

Guidance for joint targeted area inspections on the theme: children living with neglect

The 'deep dive' theme is children living with neglect for joint targeted area inspections between May and December 2017

This document should be read alongside the framework and inspection guidance for joint targeted area inspections (JTAs).

JTAs include an evaluation of the multi-agency 'front door' for child protection, when children at risk of harm first become known to local services. This is a part of all JTAs and, in this inspection, the evaluation of the multi-agency 'front door' will focus on children of all ages who are being or have been neglected.

JTAs also include a 'deep dive' investigation. From May to December 2017, the deep dive focuses is on children between seven and 15-years-old who have been neglected.

This document outlines guidance for the deep dive theme between May and December 2017: children who are being or have been neglected.

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Introduction

1. This guidance is to assist inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) when they conduct a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) that includes a deep dive investigation of the response to children who are/or have been neglected. It should be read alongside the framework and guidance for these inspections.¹
2. Inspectors will track and sample the experiences of children and young people. Tracking is an in-depth, end-to-end look at the experiences of children and young people. Sampling is a more targeted look at the experiences of a greater number of children, focusing on particular points in these children's journeys. More information on tracking and sampling is in the inspection framework.
3. In 2014, Ofsted conducted a thematic inspection focusing on the impact and response to neglected children under the age of 10. The JTAIs provide an opportunity to build on this evidence base and look at the experiences of older children. Therefore, the deep dive aspect of JTAIs between May and December 2017 will evaluate the effectiveness of multi-agency interventions for children between seven and 15 years old who have experienced neglect.
4. For the purpose of this inspection, we will use the definition of neglect in 'Working together to safeguard children 2015':²

"The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs."

¹ Joint targeted area inspections: framework and guidance'; Ofsted 2016; www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspection-of-arrangements-and-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection

² Working Together 2015: www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

5. Identifying neglect in middle childhood and adolescence can be complex because these children experience and respond to neglect in different ways. Some children between the ages of seven and 11 years may show challenging behaviours because of neglect, while others may suppress their feelings so that it is not obvious that they have been or are neglected. At this critical age in a child's development, it is crucial that neglect is identified and responded to. As children move from primary to secondary education and into adolescence, they need support to manage these changes. If this support is not in place at home and they are being neglected, children will find this time in their life particularly difficult. This can lead to long-term problems.
6. Recent research by the Children's Society found that 'adolescent's problem behaviours and the personal issues they face may often be linked to neglect'.³ Older children who have been neglected may be at risk of going missing or being exploited. They may exhibit challenging behaviours and neglect may have a detrimental effect on their physical and emotional health. Professionals do not always identify the underlying cause of these behaviours and therefore children do not always get the support they need. Sometimes, the public and professionals assume that older children are better able to cope with neglect.⁴
7. The deep dive aspect of these multi-agency inspections provides an opportunity to explore joint responses to children in middle childhood and to older children. These inspections will support the understanding of what works well in order to improve practice in this complex area of work.
8. The deep dive focus of these JTAIs is on children between seven and 15 years old who have been neglected. The evaluation of the multi-agency front door services for child protection will focus on children of all ages who have been or are suspected of being neglected.

Scope of the inspection

9. All JTAIs evaluate multi-agency arrangements for:
 - the response to all forms of child abuse, neglect and exploitation at the point of identification
 - the quality and impact of assessment, planning and decision-making in response to notifications and referrals

³ 'Troubled Teens; Understanding Adolescent Neglect'; The Children's Society, 2016: www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/research/troubled-teens-understanding-adolescent-neglect

⁴ 'Hurting inside', Michelle Turnbull, NSPCC 2015: NSPCC report on the learning from the NSPCC helpline and ChildLine on neglect; London: NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2015/hurting-inside-helpline-childline-neglect/

- protecting children and young people at risk of a specific type (or types) of harm or the support and care of children looked after and/or care leavers (evaluated through a deep dive investigation into the experiences of these children)
- the leadership and management of this work
- the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board (LSCB) in relation to this work.

