

CABINET – 19 JULY 2016

Oxfordshire Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the Multi-Agency Response to Abuse and Neglect in Oxfordshire: Written Statement of Action

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Background

1. In early March Ofsted, The Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation undertook a joint inspection of the multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation, children missing from home, care or education and the front door to children's social care. This resulted in the publication of a detailed letter outlining the findings of the effectiveness of partnership working and the working of individual agencies in Oxfordshire.
2. The Director of Children's Services is required to submit a written statement of action to Ofsted by 15 August 2016, which will be accompanied by the detailed action plan that addresses the areas for improvement identified by the JTAI.
3. The sign up by agencies is outlined in section 5 of Appendix 1.

Issues

4. Overall the letter is positive and the headline judgement that Oxfordshire now has 'a highly developed and well-functioning approach to tackling exploitation' provides an important external judgement on an area of work that has been a key priority for the county council and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) in recent years. This builds on Ofsted's judgment in their last major inspection of the county council's children's services and the OSCB in 2014, when both were deemed 'good'.
5. The report identified a wide range of key strengths and importantly, recognises that local agencies have learned lessons from recent investigations into child sexual exploitation and have acted effectively to improve performance. Critically it confirms that agencies in Oxfordshire understand the needs of children and young people and help them keep safe. Significantly, in examining the work with children and young people in Oxfordshire the inspectors found that 'no children were identified as at risk from harm'.
6. Key overarching strengths identified by inspectors include:
 - Strategic leadership from individuals, agencies and in the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB);
 - The Kingfisher Team which provides specialist multi-agency responses to children at risk of exploitation and its links to MASH – the multi-agency safeguarding hub and with the Youth Justice Services;

- The responsiveness of local authority, police and health services;
 - A high standard of inter-agency working with sexually exploited children and a clear commitment to safeguarding children at risk including listening to children about what works.
7. Strengths outweigh areas for improvement. Critically, areas for development match those identified by partners in their own self-assessment of performance and action plans to address these areas are already well developed. The key focus going forward will be to translate the success with child sexual exploitation into consistently good standards of practice across all services. Most importantly there is a drive to further develop the 'front door' into services.
8. There are three key areas for improvement which are addressed in the Written Statement of Action in Annex 1.
- The Front Door of services and the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
 - Standards of practice and specifically assessments, recording and timeliness and supervision;
 - Resource implications particularly relating to increased demand whilst social work resources have not kept pace and are unable to meet need with a specific impact on high caseloads for some children's social workers.
9. These points have direct bearing on the current review of the MASH with partners and the remodelling of Children's Social Care with Early Intervention services. The required changes will be addressed as part of this process.

Financial Implications

10. The budgetary implications are considered as part of the remodelling work of Children's Social Care with Early Intervention Services which includes the county council contribution to the MASH. The remodelling work was reported to Cabinet in May 2016 as part of the paper on Future Arrangements for Children's Social Care.

Equalities Implications

11. The equalities implications are considered as part of the remodelling work of Children's Social Care with Early Intervention Services which includes the county council contribution to the MASH.

Risk Management

12. The risks and opportunities are considered as part of the remodelling work.

Communications

13. There has been a consultation with the public and a consultation with staff is currently underway as part of the remodelling work.

Recommendation

14. Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to approve in principle the attached Written Statement of Action and Action Plan (Annexes 1&2) prior to submission to Ofsted by 15th August 2016.
15. It should be noted that the Written Statement and Action Plan are still being endorsed by relevant senior officers and boards within the wider partnership.

JIM LEIVERS

Director of Children's Services.

Contact: Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships Manager,

Telephone contact 0786 7923 287, email tan.lea@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2016

Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the Multi-Agency Response to Abuse and Neglect in Oxfordshire: Written Statement of Action

1. Introduction

Partners in Oxfordshire welcome the outcome of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection undertaken in March 2016 which included a deep dive focus on the response to child sexual exploitation and those missing from home, care or education and a focus on the 'front door' of children's services. The letter of 10th May from the four inspectorates outlines the findings and identifies an extensive range of key strengths particularly in relation to the multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation and children missing. It is important recognition that key agencies have learned lessons from recent investigations into child sexual exploitation and have acted effectively to improve performance.

2. Key Strengths

Critically the report confirms that agencies in Oxfordshire understand the needs of children and young people and help them keep safe and has a highly developed and well-functioning approach to tackling exploitation. The report provides reassurance that young people in Oxfordshire are significantly safer from sexual exploitation as a result of all agencies' heightened levels of understanding and investment.

