

Inspecting multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

This document sets out how Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services inspect safeguarding arrangements.

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1. Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and HMI Probation jointly inspect and report on the impact of local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements on children through the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) programme.
2. These joint inspections look closely at the experiences of children and provide a rigorous assessment of the quality and impact of work in a local area. The inspectorates identify strengths and weaknesses in the practice of individual agencies: the local authority, health agencies, the police, the youth offending team, the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies, as well as the collective response to children.
3. The inspectorates evaluate how well agencies are working together to identify children at risk and respond appropriately, including at the first point of contact from someone concerned about a child (known as the 'front-door').
4. The inspectorates agree a programme of 'deep dive' topic areas. These 'deep dives' allow the inspectorates to identify what is working well and what is working less well at a practice and strategic level for particular cohorts of children, such as children living with domestic abuse. The 'deep dive' findings are drawn together into a thematic report that can provide insight for agencies, policy makers and government.
5. In addition, each JTAI evaluates the quality and impact of the agencies' leadership and local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements on practice with children in relation to the 'front-door' and the deep dive topic area. The joint focus by the inspectorates on practice and strategic leadership gives insight into the impact and effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements.
6. When local arrangements either improve or hinder the experiences of children, this is clearly set out in the report. Ten local areas are inspected each year. An 'area' for a JTAI corresponds with the footprint of the local authority.
7. Each inspectorate also has its own programme of routine inspection that looks at how well children are helped and protected by the local authority, the health sector and the police (see annex A). Each inspectorate will use these programmes to scrutinise the contribution of the individual agency to the new arrangements.
8. In addition, each of these programmes of inspection will provide a regular window into the impact of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements on children locally. Concerns (or indeed exceptional practice) in local safeguarding arrangements will be shared between the inspectorates using well-established information sharing systems so that these issues can inform individual programmes of work and/or the JTAI programme.

Annex A

Ofsted inspections of local authority children's services (ILACS)

9. Ofsted implemented the new ILACS inspection programme from January 2018. ILACS consists of:
 - an expectation of an annual self-assessment of social work practice by every local authority (LA)
 - an annual conversation with each LA to identify strengths and areas for improvement based on its self-assessment and our extensive database
 - a focused visit on an identified area of weakness or strength to half of all LAs annually
 - monitoring visits to all inadequate LAs four times a year until their re-inspections
 - standard or short inspection of each LA lasting either one or two weeks depending on the strengths of the LA, once in a three-year period.
10. Ofsted decides on the timing and nature of each inspection or focused visit based on the information it holds: previous inspection outcomes and regional cross-remit and national intelligence, including information from the other inspectorates.

HMICFRS inspection activity

11. The protection of the vulnerable is at the heart of policing. Improving policing is HMICFRS's core purpose and so the police response to vulnerable people and children is assessed through many different inspections.
12. While child protection features in most of HMICFRS's single and joint inspection work, there are currently two primary ways (in addition to the JTAIs) in which the effectiveness of the police (and partnership) response to children who are in need of help and protection is assessed.

Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL)

13. PEEL is an annual assessment of police forces in England and Wales. Forces are assessed on their effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. They are judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate on these categories (or pillars) based on inspection findings, analysis and Her Majesty's Inspectors' (HMI) professional judgment across the year. This provides a comprehensive assessment of the processes and tools in place to enable the force and its staff to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
14. Assessing the effectiveness of a force's arrangements to recognise and respond to vulnerability and children at risk forms part of this assessment process.

National child protection inspection programme (NCPI)

15. HMICFRS is inspecting the child protection work of every police force in England and Wales. The specific police roles¹ evaluated at the inspection are:
 - the identification of children who might be at risk from abuse and neglect
 - investigation of alleged offences against children, inter-agency working and information-sharing to protect children
 - the taking of emergency powers to protect children.
16. These inspections will consider how effectively police forces are meeting their responsibilities in the new safeguarding arrangements.

CQC inspection activity

Inspections of Essential Standards under the Health and Social Care Act (2008), section 60

17. CQC inspectors assess all health services for compliance against the fundamental standards as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014. There is a specific children and young peoples' core service framework that has key lines of enquiry related to all aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and female genital mutilation.
18. In any service where there are breaches of the standards relating to safeguarding children, services are required to address the breaches and improve or be subject to further enforcement action. This relates to all health services, including primary medical services, acute, community and mental health services and some children's residential and domiciliary based health provision.

Specialist inspections

19. In addition to the core inspections, CQC undertakes a single agency children looked after and safeguarding (CLAS) inspection programme. This is a 'Special Review' conducted under the Health and Social Care Act (2008), Section 48 powers. This enables CQC to review both the commissioning and provision of health services for looked after children and the safeguarding arrangements for all children within each local authority area. The range of services that are reviewed on each CLAS inspection include:

¹ Outlined in 'Working together to safeguard children', Department for Education, March 2015 (updated July 2018); www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

- acute hospitals – maternity services, children’s wards, adult and children’s emergency departments, urgent care centres
 - adult and children’s substance misuse services
 - adult and children’s mental health services
 - community services
 - school nursing and health visiting services
 - primary care services – GPs, dentists, out-of-hours services
 - sexual health services.
20. The inspections focus on a child’s journey through the health system. They make recommendations to both providers and commissioners to improve how they work both individually and as part of a whole health system to help, support and protect children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, significant harm. These inspections will consider the contribution made by the health agency and evaluate how effectively it is meeting its responsibilities in the new safeguarding arrangements.

Sexual abuse and assault services

21. In April 2018, CQC will commence inspections of sexual assault and abuse services (SAAS). SAAS inspections will focus on the quality of care being provided to child and adult victims of sexual assault and abuse, with a focus on ongoing support and safeguarding. All SAAS services will be included in the inspection programme.



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