Meeting with relevant staff

10. In addition to the list provided in paragraph 67 of the framework, inspectors may talk with, by telephone or in person:
- voluntary and community sector representatives who are providing services to children living with neglect in the local area
 - local housing providers
 - designated child protection leads and/or headteachers
 - regional school commissioners' safeguarding leads and the local authority safeguarding leads with responsibility for supporting schools
 - representatives from organisations within the local area who have been brokered by schools or the local authority to provide alternative education provision
11. An education inspector will contact the schools of the children who have been selected for case tracking. The inspector will discuss with staff the work of the school to support the child.

Evaluation criteria

12. Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:
- risks to children living with neglect are prevented and reduced. The needs of the child and their family are met at an early stage through timely access to effective help⁵ (ESN 23)⁶
 - children living with neglect receive the right help and protection because of application of appropriate thresholds, effective information sharing and timely intervention⁷ (ESN 24)

⁵ This includes the troubled families programme.

⁶ The evaluation schedule numbers (ESN) are a referencing system to support inspectors when they record their findings in evidence records. ESNs 01–22 are in the main JTAI framework.

⁷ This includes thresholds for early help, children in need, child protection processes, children becoming looked after

- agencies work together to identify children who are neglected, intervene to reduce risk and monitor effectively the impact of interventions so that risk is reduced (ESN 25)
- the impact of neglect on children is reduced because they and their families can access a sufficient range of local services, including therapeutic help that improves children's emotional well-being and safety. This may include help provided by community and voluntary services (ESN 26)
- professionals⁸ and support staff are well trained, confident and knowledgeable. They understand the impact of neglect on children's daily lives as well as the long-term and cumulative impact on their health and well-being. This enables them to identify how to help and protect children and to take action to do so (ESN 27)
- children who are neglected experience a child-centred approach from all professionals. The risks to them and their needs are assessed effectively and responded to appropriately. Assessments consider family history and the cumulative impact of neglect, and show that there is a clear understanding of the ways in which different forms of neglect affect children. The views of the child are clearly recorded and central to the work with the family (ESN 28)
- professionals have a clear understanding of how the behaviour of parents and carers affects children. They assess any strengths and risks in parenting and the extended family. Where changes in parents' and/or carers' behaviour are required, clear timescales for change are agreed. These timescales are based on the child's needs, and improvements in parenting are closely monitored (ESN 29)
- professionals challenge each other appropriately to ensure good practice, and they challenge and support parents/carers where poor parenting is resulting in neglect (ESN 30)
- children living with neglect benefit from evidence-based approaches, tools and services that reduce risks and meet their needs (ESN 31)
- children and their families feel that their views have been heard and understood. This leads to improvements in the help and support that they receive (ESN 32)
- the police work in partnership with other agencies to appropriately identify and address the needs of children who have been or are neglected. They investigate effectively cases of neglect in families with children (ESN 33)

⁸ This means but is not limited to early help workers, social workers, family/social work support workers, police officers and support staff, health professionals and support staff, personnel in the National Probation Service and community rehabilitation company, youth offending team staff, teachers and school staff.

- schools have effective systems to identify children at risk of or subject to neglect. They make timely referrals to early help or children's social care where appropriate and children receive support within the school and/or from external agencies where required (ESN 34)
- schools contribute effectively to inter-agency working to improve outcomes for children who are being or have been neglected. This includes contributing to a coordinated offer of early help or inter-agency plans for children in need of help and protection (ESN 35)
- leaders and managers understand the experiences of children living with neglect that live locally.⁹ This leads to effective action to meet children's needs and improve the help and support provided to children and their families (ESN 36)
- leaders and managers recognise the challenges involved in responding to neglect and provide effective support, training and challenge to practitioners (ESN 37)
- the LSCB actively monitors, promotes, coordinates and evaluates the work of the statutory partners that help and protect children at risk of neglect, including working effectively with other multi-agency groups that have responsibility for responding to neglect. (ESN 38)

⁹ This includes leaders and managers from the police, health, probation and the local authority.

