

Integrated inspections

Consultation outcomes, learning from pilot inspections and next steps

This report summarises the response to joint proposals for integrated inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and joint inspections of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

It also outlines the main learning points arising from the pilot inspections undertaken to test these proposals and the next steps the inspectorates plan to take.



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361

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Contents

Introduction	4
Background	4
Consultation proposals	5
Consultation feedback	6
Learning from the pilots	7
Next steps	7
Annex A: Care Quality Commission consultation responses	9
Summary	9
The criteria	9
Annex B: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary consultation responses	11
Summary	11
The criteria	11
Annex C: Her Majesty's Inspectorate Probation consultation responses	13
Summary	13
Probation services criteria	13
Youth offending services criteria	13
Annex D: Responses to the consultation	14
Proposal one: how and where we will inspect	14
Proposal two: the judgement structure	14
Proposals three and four: the evaluation criteria	15
Proposal five: how we will report	17
Proposal six: joint inspection of the LSCB	17

Introduction

1. In April 2013, Ofsted took the decision that a joint inspection of the multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children should not go ahead. This joint inspection would have been by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons). The same decision was made about a separate joint inspection by Ofsted and CQC of services for looked after children and care leavers. This decision was based on learning from our pilots and the concerns expressed about the use of a single judgement for a complex multi-agency system. The inspectorates remained committed to working together to find a model that took into account these concerns and announced alternative proposals for consultation from July to September 2014.
2. This report details the main responses to the consultation, the learning from the pilots and the next steps.

Background

3. Following the decision in April 2013 not to implement the joint inspections, the inspectorates continued to work together to find the best model of joint working. However, the inspectorates were clear that while this joint work was being further developed, they must continue to scrutinise and evaluate the contribution of local agencies to the help and protection of children.
4. As a consequence, Ofsted and CQC launched their own single inspection events in September 2013:
 - Ofsted: 'Framework and evaluation schedule for the inspections of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers' (see: www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework)
 - CQC: 'Child safeguarding and looked after children inspection programme' (see: www.cqc.org.uk/content/child-safeguarding-and-looked-after-children-inspection-programme-0).
5. As part of launching its event, Ofsted also began a programme of reviews of each Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), looking at how effective the LSCB was in discharging its relevant functions.
6. In April 2014, HMIC launched a programme of child protection inspections across all police forces in England and Wales (see: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/our-work/child-abuse-and-child-protection-issues/national-child-protection-inspection).
7. HMI Probation and HMI Prisons continued with their ongoing programmes of inspection that include a consideration of the safeguarding of children and

young people. HMI Probation also published a thematic report on child protection work in probation and youth offending services in August 2014.

8. Each of the individual inspection programmes are proving to be rigorous and well received in the relevant sectors and are identifying strengths and weaknesses in the system to drive improvement. Ofsted, CQC and HMIC are committed to completing a full round of inspections within their respective sectors.
9. Given these commitments and the response to a shared judgement in the first set of proposals, the inspectorates had to consider how they could:
 - continue with their single inspection activity
 - maximise information sharing between the inspectorates
 - still undertake some joint activity.

At all times, we considered how we can have the most impact in improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

Consultation proposals

10. In July 2014, the inspectorates set out their proposed next steps for consultation (see: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-inspections-of-services-for-children-in-need-of-help-and-protection-children-looked-after-care-leavers-joint-inspection-of-the-local-s). These are summarised below:
 - In 20–25 local authority areas Ofsted, CQC, HMIC, HMI Probation and HMI Prisons (where there is a children’s custodial provision), would conduct separate inspections at the same time, each using their own powers. This number was based on the resources available in the inspectorates.
 - The inspectorates would jointly evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the LSCB, resulting in a shared judgement and a shared report. This would take place at the same time as the separate single inspections, outlined above.
 - As some of the proposed activity was ‘separate but aligned’ (see first bullet point) and some of the activity was ‘joint’ (see second bullet point), the inspectorates described this new set of proposals as an ‘integrated’ inspection
 - Ofsted’s single inspection of the local authority would be the ‘spine’ of the integrated inspection. Ofsted would use the same methodology and criteria to evaluate and judge the help, protection and care of children and young people that it was already using in its single inspection of the local authority.
 - CQC and HMIC would make judgements in line with the Ofsted judgement structure and using a four-point scale. Both CQC and HMIC asked for views on their proposed grade criteria.