Key overarching strengths identified by inspectors include:

- Strategic leadership from individuals, agencies and in the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB);
- The Kingfisher Team which provides specialist multi-agency responses to children at risk of exploitation and its links to MASH – the multi-agency safeguarding hub and with the Youth Justice Services;
- The responsiveness of local authority, police and health services;
- A high standard of inter-agency working with sexually exploited children and a clear commitment to safeguarding children at risk including listening to children about what works.

The report also identified sixteen areas of specific strength which include praise for:

- Significant investment from the local authority, police and health agencies;
- Effective leadership and commitment from senior leaders of all agencies led by the Director of Children's Services, the Council's County Director (formerly Head of Paid Service) and senior politicians;
- Strong collaboration between health providers at all levels to ensure early identification, reporting of concerns and sensitive working with children and families;
- The commissioning of the specialist Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service, complemented by the Horizon Service providing advice to professionals and a range of therapeutic interventions for children who have experienced sexual abuse.
- The success of the OSCB in leading the development of robust multi-agency services to exploited children;

- Good oversight of practice by professionals across all agencies including effective decision making at all points in the sexually exploited children's journey to safety;
- Clear and coherent disruption activity to identify and tackle perpetrators without always relying on vulnerable victims to make complaints;
- Work with hotels, taxi drivers and the wider community to identify and report signs of child sexual exploitation;
- Work with young people who repeatedly go missing provides robust assessment, monitoring and review of risk and impact for all individual children on a multi-agency basis through the Missing Children Panel.

3. Areas for Improvement

Importantly these areas match those identified by partners in the local self-assessment of performance and action plans to develop these matters are already well developed. The key priority for senior leaders moving forward will be to translate the success with child sexual exploitation and children missing into consistently good standards of practice across all services. There are three key areas for improvement which are outlined in the following sections, with the detail described in the Action Plan. Work is already underway to address these issues but it should be noted that the underpinning progress for a number of areas is dependent on wider systemic and organisational change.

3.1 The Front Door of Services and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Issues raised

The key findings were that children at lower levels of need or referred for reasons other than exploitation do not always receive the same high quality and timeliness of response at the point of referral as high risk cases. Some referrals lack key information; thresholds for interventions are not generally well understood; responses are inconsistent and it is not always clear how decisions are made; 75% of referrals lead to No Further Action or are stepped down to early help; and communication with schools could be improved.

What we are doing and progress already made

These problems are well recognised and the county council's Performance Scrutiny Committee was informed of the necessity to review the MASH February 2016. This review is already underway with partners and a new model of delivery for the MASH is being agreed and will be implemented by November 2016.

A new referral form for Children's Social Care providing clear links to the Threshold of Needs Matrix and requiring supporting evidence has gone live. The MASH now prioritises lower risk cases where the potential for uncovering hidden harm is greater. High risk cases and those clearly requiring an assessment are fast tracked to Children and Families Assessment Teams where agency checks are completed within the assessment process.

The new model will improve timeliness and reduce the number of enquiries made to the MASH which do not meet the criteria for further work by Children's Social Care. The new service will ensure that quality standards are high and responses are consistent with clear closure plans communicated to the referrer. In particular the introduction of new locality and community support teams will support professionals worried about a child at an earlier stage and triage enquiries before they reach Children's Social Care to ensure thresholds are understood. These teams will work very closely with schools, primary health services

and community groups and will be in place by November 2016. The staff consultation for the new service has been completed. Six monthly audits will take place of the pathway into Children's Social Care and a survey of the new service to schools and community groups will take place after a year.

The Thresholds of Needs Matrix is being revised and will be re-launched in the autumn of 2016 to ensure agencies are clear about what point to involve partners to provide additional support and manage risk.

3.2 Standards of Practice

Issues raised

A number of issues relating to assessments were identified including delays in information sharing on low risk cases and that the quality and analysis of information gathering in Children's Social Care assessment teams is variable. Concerns were raised about recording and timeliness specifically relating to strategy meetings and social care records and action plans. This included the engagement of children in their plans and ensuring that strategy meetings are held at an early enough stage.

It was found that supervision and management sign off of assessments do not always sufficiently challenge poor practice.

What we are doing and progress already made

There is a clear drive to secure consistently good standards of practice across all children's services and a range of actions are planned.