Annex A: Local information to support the inspection

13. Annex A lists the information inspectors request from local agencies where the deep dive theme for the JTAI is children living with neglect. The information is listed in the order that the local agencies are asked to provide it.

Lists of children at risk of neglect

14. **By the end of the day that the area is notified of the inspection** (Tuesday of week one), the director of children's services (DCS) should provide lists of children identified as a child in need and children who are the subject of a child protection plan, both living in the local authority area and those living outside the area for whom the local authority is responsible. The list should indicate whether these children are living or have lived with neglect. The lead inspector will use these lists to select the children whose experiences inspectors will track and the local area are asked to jointly evaluate. Where possible, the list should include the fields stated below.

| List | Detail required |
|---|--|
| <p>Children identified as a child in need</p> <p>All those in receipt of services as a child in need at the point of inspection and those who ceased to receive services as a child in need in the three months before inspection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn: expected date of birth ■ Age of child (years) ■ Does the child have a disability? (Y/N) ■ Child in need start date ■ Primary need code ■ Date child was last seen ■ Child in need closure date ■ Reason for closure ■ Allocated team ■ Allocated worker ■ Whether the child is living or has lived with neglect (Y/N)¹⁰ |

¹⁰ This list is the same as list six in Annex A of Ofsted's single inspection framework for local authorities. The last field is an additional request specific to the joint inspection. The local area should determine how best to provide this additional information.

| List | Detail required |
|---|--|
| <p>Children on a child protection plan</p> <p>All those who are the subject of a child protection plan at the point of inspection and those who ceased to be the subject of a child protection plan in the three months before inspection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn: expected date of birth ■ Age of child (years) ■ Does the child have a disability? (Y/N) ■ Child protection plan start date ■ Initial category of abuse ■ Latest category of abuse ■ Date of the last statutory visit ■ Child seen in accordance with the timescales specified within their plan, by the lead social worker? (Y/N) ■ Was the child seen alone? ■ Child protection plan end date ■ Subject to emergency protection/care/supervision order or protected under police powers in last six months (Y/N) ■ Number of previous child protection plans ■ Allocated team ■ Allocated worker ■ Whether the child is living or has lived with neglect (Y/N)¹¹ |

15. **By 3pm on day one (Wednesday)** the local authority with partner agencies should also provide the following lists, which need to include both child protection and child in need cases:

- 10 cases that the local authority identify where neglect is a current and significant factor, where the child is between seven and 15 years old and there is multi-agency involvement.¹² The list should include the child's ID number and whether they are a child in need or on a child protection plan.
- 10 cases that the local authority identify where neglect is a current and significant factor, where the child is between seven and 15 years old and the agencies believe there has been positive engagement between them and the family to improve outcomes for the child. The list should include the

¹¹ This list is the same as list seven in Annex A of Ofsted's single inspection framework for local authorities. The last field is an additional requests specific to the joint inspection. The local area should determine how best to provide this additional information.

¹² Multi-agency involvement means at least two agencies.

child's ID number and whether they are a child in need, on a child protection plan or a child looked after.¹³