- HMI Probation and HMI Prisons would use criteria from their own inspections to evaluate the contribution of their respective agencies but would not make a judgement. They both asked for views on their evaluation criteria.
11. These inspections would all take place in the same period of time so that the inspectorates could share lines of enquiry in real time.
 12. In summary, each inspectorate would be acting under their own legislative powers, making their own judgements, using their own evidence and own evaluation criteria and producing their own individual inspection report. In addition, the inspectorates would jointly inspect the LSCB under a separate legislative power that permits a joint review of children's services.
 13. To help the agencies in the local authority area and the local population understand the findings of each of the inspectorates, we proposed that the headlines from each of the reports would be combined into an executive summary.

Consultation feedback

14. We received 134 responses. While respondents supported some sort of joint approach, there were varied views about the detail of the proposals for an integrated programme. Feedback included the following:
 - Respondents were concerned that differences in inspection practice between the inspectorates may be exacerbated in an 'integrated' way of working.
 - Some respondents suggested that it would be much more effective if inspection activity is 'joint' and that the inspectorates should arrive at a shared judgement about the local system.
 - Some respondents thought it would be problematic and confusing for some inspectorates to make judgements when others did not.
 - The arrangements need to take account of agencies that operate across local authority boundaries, or where multiple agencies operate within a local authority area. This was particularly an issue for police forces.
 - Respondents thought that LSCBs should not be judged until their purpose is clarified.
 - Local Government Association and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers thought the LSCB shared judgement and a combined report was a step in the right direction but would prefer narrative reporting.
 - The burden of up to five aligned and one joint inspection was of concern, particularly in smaller local authority areas, and there was a fear that the findings would be confused.

- LSCB chairs were supportive of a shared judgement but wanted the inspectorates to be clear where within the partnership the responsibility for strengths and weaknesses resides. They also wanted a larger sample of areas to experience an integrated inspection.

Learning from the pilots

15. We were pleased that the sector was very responsive to our requests for opportunities to pilot. We embarked on two pilot inspections that helped us to identify issues to resolve in our proposals. We found the following:
 - Delivering up to five separate inspections of local agencies at the same time as a joint inspection of the LSCB was difficult and challenging for the inspectors and those being inspected. It created competing demands on both.
 - There are significant benefits to be gained from a joint review of the LSCB, but the methodology was challenging to deliver due to the number of separate inspections occurring at the same time.
 - The five separate inspections did not (and could not due to legislative constraints) give the agencies in the local authority area a shared evaluation of operational partnership working.
 - Each of the inspectorates had different resources available for the inspection. The absence of joint opportunities to set up the LSCB inspection and provide feedback created more difficulties than we anticipated. The resources available to the inspectorates also reduced the opportunities for joint evidence gathering activity and joint evaluation of the issues raised in the LSCB inspection.
 - The evidence gathering activity across the separate inspections resulted in duplication of effort in some areas and a lack of 'join up' in others for those being inspected.
 - We attempted to minimise burden for the LSCB chair by using Ofsted as the conduit for discussions about the joint LSCB inspection. The LSCB chairs reported that, in practice, this was unhelpful.
 - Learning from the first pilot informed the second pilot and improved the process. Despite the improvements, there was still insufficient added value from the integrated approach.
16. In summary, the integrated methodology did not add enough inspection value to enable a proper multi-agency evaluation of services for vulnerable families, children and young people living in that local authority area.

Next steps

17. We all remain committed to working together and finding the right solution. We are clear, based on our collective experience, that we can add value when we bring our expertise together. There are areas of public and government concern

where a shared interrogation and shared view from the inspectorates will add to the public debate, support improvement and most importantly have a positive impact on the experiences of children and young people.

18. There are issues that would benefit from a shared view from two or more of the inspectorates. We think that by looking at targeted areas of practice, either by theme or locality, we will be able to:
 - set out clearly how partnership working in relation to a particular issue and/or in a particular area improves the experiences and progress of children and young people
 - use our resources effectively so that any such inspection activity is truly 'joint' between the inspectorates relevant to the issue
 - gain a detailed view of services in a particular area of practice so that we can report examples of both good and poor practice for others to learn from.
19. We intend to complete six targeted inspections in a locality area before March 2016. These targeted inspections will evaluate how local agencies work together to protect children, focused on specific areas of concern such as the sexual exploitation of children and young people.
20. We will work closely with our relevant government departments and sector representatives to help us think about the important areas of practice we must take into account in this planned programme of joint inspection.
21. We will call this group together in the summer with the intention, subject to further consultation, of launching this programme of joint work in the autumn. This targeted programme of joint inspections will inform our ongoing programme of joint work after April 2016.