Children's Social Care will be reviewing training, particularly in relation to ensuring that analysis and assessment processes are holistic and of a high quality, leading to clear decisions, plans and interventions that improve outcomes for children. Training will also be provided on chairing of strategy meetings to ensure decision making is robust and action plans are clear. Minimum standards for recording in Children's Social Care will be reviewed and guidance issued to social work staff and managers in relation to the learning from the inspection. Audits of analysis, assessment, action planning, timeliness and engagement of children will be undertaken to assure senior managers that improvements have been embedded across the service. As part of the review of the MASH arrangements, the police and the National Probation Service will review how they respond to requests for information on low risk cases in the MASH to inform assessments. The learning from the inspection has already been disseminated across all social work teams through the 'In the Loop' newsletter and team discussions.

Improvements to supervision and management oversight within Children's Social Care is planned by 2017 as part of the development of the Academy which will include a programme for 'Aspiring Seniors and Aspiring Managers' and a 'Knowledge and Skills Statement' for all supervisors. The county council's Business Development Team are providing project management oversight for the development of the Academy. 'Analysis into Assessment' training has been commissioned and will continue to be integrated within the Children's Social Care Learning and Development programme. Quality assurance audits of supervision with follow through on actions identified will be undertaken in the interim.

3.3 Resources and Performance Management

Issues raised

Inspectors noted evidence of increased demand in the system whilst social work resources have not kept pace and are unable to meet need and that some very high caseloads for children's social workers are adversely affecting quality.

A concern was raised that Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board does not set baselines and target to measure against when monitoring partners' performance and the effectiveness of action taken e.g. for the MASH.

What we are doing and progress already made

These demands on social work resources are well recognised across the partnership and by Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Proposals to remodel early intervention provision and develop an integrated model with Children's Social Care are currently out for consultation and the full model will be implemented by February 2017. The key features of the future service are to ensure that resources are targeted at the most vulnerable children and families through locality based integrated Family Support Services and that there is a stronger interface with communities, schools and community health teams through the new Locality and Community Support Service to provide consultation and advice to professionals who are worried about a child. The service will also allow greater flexibility ensuring the workforce can be responsive to needs and pressure points.

The integration of these services will ensure that there are additional resources to support children in need and subject to child protection planning and thereby reduce caseloads. Caseloads for assessment teams will reduce to meet local standards as part of the service remodelling.

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is currently reviewing its multi-agency performance dataset and will be setting targets against key priority measures for implementation from the summer of 2016.

4. Monitoring arrangements for the Action Plan

This statement of action is supported by a more detailed action plan which will be monitored by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Executive Group to ensure that timely progress is made and all partners are held to account for delivering on the actions agreed and that the learning from the Joint Targeted Area Inspection is embedded across all services.

5. Sign up by Partners

This response has been endorsed by the partners identified below.

Jim Leivers, Director of Children's Services

David Smith, Chief Executive Officer, NHS Oxfordshire CCG

Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner

Jason Hogg, Assistant Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police

Amrik Panaser, Youth Justice Service County Manager

Gabriel Amahwe, CEO, Community Rehabilitation Company

Angela Cossins, Deputy Director National Probation Service, South West and South Central

Paul Burnett, Interim Chair of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
Stuart Bell, Chief Executive Officer, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Bruno Holtoff, Chief Executive Officer, Oxford University Hospitals, NHS Foundation Trust

Contributions have also been made by a dedicated Partnership Group:

Catharine Darnton, Head Teacher of Gillotts School
Lynn Knapp, Head Teacher of Windmill School
Annabel Kay, Head Teacher of the Warriner School
Pauline Scully, Service Director, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
Tracy Toohey, Safeguarding Children Lead and Patient Experience, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Alison Chapman, Designated Nurse Safeguarding, Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Bex Raven, Senior Probation Officer, Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company
Val Johnson, Partnership Development Manager, Oxford City Council
Superintendent Christian Bunt, Thames Valley Police
Acting Detective Inspector Jon Capps, Thames Valley Police
Detective Chief Inspector Felicity Parker, Thames Valley Police
Lucy Butler, Deputy Director Children's Social Care, Oxfordshire County Council
Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director – Safeguarding, Oxfordshire County Council
Roy Leach, School Organisation Planning Manager, Oxfordshire County Council
Lara Patel, Social Care Manager, Oxfordshire County Council
Sue Lingard, Social Care Manager, Oxfordshire County Council
Delia Mann, Social Care Manager/Early Intervention Manager Central, Oxfordshire County Council
Tan Lea, Strategic Safeguarding Partnerships Manager, Oxfordshire County Council

This response has been signed off by the following Boards/Governing bodies:

MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) Steering Group - 5th July 2016
Oxfordshire County Council Management Team – 6th July 2016
Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) – 12th July 2016
Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet – 19th July 2016
OSCB's Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group – 20th July 2016