- 10 cases where Youth Offending Teams and/or National Probation Services or the Community Rehabilitation Company are involved as well as children's services and there are current or significant concerns about neglect. The children in these cases should be between seven and 15 years old. The list should include the child's ID number and whether they are a child in need or on a child protection plan.
16. If there are any particular contextual issues in the local area in relation to neglect, for example a specific programme of work or service for neglect, the DCS can advise the lead inspector of this when they provide these lists. The lead inspector will take this into account when selecting the children whose experiences inspectors will track and sample.
17. **By 5.30pm on day one (Wednesday)**, the lead inspector will select 20 children living with neglect from all the lists provided and ask the local authority to provide additional information on these 20. **By 4pm of day two (Thursday)**, the local authority should provide the following information on each of the 20 children:
- is the child or young person known to the youth offending team? (Y/N)
 - is the National Probation Service working with a parent or any adult living in the same household as the child that may pose a risk to the child or young person? (Y/N)
 - is the community rehabilitation company working with a parent or any adult living in the same household as the child that may pose a risk to the child or young person? (Y/N)
 - is there a current police investigation or any criminal proceedings? (Y/N)
18. **By mid-day on day three (Friday)**, the lead inspector will select between five and seven children whose experiences the local partnership should evaluate jointly. By 10am on day three, the lead inspector may request a phone call with the local authority to confirm that the selection of cases include multi-agency involvement and current or recent work to address concerns about neglect. The lead inspector may ask the local authority to review the cases on the electronic recording system to ensure this.
19. Inspectors will focus their evaluation on the experiences of the specific children identified. Although family context will be taken into consideration, the experiences of any brothers or sisters will not be evaluated in detail.

¹³ We have not requested lists of looked after children but there may be cases where children have recently become looked after and fit the criteria outlined above.

20. Inspectors will focus on practice over the six months before the inspection, but will take into account the child’s experiences prior to this point. The local agencies should provide key documents associated with these children **by the end of day five** (Tuesday of week two) and the joint evaluations **by the end of day seven** (Thursday of week two). See the section ‘Key case file documents’ below for further information.

Child-level lists and details of planned multi-agency meetings

21. **By the end of day two (Thursday)**, the local authority should provide the lists of child-level data shown in the table below. Inspectors will use these lists to develop lines of enquiry and identify children whose experiences they will sample while in the local area. These lists are of all children in each category known to the local authority, not just those living with neglect.¹⁴

| List | Detail required |
|--|--|
| <p>Contacts</p> <p>All those who have been the subject of a contact in the three months before inspection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn, expected date of birth ■ Age of child (years) ■ Date of contact ■ Contact source |
| <p>Early help</p> <p>All those who have been the subject of an early help assessment, a common assessment or a targeted intervention in the six months before inspection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn, expected date of birth ■ Age of child (years) ■ Assessment completion date ■ Organisation completing assessment |

¹⁴ The content of these lists is the same as the equivalent lists requested for an inspection of the local authority as part of Ofsted’s single inspection framework.

| List | Detail required |
|--|--|
| <p>Referrals</p> <p>All those who have been the subject of a referral in the three months before inspection.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn, expected date of birth ■ Age of child (years) ■ Date of the most recent referral ■ Referral source ■ Referral – no further action? (Y/N) ■ Number of referrals in last 12 months ■ Allocated team ■ Allocated worker |
| <p>Assessments</p> <p>All those who have been the subject of a statutory assessment in accordance with section 17 or section 47 of the Children Act 1989 in the six months before inspection.</p> <p>This includes assessments that have started but are not yet completed.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn, expected date of birth ■ Age of child (Years) ■ Does the child have a disability? (Y/N) ■ assessment start date ■ Child seen during assessment (Y/N) ■ assessment date of authorisation ■ Allocated team ■ Allocated worker ■ If assessment completed has neglect been identified? (Y/N) |
| <p>Section 47</p> <p>All those who have been the subject of a section 47 enquiry in the six months before inspection</p> <p>This includes enquiries that are ongoing and an initial child protection conference (ICPC) decision has not yet been made.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Child unique ID ■ Gender ■ Ethnicity ■ Date of birth ■ If unborn, expected date of birth ■ Age of child (years) ■ Does the child have a disability? (Y/N) ■ Section 47 enquiry start date ■ Number of section 47 enquiries in the last 12 months ■ Initial child protection conference not required (Y/N) ■ Date of initial child protection conference ■ Did the initial child protection conference result in a child protection plan? (Y/N) ■ Number of ICPCs in the last 12 months ■ Allocated team ■ Allocated worker |