Annex A: Care Quality Commission consultation responses

Summary

22. In general, respondents were supportive of the proposals set out in the consultation.
23. There was significant support for the criteria used to identify the local authorities where integrated inspections would take place. Respondents were in agreement that the inspectorates should use the same judgement structure as well as making a shared judgement about the effectiveness of the LSCB.
24. There was similar agreement for the criteria CQC proposes to use to evaluate the effectiveness of health services.

The criteria

25. There was support for the way integrated inspections will be conducted:

‘When inspecting an area, as a single agency the full picture of what it is like for a child or young person cannot be gained – this needs to be conducted with all partners at the same time. This will avoid assumptions being made of another agency’s input.’
26. There were some concerns that an integrated inspection would be very time-consuming for agencies, and they would need to be managed effectively to ensure that day-to-day work was not disrupted.
27. There was some strong support for CQC to include children’s health services that are commissioned by local government, with some respondents suggesting that the integrity of health inspections would be compromised if they were not included.
28. Some agencies thought it was important that good practice areas were also inspected to ensure balance.
29. Although there was general agreement about using the same judgement structure, there were some concerns expressed about those situations where agencies were not working to similar standards.
30. Respondents generally supported a shared judgement of the LSCB:

‘We would welcome the judgements reflecting the role of the LSCB in scrutinising and challenge and assessing if they have effectively recognised poor practice and are challenging this appropriately.’
31. There was strong support for the proposals to evaluate the effectiveness of health services:

'Overall it is felt this is a comprehensive structure. It gives clarity in how the different areas are inspected.'

32. There was support for evaluating leadership, management and governance in health services:

'Health agencies represented on LSCB recognise the importance of its strategic leadership in driving change and influencing service delivery. Good leadership is required to ensure a robust service which is innovative and will challenge services.'

Annex B: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary consultation responses

Summary

33. Respondents were generally supportive of the proposed criteria for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the police.

The criteria

34. Supportive responses focused on the positive outcomes for children and hearing the child's voice throughout the process. However some concerns were raised about the experiences of children:

'We would like to see the experiences of children in care and care leavers more explicit in the criteria to ensure that their experiences are captured.'

35. Concerns were raised about the challenges for police forces dealing with children placed within local authority areas from other parts of the country. Some concern was expressed that the criteria did not give sufficient consideration to the interaction of police forces with children. One respondent expressed concern that a police force may be graded as 'good' without having:

'the views and experiences of children, young people and their families at the centre of service design'

and without children's opinions being used:

'to influence development and strategic thinking.'

36. Some respondents recommended that additional criteria should be added that recognise the higher risk of abuse to disabled children. This was seen as important due to potential barriers to their protection being well understood and responded to, such as the difficulties some disabled children have in getting their experiences and voices heard.
37. Several respondents cited differences in the experiences of children who go missing compared with those children who are looked after and who go missing. In particular, concerns were raised about the experiences of particular groups of children with specific needs, such as children looked after, disabled children or children in custody. One respondent said that the criteria should include a measure of whether children's experiences and voices have been sought and considered routinely when the police attend any incident involving them. Other recommendations for additional criteria focused on:
- data on the use of 'safe and well' checks
 - identifying, recording and responding to trafficked children and work jointly with other agencies to protect them from harm

- how police forces respond to child sexual exploitation
- how effective police forces are in the use of early intervention and disruption measures
- how police forces work with relevant voluntary sector organisations in gathering and mapping information
- whether HMIC should evaluate how police forces gather data on 'stop and searches', specifically in relation to children looked after or other children whose circumstances have made them vulnerable.

Annex C: Her Majesty's Inspectorate Probation consultation responses

Summary

38. All but one respondent agreed with our proposals to inspect the National Probation Service, community rehabilitation companies and youth offending teams – the one who disagreed would like to see a stronger focus on work with health services.