Oxfordshire Joint Targeted Area Inspection 2016: Action Plan

Issues Raised by Inspectors	Action	What will be different	How will we know	Completion date	Lead
1. Front Door of Services and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all children receive a high quality and timely response at the point of referral to children's services. Thresholds for interventions are not generally well understood and responses are inconsistent and it is not always clear how decisions are made. 75% of referrals lead to NFA or are stepped down to early help. Some referrals lack key information. Some schools do not know who their MASH representative is. 	Children's Social Care, Police, Health to lead on the remodeling of the MASH and improved interface with new CSC Assessment Duty Teams.	Referral routes into CSC are clear. Published response times to referrals will be met.	Incremental rise each quarter in timeliness of response over next year.	08/2017	Chair of MASH Steering Group
	6 monthly audits take place of pathway into CSC, including the MASH to assess quality of referral.	High quality referrals with timely response.	Audits of 50 cases demonstrate that cases meet required standards in relation to quality of referral, response and feedback to referrers.	01/2017	Chair of MASH Steering Group
	6 monthly audits of response and feedback to referrers.	Clear feedback to referrer, baseline agreed and monitored with escalation process. All referrals have a clearly recorded outcome	Referrer receives feedback within published response times in 100% of audited cases. 100% referrals have a clear outcome	03/2017	Chair of MASH Steering Group
	Review CSC audit systems in remodelled service.	Audit process including collation and dissemination revised and embedded in new roles.	Monthly audits in place and reported to senior management, informing strategic planning.	02/2017	Principal Social Worker
	Children's Social Care to develop new Locality and Community Support Teams.	Integrated model of early help and CSC in place with fully functioning Locality and Community Support Teams.	See evidence above.	11/2016	Deputy Director CSC
	Termly reminders to be sent to schools about the TON Matrix and how to refer to CSC.	Thresholds are understood and referrals meet required standards.	100% of schools receive termly reminders.	From 09/2016	Deputy Director CSC

	Review of Threshold of Needs Matrix.	Strategy meetings identified early in accordance with TON criteria.	TON matrix relaunched.	11/2016	Early Intervention Manager
	Launch TON Matrix via multi agency training and local planning days as part of launch of new model.	Thresholds are understood and referrals meet required standards.	Training on TON matrix delivered to 100% of schools.	04/2017	Early Intervention Manager
	Survey of schools, health partners and community groups to be undertaken to test out effectiveness of new model and understanding of thresholds and CSC processes	Professionals in schools and communities are supported earlier when they are worried about a child, can state what the thresholds are/can reference the document they would refer to in making a referral.	Survey of schools, health partners and community groups demonstrates effectiveness of new model and understanding of thresholds and CSC processes with 60% response rate	11/2017	Deputy Director CSC
2. Standards of Practice					
<p>2.1 Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General requests for information from the police on cases that would support assessments are delayed in low risk cases and NPS only responding effectively where risk had been identified. The quality of analysis and information gathering within assessments in CSC assessment teams is variable leading to poor decision making and drift. Assessments not routinely recording full details and some examples of optimistic assessments seen. 	Police and NPS to review information sharing processes and timeliness for low risk cases as part of 1 above.	Information shared in a timely way for all cases, including low risk cases.	Incremental rise each quarter in timeliness of information share over next year.	08/2017	Chair of MASH Steering Group
	CSC to revise training on 'Analysis into Assessment' (AiA) and develop Action Learning Sets for seniors and managers.	High quality holistic assessments; improved decision making; realistic planning; child is involved in the planning.	Lunchtime training and Action Learning arrangements in place across social work teams, one in each area to implement AiA. 100% newly qualified social workers completed Analysis into Assessment training during their ASYE.	09/2016	Principal Social Worker/ Best Practice Educators.
	See 2.3 for audit work and observations.				