Key case file documents

22. **By the end of day five** (Tuesday week two), the local agencies should provide electronic copies of the following key documents for each of the children whose experiences they have been asked to evaluate (where recent examples exist):
- initial referral/contact/notification (where applicable)
 - most recent assessment, including a common or early help assessment
 - strategy or other multi-agency discussion or equivalent
 - section 47 investigation documentation/ICPC minutes
 - most recent plan for the child and/or review of the plan
 - latest return home interview and any subsequent risk assessments (where appropriate)
 - the most recent pre-sentence report relating to the child or any relevant adult (where applicable)
 - details of any specialist services involved with the family
 - a joint chronology of significant events in the six months prior to the inspection. Significant events may include:
 - concerns about neglect and/or other forms of abuse
 - any contact the child or relevant adults had with the police – as either a victim or suspect – such as reported incidents, crimes and investigations, and reports of the child being missing or absent (including police notifications to social care)
 - any occasion when the child or relevant adults have attended urgent care units
 - episodes of the child missing from home, care or education
 - information on events earlier than the six months before inspection, where this is necessary to understand the context of the child’s experience.
23. The CQC will request documents about the children whose experiences inspectors will track. However, as the specific health agencies involved will vary, the CQC will determine which agencies to request information from following inspectors’ review of the evaluations undertaken by the local partnership. The CQC will make this request on the Friday of week two.
24. **By the end of day five** (Tuesday week 2), the local authority should also provide the lead inspector with any details of multi-agency meetings taking place during the fieldwork week relating to children living with neglect who have been selected for case tracking, including:
- initial child protection conferences

- review child protection conferences
 - children looked after reviews
 - strategy discussions
 - any other planning or review meeting.
25. The local agencies should provide their joint evaluations of children's experiences electronically **by the end of day seven** (Thursday of week two). Access to a secure online site will have been arranged to receive the case file documents and evaluations. If printed copies of these documents are needed, inspectors will request that they are available for when they arrive on site.

Other information to support the inspection

26. **By the end of day five** (Tuesday of week two), the local agencies should provide the information outlined below to help inspectors understand the work of agencies within the area. The local agencies should not provide everything they hold on each subject. They should provide the area's **best and most recent examples that relate to the scope of this inspection**. Some examples may relate to more than one of the areas listed below. They should provide this information electronically.

The local authority

- 1.1 – organisational structures showing lines of reporting and accountability
- 1.2 – management information reports for those children within the scope of the inspection, at both a local and agency level
- 1.3 – assessment and threshold criteria for helping families and protecting the identified children
- 1.4 – practice audits, including multi-agency **audits**, over the six months prior to the inspection relating to the focus of the inspection, and associated improvement/action plans
- 1.5 – details of any services in the area that have been commissioned from the community or voluntary sector for children living with neglect and details of the early help offer for children living with neglect
- 1.6 – terms of reference for the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) or local equivalent
- 1.7 – needs analysis, strategies and action plans relating to neglect, including the prevalence of neglect, any success criteria and any analysis of impact.

The local safeguarding children board

- 2.1 – organisational structures showing lines of reporting and accountability
- 2.2 – minutes of LSCB meetings from the 12 months before the inspection (including executive board meetings where applicable)
- 2.3 – structure of the LSCB and sub-groups and the names and contact details for LSCB members
- 2.4 – sub-group minutes as relevant to the scope of the inspection (as requested by the lead inspector).