Probation services criteria

39. Responses about the proposed criteria for inspecting probation services included:
- the importance of making sure that inspection covers the new structural arrangements in provision of probation services
 - the need to account for how the transition from youth to adult services impacts on safeguarding
 - concerns about the ability of information sharing arrangements to provide accurate information about the involvement of offenders with children
 - concerns that the views of children were not taken into account sufficiently
 - some disappointment that HMI Probation would not provide a graded judgement – as this could give the impression that the contribution of probation is not important
 - the importance of more attention being directed at those who are care leavers and known to probation services.

Youth offending services criteria

40. Responses about the proposed criteria for inspecting youth offending services included:
- the need to consider issues around the transition to adulthood in the criteria
 - the need to be aware of the possibility of child sexual exploitation – the criteria should be changed to recognise early identification of children missing from home and risk of exploitation
 - concerns that the voice of the child is absent in the proposed criteria
 - concerns that the proposal not to make a graded judgement could give the impression that the youth offending team contribution is not important to child protection
 - the need to understand the important overlap between youth offending teams and children's services, for example when children become looked after because they are remanded in custody.

Annex D: Responses to the consultation

Sector	Number of response
Social care	36
Education	8
Health services	27
Policing	9
Probation services	5
Providers of custodial or detention services	1
Youth offending teams	3
Charities	6
Voluntary sector organisations	4
None of the above	34
Prefer not to say	1
Total	134

Proposal one: how and where we will inspect

Q1a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal for how we will conduct the integrated inspection?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
23 (17%)	88 (66%)	14 (10%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (3%)

Q1b. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the criteria to identify the local authority areas where we will conduct an integrated inspection?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
27 (20%)	79 (59%)	15 (11%)	5 (4%)	0	8 (5%)

Proposal two: the judgement structure

Q2a. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Ofsted, CQC and HMIC should use the same judgement structure?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
37 (28%)	81 (60%)	7 (5%)	4 (3%)	0	5 (3%)

Q2b. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the inspectorates should make a shared judgement about the effectiveness of the LSCB?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
44 (33%)	78 (58%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	0	7 (5%)

Proposals three and four: the evaluation criteria

Q3a. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should continue to use the judgement criteria outlined in the single inspection framework when conducting an integrated inspection?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
26 (19%)	77 (57%)	13 (10%)	5 (4%)	2 (1%)	11 (8%)

Q3b. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the criteria CQC propose for evaluating the effectiveness of health services?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
The overall effectiveness of health services?	26 (19%)	71 (53%)	15 (11%)	4 (3%)	0	18 (13%)
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection?	22 (16%)	75 (56%)	9 (7%)	1 (1%)	0	27 (20%)
The experiences and progress of children looked after and care leavers?	36 (27%)	64 (48%)	7 (5%)	4 (3%)	0	23 (17%)
Leadership, management and governance?	29 (22%)	71 (53%)	6 (4%)	2 (1%)	0	26 (19%)

Q3c. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the criteria HMIC propose for evaluating the effectiveness of the police force?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
The overall effectiveness of the police force?	24 (18%)	65 (49%)	12 (9%)	6 (4%)	0	27 (20%)
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection?	26 (19%)	65 (49%)	7 (5%)	5 (4%)	0	31 (23%)
Leadership, management and governance?	27 (20%)	60 (45%)	11 (8%)	3 (2%)	0	33 (24%)

Q4a. To what extent do you agree or disagree with criteria HMI Probation propose for evaluating the effectiveness of:

The National Probation Services and Community Rehabilitation Companies?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
20 (15%)	64 (48%)	12 (9%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	33 (24%)

Youth offending teams?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
25 (19%)	60 (45%)	11 (8%)	5 (4%)	0	33 (25%)

Q4b. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the criteria HMI Prisons propose for evaluating the effectiveness of custodial and detention services?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
14 (10%)	59 (44%)	23 (17%)	3 (2%)	1 (1%)	34 (25%)

Proposal five: how we will report

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for how we will report our findings?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
31 (23%)	72 (54%)	15 (11%)	6 (4%)	1 (1%)	9 (6%)

Proposal six: joint inspection of the LSCB

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our shared criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the LSCB?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
39 (29%)	75 (56%)	8 (6%)	1 (1%)	0	11 (8%)