a week, including Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and National Probation Service (NPS). Additional staff have been recruited to the MASH including a social worker, practice manager, DA worker and a representative from Adult Services Disability. Group supervision has been focussed to enhance social workers and partners understanding of the cumulative impact of domestic abuse.
- In order to improve the quality of Domestic Abuse Notifications (DANs) Kent Police Central Referral Unit (CRU) Detective Sergeant has been based in First Response from 29th October (in addition to the Police MASH co-ordinator), to participate in strategy discussions, DAN triage and from November, to support Operation Encompass and facilitate timely information sharing and decision making. The quality of the DANs will be monitored via the operational MASH board, reporting findings to MASH Strategic Board.
- NPS Kent have a named Probation Officer acting as a virtual member of the MASH. This officer acts as the single point of contact and conduit between the MASH and NPS practitioners and is supported by the NPS Kent Safeguarding Team based at the Central Referral Unit including a 0.5fte Safeguarding Probation Officer and a 1.0fte Safeguarding Case Administrator who have access to both Framework-I and NPS case record systems to allow for timely information sharing.

4.3 Performance information, monitoring and evaluation

- In order to ensure effective systems are in place to monitor MASH progress and performance, a workflow has been developed and will go live once social workers and partners are trained at end of November. This will better define links to virtual partners improving how information is requested and the expectations on partners. Live data is available as daily reporting is now undertaken and a MASH dashboard has been created which is overseen by the Operational Group and MASH Strategic Board. Monthly audits of MASH activity now take place and actions and learning will be considered within individual and group supervision within First Response and will also be fed back to the board.
- The MASH workflow requires partners to provide an analysis of the information they share to ensure that they consider the impact and the risk of this information for the child and their family. Training is being provided internally to partners to enhance their analysis.
- Double checking systems are now in place at key decision making points in the single point of access (SPA), through the MASH and in assessment teams.

- The NPS Kent Safeguarding Case Administrator and virtual Probation Officer linked to the MASH collate all consultation and Domestic Abuse Notifications (DAN) information on a weekly basis. Data is already provided to the Central Referral Unit Strategic Board and will be shared with the MASH Strategic Board. The named Probation Officer acting as the virtual link to the MASH will attend the MASH Operational Group representing NPS Kent.
- Domestic Abuse is a Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) priority and as such data is presented and scrutinised at the Performance Management and Quality Assurance sub-group where partners are challenged and held to account.

4.4 Training

- Foundations of Practice training has been developed further and mandatory monthly training is now in place. There is greater emphasis on good quality assessments, managing risk and triangulation of professional information with parental self-reporting, within the training to ensure the child's and family's history is incorporated into decision making and analysis. Audits will be completed to measure the impact of training and will specifically check the identification of historic risk and completion of chronologies.
- A multi-agency workshop was held to look at strengthening child risk assessment tools in relation to domestic abuse. It has been agreed that we will develop a localised version that looks at protective factors and not just risk.
- The Community Rehabilitation Company is committed to improving the uptake of multi-agency training. Since the inspection 7 of the 18 case managers at the Chatham probation office, have now completed MSCB safeguarding training.

4.5 Partnerships

- New integrated Domestic Abuse service to be awarded January, pooling resources from across Council and the NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to promote early intervention, provide wider support for clients across all levels of risk and to embed health outcomes.
- The police single point of access (SPA) has introduced a process to ensure that children who are victims or perpetrators are included with the daily police review with partners.
- The new MASH workflow supports both in situ partners and virtual partners such as the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and NPS to better engage with the MASH. CRC and NPS are now represented at the Operational MASH board and training for virtual partners will be delivered by December 2018.
- The MSCB data set has been reviewed to ensure that it can be used to provide an understanding of safeguarding activity within partner agencies. Partner agencies submit data on a quarterly basis and are required to provide a clear analysis of the data. The data set is scrutinised quarterly by the MSCB Performance Management and Quality Assurance (PMQA) sub group. Live data is available to track timeliness of responses and throughput throughout the MASH.