The police force

- 3.1 – organisational structures showing lines of reporting and accountability
- 3.2 – risk assessments for vulnerable children and those at risk of neglect
- 3.3 – information about learning and development on vulnerability, neglect and child protection
- 3.4 – child protection referral document
- 3.5 – strategy, policies and guidance relating to vulnerability, neglect and child protection
- 3.6 – vulnerability, neglect and child protection action plan(s) and self-assessments
- 3.7 – any audits and action plan(s) relating to vulnerable children and those at risk of neglect
- 3.8 – performance management information relating to vulnerable children and those at risk of neglect, and available data about outcomes for vulnerable children and those at risk of neglect

The National Probation Service and community rehabilitation company/companies

- 4.1 – organisational structures showing lines of reporting and accountability
- 4.2 – policy/procedures about child protection and safeguarding
- 4.3 – policy/procedures for the management of risk of harm to others
- 4.4 – record of staff trained in child protection and safeguarding (with dates training completed)
- 4.5 – information about the presence of approved premises in the area

Youth offending team

- 5.1 – organisational structures showing lines of reporting and accountability
- 5.2 – policy/procedures with regard to child protection and safeguarding
- 5.3 – policy/procedures for the management of risk of harm to others
- 5.4 – record of staff trained in child protection and safeguarding (with dates training completed)

Health partners

- 6.1 – organisational structures showing lines of reporting and accountability including details of local health commissioning and/or provider services
- 6.2 – Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and health-provider services – with details of who is providing commissioned services, including health visiting and school nursing, adult substance misuse and Contraceptive and Sexual Health (CASH) services
- 6.3 – CCG and provider services annual reports on safeguarding and child protection, including for children looked after
- 6.4 – provider policies relating to children living with neglect, including local primary care policies
- 6.5 – any commissioner or provider audits and action plans relating to children living with neglect

Consent to meet with children, young people, parents and carers

- 27. The lead inspector will ask the local agencies to arrange opportunities for inspectors to talk directly with the children whose experiences they will track. The local agency should record that consent has been given by the children and their parents or carers. Where consent is not given or a discussion is not possible, the local agency should inform the lead inspector of the reasons and confirm these in writing as soon as possible and by the end of week two.

Annex B: Tool for tracking children’s experiences

The inspection team uses the tracking tool to ensure that they are consistently recording evaluations of evidence from tracking individual children and young people’s experiences at each key stage of intervention.

| | |
|---|--|
| Inspector | |
| Inspectorate | |
| Case number | |
| Age of child/young person | |
| Does the child have any individual needs relating to their circumstances? (for example, their ethnicity or a disability) | |

Evaluation by the local area

| | |
|---|--|
| Does the joint evaluation by the local partnership accurately evaluate the experiences of the child? (where an evaluation has taken place) | |
|---|--|

Inspector’s evaluation

| | Evaluative summary of child/young person’s experience |
|--|--|
| Was referral for action timely for the child? ESN 01, 03, 04, 23, 25, 27, 33, 34 ¹⁵ | |
| Is risk identified, understood and prioritised? Does the child appear to be safe? ESN 08, 09, 24,25,27,31 | |
| Has decision-making matched the priority risks and needs? Has this resulted in the child getting the help they need? ESN 06, 09, 24,25,27,28,34 | |
| Where an assessment has been completed, are risks, needs and strengths clear? ESN 05,24,29,31 | |

¹⁵ ESN numbers 01–22 are in the separate ‘Framework and inspection guidance for joint targeted area inspections’, Ofsted, 2016; www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-arrangements-and-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection.

| | Evaluative summary of child/young person's experience |
|--|--|
| <p>Is there a plan? Is it sufficient to address risk and need? Is it making a difference and improving the child's well-being? ESN 06,29,35</p> | |
| <p>Has the child been involved/engaged at all stages? Have family/carers been involved at all stages? ESN 10,27,28,29,32,34,</p> | |
| <p>Have individual needs and circumstances been taken into account? Please provide examples ESN 09, 23, 24, 25,26, 27, 28,29,31,32,34,35</p> | |
| <p>Do the agencies work together effectively to protect the child and make sure that they get the services they need to improve outcomes? ESN 07, 26, 29</p> | |



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