<p>2.2 Recording and Timeliness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording of discussions and actions at some multi-agency strategy meetings are not sufficiently robust and comprehensive and are not held in a timely way. Strategy meetings only held once it was recognised there were partnership issues delaying children receiving full range of services needed. Records not showing how children had been engaged and how they had contributed to assessment and planning processes, including reflecting their views and experiences. Social Care case recording out of date and records not reflecting key information, including from partners which are not reflected in decision making. Action plans requiring named individuals to complete actions and timescales. 	CSC to provide external training for all managers who chair strategy meetings.	Strategy meetings lead to SMART action plans and hold agencies to account for their contributions.	Training delivered to 100% managers who undertake strategy meetings.	11/2016	Principal Social Worker
	Audit of strategy meetings focusing on recording, action planning, interventions and timeliness.	Improved quality, recording, timeliness of strategy meetings.	Audit work of strategy meetings evidences improved recording, action planning, interventions and timeliness in 90% of cases.	01/2017	Independent Reviewing Officers
	FWi database to prompt SMART Action Planning for strategy meetings.	New FWi form in place.	See above.	07/2016	Principal Social Worker
	Definitions of CSC processes issued to schools and community partners.	Clear guidance in place.	CSC processes understood and confirmed through survey in 1.	07/2016	Principal Social Worker
	Effective Recording Working Group set up to review minimum standards of recording including timeliness and form part of training in 2.1.	Records are holistic and include information from partners leading to improved decision making and planning for children.	Working Group established and guidance issued and part of training in 2.1 Audit in 2.3 will demonstrate improvements.	09/2016	Principal Social Worker
	See 2.3 for audit work and observations.				
	'In the Loop' Briefing to social workers includes all learning from section 2.	All social work staff aware of the findings of the inspection and aware of planned changes.	Team managers to discuss in team meetings in 100% teams so all social work staff are aware of the findings and improve practice.	07/2016	Principal Social Worker
<p>2.3 Supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision and management sign off of assessments do not sufficiently challenge poor 	Develop 'Aspiring Seniors and Aspiring Managers' programme.	Academy up and running and Aspiring Managers programme in place and linked to OSCB.	70% managers registered and demonstrate skills in 80% of domains.	11/2016	Principal Social Worker
	Knowledge and Skills Statement in place for all	Knowledge and Skills Statement in place and linked	70% managers registered and demonstrate skills in 80% of	06/2017	Principal Social

<p>practice including gaps, missing information, poor recording, drift and delay particularly in low priority cases.</p>	<p>supervisors as part of the Academy development for social workers.</p>	<p>to OSCB.</p>	<p>domains.</p>		<p>Worker</p>
	<p>Supervision observations and audits undertaken to ensure high standards of practice and minimise drift.</p>	<p>Supervision practice and management oversight meet required standards.</p>	<p>Supervision taking place every 4-6 weeks for 100% practitioners.</p> <p>Required standards met in 100% of bi-annual supervision observations and audits.</p>	<p>07/2016</p>	<p>CSC Area Managers</p>
	<p>20 case audits undertaken focusing on assessments, analysis, action planning, timeliness and engagement of children in place, recording and management oversight and challenge.</p>	<p>Required standard known and auditable.</p>	<p>Annual audit for all domains meet required standard in 75% of cases</p>	<p>11/2016</p>	<p>CSC Area Managers</p>
	<p>Supervision and supervision observation templates revised.</p>	<p>Consistent standard of supervision to new standard.</p>	<p>New templates in place.</p>	<p>09/2016</p>	<p>Principal Social Worker</p>
<p>3. Resources and Performance Management</p>					
<p>3.1 Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some very high caseloads for children's social workers adversely affecting quality. Evidence of increased demand whilst social work resources have not kept pace and are unable to meet need. 	<p>CSC to remodel early intervention provision and develop an integrated model with CSC including the development of integrated Family Support Teams and Locality and Community Support Teams.</p>	<p>Resources are targeted at the most vulnerable children.</p> <p>Integrated model of early intervention and CSC in place.</p> <p>Clear caseload management and reporting to ensure CSC work cases effectively, monitored by senior managers.</p> <p>Caseloads reduced for assessment teams.</p>	<p>Caseload monitoring demonstrates caseloads for assessment teams are meeting local standards as part of service remodeling.</p>	<p>02/2017</p>	<p>Deputy Director CSC</p>
<p>3.2 Performance Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LSCB does not set baselines and targets to measure against 	<p>OSCB to review its multi-agency dataset and set targets against key priority</p>	<p>OSCB identifies key concerns across the safeguarding system early and is able to</p>	<p>New dataset in place and targets effectively monitored and escalated as appropriate and</p>	<p>07/2016</p>	<p>Chair of Performance, Audit</p>

when monitoring partners' performance and the effectiveness of action taken e.g. for the MASH.	measures.	instigate appropriate action to be taken.	benchmarked against statistical neighbours where possible.		and Quality Assurance Sub-Group of OSCB.
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Glossary

- ASYE – Assessed and Supported Year of Employment for newly qualified social workers
- CRC – Community Rehabilitation Company
- CSC – Children’s Social Care
- CCG – Clinical Commissioning Group
- FWi – Frameworki, CSC database
- LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children Board
- MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- NFA – No Further Action
- OSCB – Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
- SMART – Action Plans that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound
- TON Matrix – Threshold of Needs Matrix
- TVP – Thames Valley Police