- The Medway Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) Challenge and Escalation policy has been reviewed and updated.
- The MASH Health post Job Description has been reviewed and an agreed Partnership Information Sharing Protocol will be signed by all Health Agencies. This will strengthen the pathways to facilitate information being shared and enable timely and effective decision making within the MASH.
- Egress has been in use in the local authority for several years and is a recognised secure email system. It enables 'official' and 'official sensitive' emails to be sent and received securely to partners, providers, organisations and individuals and is being used across Children's Services. To further improve the way in which the Local Authority can share information securely with partners the Council having recently transitioned to Office 365, are testing the use of an alternative secure email system, which will replace Egress. Both Egress and the new solution meet the necessary regulations and security levels.
- A Single Point of Access within the community children's health services provider has been developed and teleconferencing facilities are now available to enable staff to participate in Strategy meetings if they are unable to attend. This has allowed for improved involvement from Health professionals in regards to any safeguarding concerns. Partner's attendance at strategy meetings is being monitored.
- Lessons and actions arising from the work will now also be reported to the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group which sits across Kent and Medway and across agencies. This group will be seeking to sign off the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy by the end of the year.
- Turning Point have appointed a family worker and this will increase their presence at MASH and in the Early Help system and make the pathways more visible.

4.6 **Workforce - Recruitment and Retention**

- To address workforce pressures relating to vacancies, turnover and reliance on temporary agency staff, our priority is to recruit and retain a sufficiently skilled and stable workforce to ensure that children receive a consistent standard of service. The Local Authority is undertaking intensive recruitment activity with encouraging results. All roles are being advertised online with Community Care and Jobs Go Public. A target email has also been sent out by Community Care to promote the roles in Medway.
- Medway hosted a stand at Community Care Live 2018. Leads are now being followed through to encourage further applications.
- Since June 2018, we have processed 26 offers of appointments, of which 20 will be starting between October-December 2018. This is a significant improvement compared to the period December 2017 – May 2018 when we appointed only 1 candidate. There has been a significant increase in permanent appointments and in October 2018, the percentage of the social work workforce that are agency has been reduced by almost a third to 25%.

4.7 **Further work to progress**

- An action plan is in place to develop further improvements across the system. The action plan will be monitored by the Domestic Abuse Sub

group of the Community Safety Partnership and which will report back to the MSCB executive group to manage any barriers to progress.

- Multi-agency training on the MASH workflow has started, which will ensure all partners (in situ and virtual) understand the expectations of timely information sharing and effective analysis to support decision making. This will be completed by the end of November 2018.
- Capacity for children to receive focussed help will increase with the appointment of two new DA posts within the Family Hubs, who will both hold a case load of medium risk cases. Additional to case holding, the staff will be able to provide additional support to other partners working from the Family Hub and will also support social workers on best practice (whilst also supporting the MASH/ Front Door model). Posts to be in place by December 2018.
- Governance arrangements have been tightened. The MASH Strategic Board is now a defined sub group of the MSCB and a 6 monthly report will be presented to the MSCB. The MASH Operational Group has been reinstated with updated Terms of Reference to ensure challenge and that actions are progressed. Any unresolved barriers to progress are escalated to the MASH Strategic Board to resolve.
- The Community Rehabilitation Company have appointed Quality Development Officers who are currently undergoing a programme of training. These are split practitioner/quality development roles. The Quality Development Officer in each team, will work alongside colleagues, to establish case discussions and support reflective practice, in particular the development of professional curiosity.
- The MASH Workflow, which is now in place, will enable performance monitoring of all information requested and responded to by partners. This will ensure that where there is delay, this can be discussed and addressed at the Operational MASH board, which will meet monthly.
- MSCB multi-agency audit group Terms of Reference and methodology has been revised to ensure that a measurable audit tool is utilised as the evidence based reference point from which themed reports are devised and circulated six weekly. The findings and recommendations are reviewed and challenged by MSCB Learning Lessons Sub group and contribute to a composite action plan.
- By December 2018 the Learning Development Group of the MSCB will review how we upskill staff in relation to professional curiosity and deliver multi-agency training to champion this across services.
- Kent Police are embedding professional curiosity into training for new recruits and all DA training. Training in relation to cumulative risk will commence in November 2018.
- The MSCB Challenge and Escalation policy will be relaunched in November 2018.
- The MSCB competency framework is being reviewed and will be relaunched in January 2019. In addition the MSCB Learning and Development sub group is introducing a multi-agency learning passport which will support agencies to evidence how professional are meeting the competencies for safeguarding training. This learning passport has already been piloted by Medway NHS Foundation Trust.

