



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Monday, 10 February 2025

10.00 am

Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton TA1 4DY

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA

To: The members of the Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Agenda Item 6 JTAI Update (Pages 3 - 10)

To receive an update on the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Somerset – serious youth violence.

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Joint Targeted Area Inspection

Progress Update January 2025

Author: Jasmine Wark, SSCP Business Manager

1. **Summary**

[Link to JTAI Letter](#)

- 1.1 This paper aims to update Scrutiny on the progress of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection action plan. The findings of the Inspection were [presented to Scrutiny in August 2024](#) and the key headlines of the [action plan were presented in September 2024](#). The action plan was scrutinised and signed off by the Inspectorates (Ofsted, CQC, HMICFRS and HMIP) in October 2024. The Children's Scrutiny Committee are requested to note the progress against the action plan.

2. **Key areas of progress:**

- 2.1 Staff training (in Serious Youth Violence, Child Exploitation, Transform and general child safeguarding) is well underway as per the action plan. The multi-agency training offer has been launched and agencies have set targets for staff completion, which will be monitored by the Partnership Learning and Improvement subgroup. [New Serious Youth Violence awareness page launched! - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)
- 2.2 Electronic daily paediatric reports are expected to be in place for Emergency Departments by the end of January 2025 to improve oversight of safeguarding practice in hospitals.
- 2.3 The Police have delivered a new Voice of the Child programme 500 CID Police officers, with plans to roll out to three other operational directorates. This aims to improve professional curiosity about children's lives and to support the development of a child centred approach to intelligence and safeguarding referrals.
- 2.4 An SSCP Serious Youth Violence Conference was held on 25/11/24, with 240 attendees from across agencies. Feedback from attendees included that it would support their practice in relation to better information sharing, better professional challenge and curiosity about the factors that may contribute to risk of serious youth violence.
- 2.5 Work also continues on the Education for Life Strategy locally, as key data around attendance and exclusion was identified as an area of weakness within the inspection. In the 12 months from September 2023 to September 2024, exclusions

have reduced by 13%. They do however remain some of the highest rates in the country, with children with SEND over-represented in this cohort. There is still much to do.

- 2.6 Police are developing a violence reduction app to promote better information sharing between agencies.

3. Focus areas

- 3.1 Progress in the areas below has been slower than anticipated, with a confidential report commissioned by the Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive, through the DfE Safeguarding Lead, to increase pace and commitment to these issues. All areas are now progressing more coherently.
 - a. Ensuring that the governance and multi-agency meetings in place for child exploitation and serious youth violence are effective and enable the right information to be shared. A reporting schedule between the Safer Somerset Partnership, Youth Justice Partnership Board and Safeguarding Children Partnership has been agreed to enable strategic information to be examined and feed into decision making. Underneath the strategic boards, work is underway to design a MAVÉ (Exploitation) meeting in consultation with the National Working Group. A Police Priorities meeting has also been established to provide operational information sharing and oversight of place and person-based concerns and ensure that relevant agencies are involved in reducing risk. A draft of how these meetings are intended to work and the connections between them is being tested with a group of children recently identified as at potential risk of serious youth violence in one area of the county.
 - b. Regional discussions around Child Exploitation screening tools to enable clear messaging and analysis of risk across agencies including Police.
 - c. Clear messaging to frontline practitioners to ensure any changes are communicated and that the workforce have a clear understanding of how to action concerns around child exploitation and serious youth violence.
 - d. Restructure and key personnel changes (particularly within the Police) are an ongoing challenge to timely progress of aspects of the plan, however assurance has been provided that development work will continue at pace.

4. Quality assurance and oversight of the plan

- 4.1 Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership request quarterly updates from agencies who are part of the JTAI Action Plan. Once actions are completed, agencies are also required to provide quality assurance that the action has had the desired impact in terms of developing the local safeguarding system and delivering better outcomes for children and families in Somerset. This is examined by the Partnership Quality and Performance subgroup.

4.2 Alongside single agency quality assurance work, the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership also have a programme of multi-agency audit, practitioner surveys, Independent Scrutiny and site visits to gather evidence of systems change and challenge areas where required progress is not being made.

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Joint Targeted Area Inspection update – serious youth violence
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Executive Lead Member: Heather Shearer
Division / Local Member: na

1. Summary

- 1.1.** The multi-agency serious youth violence action plan was submitted to Ofsted in October 2024, as required by the inspection team. Progress on this plan has been inconsistent with some areas developing well in line with anticipated timelines and others not.

Key concerns have related to the development of an agreed serious youth framework across Somerset incorporating strengthened young people and community voice and simplified and more effective governance structures.

With the support of the DfE Safeguarding Lead, in December 2024, a clear multi-agency operational structure is being tested from prevention to disruption. Work is also underway to address the duplication and need for clarity in governance between the Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Violence Reduction Partnership and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** The inspection outcome letter - [50252825](#) - recommended:

Areas for priority action

- How well the Safer Somerset Partnership (SSP) understands the extent of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation in Somerset to enable an informed strategic response and more effective frontline practice.
- The sharing of information and the recognition of risk by partner agencies, to protect children at risk of serious youth violence at the earliest opportunity. In particular, the quality, effectiveness and governance of safeguarding practice by lead safeguarding partners in the Somerset NHS ICB, Somerset Council Public Health Directorate and Avon and Somerset Constabulary in Somerset.

What needs to improve?

- How effectively the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) and the SSP prioritise and fulfil their serious violence duty.
- How effectively partner agencies challenge and support schools to tackle the very high exclusion rates, to enable children to remain in school and to

reduce the increased vulnerability to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation associated with being out of school.

- The professional curiosity of practitioners across the partnership, with specific regard to the links between children's additional vulnerabilities and the risk of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
- The quality, extent and impact of training provided by the safeguarding children partnership about the risks associated with serious youth violence.
- How well shared information and intelligence is used to map and understand networks of adults that exploit children.
- The strategic needs analysis of threats and problem profiles and an associated action plan that is specific to Somerset.
- The evaluation of the impact of preventative services.
- Processes for working with children at high risk of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation, including children known to the youth offending service.
- The quality and effectiveness of police investigations into serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
- The effective use of exploitation screening tools to inform assessment and planning for children and families.

3. Background

- 3.1.** In May 2024, the Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons 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. The report from the inspection, in the form of an ungraded letter was published on 18 July 2024 – [JTAI of Somerset](#).

On 7th August 2024, the Children and Families' Scrutiny Committee noted the headline findings, covering governance and multi-agency safeguarding practice and requested that progress on the action plan be considered at the Committee's meeting in February 2025.

At the Children and Families' Scrutiny Committee on 18th September 2024 it was agreed that the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, would contact the ICB with regard to concerns about the implementation time for single system; and the Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, regarding the action re police intelligence and sharing of information, for her views / plans to improve the system.

A multi-agency action plan was developed and submitted to Ofsted in October 2024, as required by the Inspection team. The plan is held and monitored by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** Not applicable

5. Implications

- 5.1.** It is anticipated that new operational structures, currently being tested, will identify and address the risks of serious youth violence at an earlier stage, with children and community voices being central to understanding.

Once clear, shared and owned governance will enable each of the Partnerships to focus and address the key elements that relate to reducing serious youth violence in the county.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** JTAI Serious Youth Violence 2024 – outcome letter [50252825](#)

Somerset Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Update report

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