
Joint Targeted Area Inspection update – serious youth violence
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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