- The MSCB is reviewing the current evaluation process for multi-agency training to ensure that it provides a consistent measure to assess how training is improving practice. The evaluations including post 3 month evaluations will measure how the learning has been implemented and will be monitored by the MSCB Learning and Development sub group.
- In relation to non-convicted perpetrator programmes, multi-agency capacity has been reviewed. The Community Rehabilitation Company has secured funding and will continue to deliver community based perpetrator programmes. The next Medway programme will commence in November 2018.
- Health agencies are currently completing regular audits to review the quality of referrals into the MASH where they will be further discussed at the Performance Management and Quality Assurance (PMQA) Sub Group to allow for multi-agency scrutiny. Health colleagues also sit on a working group outside of the regular Performance Management and Quality Assurance Subgroup that looks at the quality and also the outcome of referrals, including signs of effective multi-agency working for the best outcomes for the child/ren. The revised Threshold Document is now clearly evident in health providers safeguarding training and staff are advised to attend the Safeguarding Children Boards multi-agency Threshold/Referrals training.
- There has been an increased focus, within the First Response teams, on a consistent approach to threshold and improving the timeliness of assessments. The Children's Services performance and quality assurance group monitor the timeliness of assessments against completion targets of 10 and 25 days depending on complexity.
- Multi-agency review of MASH has been undertaken and will be reported to the November meeting of the Strategic MASH Board.
- There is currently a review underway at Medway Maritime Hospital on the most effective way of putting alerts against any patient records in the Emergency Department where they have been discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and any actions have been identified. It is anticipated that the new system will be in place by February 2019.
- Medway Foundation Trust Hospital will have established a robust data collection and method for monitoring of DA cases notified / raised as a concern by March 2019.
- Kent and Medway Partnership NHS Trust have an action plan in place to insure the voice of the child is heard within adult mental health services and staff link in with other agencies where there are potential concerns. An audit is planned for March 2019 to identify if the action plan is working and the voice of the child is recorded.
- Further work is also being undertaken to promote Medway Council as an employer of choice. This includes engaging a marketing company to assist with Medway's branding, messaging and social media campaigns. Medway Council will also be hosting a stand at Compass, Birmingham in March 2019.

4.8 Evaluating Impact

- In order to be confident that the changes we have and will implement have made a difference to children's lives the following quality assurance processes are in place:
- Improved performance reporting to support better monitoring, challenge and evaluation and to inform review of practice monthly across Children's Services.
- The MSCB audits will highlight areas of development and recommended action for partner agencies will be reviewed and scrutinised by the Learning Lessons Subgroup, with further follow on audits to measure the impact of the actions and learning on practice. This activity will be reported to MSCB bi-annually for further review and challenge.
- Monthly Threshold Audits are being undertaken by the Quality Assurance team to ensure that threshold application is consistent and decision making is appropriate and timely.
- Quarterly multi-agency performance and quality audits of practice in the MASH began in September 2018. This work is being overseen by the MASH Strategic Board and findings will be reported to the next MSCB.
- Working with our Partners in Practice to carry out informal peer reviews within Children's Services Directorate to ensure changes are embedded into practice.

5. Impact on Looked After and Adopted Children

- 5.1 Whilst there is no direct impact on looked after and adopted children, the findings of the report and the resulting actions will improve the outcomes of not just children who experience domestic abuse but all children who come into contact with Children's services Front Door and MASH.

6. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk Rating
Actions are not implemented	If the actions within the action plan are not implemented in a timely way the outcomes for children living with Domestic Abuse will not improve	Every agency has nominated a named lead responsible for reporting against progress. The Action Plan will be monitored via the Domestic Abuse Sub Group with direct reporting to MSCB and Community Safety Partnership.	C2
Actions are not sufficient to reduce risk	Once implemented the risk to children will not be reduced if the actions do not address the findings of the inspection	The actions have been developed in partnership with all key statutory agencies. It has had sign off from the MSCB executive group and impact will be monitored via an invigorated audit process.	D2

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 Where possible the action plan to deliver improvements will be within existing resources. If any additional resources are required to further implement changes, a report will be referred to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
- 7.2 The recruitment of permanent social workers will reduce the reliance upon agency social workers and deliver savings against the Council forecast overspend on staffing. All recruitment is monitored and approved via Cabinet and in accordance with the Social Care Workforce Development Strategy.
- 7.3 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note this report on the JTAI, the action undertaken so far in Medway in relation to the findings of the inspection, as set out in Section 4 of the report and the next steps for Medway Council and partners as set out in Section 5 of the report.

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Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Letter of findings from the JTAI of the multi-agency response to domestic abuse in Medway

Appendix 2 – JTAI Written Statement of Action

Appendix 3 – JTAI Response Action Plan