

Somerset Joint Targeted Area Inspection

20th to 24th May 2024



Somerset
Council

Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

Serious Youth Violence

What happened?

Between 20th and 24th May 2024, the Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation jointly inspected the Somerset area's multi-agency response to children over 10, who are at risk of, or affected by, serious youth violence in the county.

This resulted in an ungraded letter which was published on 18th June 2024



Headline findings

Strategy and governance

- Partnership working is not effective at a strategic level in identifying, understanding or responding to the extent of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation of children in Somerset.
- The oversight of partnership working, led by the Safer Somerset Partnership and the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership lacks rigour, drive and challenge.



Multi-agency practice

Risks are not identified at the earliest point

Key areas of concern were identified in:

- A lack of safeguarding oversight and appropriate referrals to Children's Social Care, by staff working in Emergency Departments in local hospitals.
- A lack of information sharing by the Police with partners, of information and intelligence, relating to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
- A very high rate of exclusions from Somerset schools, in a national context of children being identified as being more susceptible to serious youth violence if they are not in school, particularly where children have special educational needs and disabilities.
- A lack of system wide targeted training in relation to Serious Youth Violence



Good practice

- The system overall responds well when there is clear and immediate risk to children at risk of serious youth violence
- Some local neighbourhoods who are proactively responding to local concerns and diverting children from violence
- A timely response from Child and Adolescent Mental health services (CAMHS) when children are referred there
- The knowledge about serious youth violence and individual children affected, in the Youth Justice Service.
- The expertise and knowledge of the Children's Social Care out of hours duty team.
- Some locally commissioned services, largely in the VCFSE sector, that help children understand risks associated with serious youth violence



What happens now?

The Safer Somerset Partnership and the Safeguarding Children's Partnership are already collating action plans from all relevant organisations, including the Council, and on behalf of each Partnership to improve partnership working in reducing serious youth violence and criminal exploitation in Somerset.

These plans will be submitted to Ofsted by the Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Partnership, on behalf of the 3 Lead Safeguarding Partners (Duncan Sharkey, CEO Somerset Council, Jonathan Higman, CEO Somerset Integrated Care Board and Sarah Crewe, Chief Constable, Avon and Somerset Constabulary) by 25th October 2024. (This is the date set by the Inspectorates)

