

**From:** Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services  
Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

**To:** Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee – 10 November 2016

**Subject:** **ACTION PLANS ARISING FROM OFSTED INSPECTIONS**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Previous Pathway of Paper:** None

**Future Pathway of Paper:** None

**Electoral Division:** All

**Summary:** This report provides the Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee with an update on activity within Specialist Children's Services to respond to both previous Ofsted recommendations and also internal business intelligence and quality assurance processes.

This is the thirteenth regular report to Cabinet Committee on progress made in improving practice and developing services provided to children and young people in Kent. The last report of this nature was July 2016, and outlined progress to that date.

**Recommendations:** The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT ON** the content of the report.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Since 2012, KCC Specialist Children's Services have undergone five Ofsted inspections:

- Fostering Services – published report 31 July 2012 (*adequate*);
- Children in need of help and protection (Safeguarding) – published report 15 January 2013 (*adequate*);
- Adoption support services – published report 18 June 2013 (*adequate*);
- Children in Care / Care Leavers – published report 23 August 2013 (*adequate*);
- Thematic inspection of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – joint national report on the findings of eight thematic inspections, published November 2014;

1.2 Kent County Council (KCC) continues to await their inspection under the Single Inspection Framework (SIF). Ofsted's current completion date for the SIF programme is December 2017 so the timeframe for Kent to be inspected under the SIF is narrowing month on month. At the end of September 2016, Ofsted

had visited or were in the process of assessing 114 Local Authorities across England. This leaves 38 authorities (including KCC) to be inspected before the end of 2017.

- 1.3 Ofsted launched a consultation in June 2016, to consider what the Inspection Framework will look like in early 2018, once the SIF has concluded.

## **2. Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) Framework: Domestic Abuse theme**

- 2.1 Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) were launched in January 2016. These shorter, one-week inspections, drill down on a specific theme and highlight good practice as well as areas for improvement. The first round of JTAs looked at “Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and children missing from home, care or education”. This first “deep dive” theme has now completed. The collective Inspectorates for Police, Probation, Children’s Services and education, and Health services have been tasked by central Government to examine how local safeguarding partnerships work together, to protect children living with domestic abuse.
- 2.2 The areas of focus for the multi-disciplinary Inspection team have not significantly changed, insofar as they will still be closely assessing safeguarding processes and responsiveness of staff at all levels of the organisation. At an individual practitioner perspective, regulators will look to see how children and young people are identified, tracked, assessed and the potential risks investigated or referred. On a broader level, the multi-agency inspection will evaluate how the leadership and management prioritise awareness and training, and are able to analysis patterns of behaviour, therapeutic needs, and disrupt perpetrator’s activity. Additionally, the JTAI framework seeks to understand “whether local elected members scrutinise and challenge services and the impact of this [challenge] on practice.”
- 2.3 The scope of services supporting and protecting children and families living with domestic abuse is much broader than the significantly more targeted services for children who are at risk of or have been sexually exploited or who have gone missing.
- 2.4 For Member’s interest, there is a very helpful website dedicated to the domestic abuse support services across Kent and Medway. Of note though, is that in the event of a JTAI, either Kent or Medway would be selected, not necessarily both Local Authorities. The website was produced and is managed by the Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (KMDASG) in order to provide a central, comprehensive resource of all domestic abuse related services within Kent and Medway.
  - The website is available at: <http://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/>
- 2.5 The website offers support advice to adults or young people in a potentially abusive relationship, children, to friends wishing to help, professionals, and to people who may themselves be an abuser.
- 2.6 The Council along with other key partners including Health, Police, Probation and the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company is gathering the information that will see us prepared for any JTAI on the current

domestic abuse theme. As with the previous theme on CSE and Children Missing, it is our intention to hold a multi-agency case evaluation exercise at the beginning of November 2016 to sample and test the same casework parameters found in a live inspection scenario. Lessons learned from this exercise are in the section 3 below.

- 2.7 For the domestic abuse evaluation, the [Kent Safeguarding Children Board \(KSCB\)](#) will lead on the exercise and produce a narrative report on completion, giving the headline findings. Domestic abuse services in Kent are provided through a range of commissioned services and we have already identified areas for review, in the provision of therapeutic services to children who have experienced domestic abuse and in the provision of perpetrator programmes at an effective level.
- 2.8 As with the previous JTAI theme, six Local Authorities will be selected for assessment. There is no guarantee whether Kent will be selected, but in a similar way to the “CSE and Missing Children” theme, the Kent partnership are taking the opportunity to learn and quality assure provision to ensure we are doing our best for children and young people living in the area. Unlike SIF inspections, there will not be a single phrase judgement; it will instead focus on a narrative of partnership effectiveness.
- 2.9 For Member’s reference, there also continues to be a third assessment framework. The jointly owned Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection Framework is conducted by both Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The two regulators have committed to undertaking twelve SEND local area inspections before the end of December 2016. Kent was a pilot for the SEND Inspection Framework in 2015.

### **3. Lessons learned from multi-agency case evaluation of CSE and missing children**

- 3.1 As part of the Council’s, the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and local partnership’s inspection readiness, a multi-agency case evaluation, regarding the JTAI topic of “CSE and children missing from home, care or education” took place in June 2016. A joint commentary was drawn together to reveal what was going well, as well as areas for development. The report and lessons learned were shared with partners via the KSCB [Quality and Effectiveness \(QE\)](#) Sub-Group, which is responsible for a range of important matters including the county’s multi-agency audit programme. The case-evaluation, conducted in the style, and to the timescales of a live JTAI inspection, built on findings from the KSCB [CSE and repeatedly missing children multi-agency audit](#) which took place in October 2015.
- 3.2 Children and young people’s experiences selected for professional’s scrutiny were appropriately anonymised and selected on the basis of known risk. Both boys’ and girls’ experiences were selected, as well as young people of varying ages and ethnicities. The audit, bench-marked findings against the [Kent and Medway CSE Toolkit](#). The Toolkit guides and assists professional’s judgement when assessing a child or young person potentially at immediate or future risk of harm. As with many children and young people whom social workers or other practitioners are supporting, their circumstances were not limited to one

worrying element. There were often other complicating factors, such as substance or alcohol misuse, or troubling relationships.

- 3.3 Despite children and young people being supported by a range of professionals and different districts across the county, there was consistency in the good practice as well as the areas for development. It was clear that young people at immediate risk of harm were taken seriously and timely steps were taken to protect them. A recurring theme for all agency's development though, was how risks are regularly re-assessed and analysed to check for changes but also ensure individual risks continue to be responded to in their own right, as well as in the wider context of a child's situation. Gathering all the evidence in one place, in a timely fashion, for multi-agency audit is a recurring challenge for a county the size, and complexity of Kent. This is one which the KSCB is fully aware of, and is continuously striving to improve.

#### **4. Signs of Safety**

- 4.1 It will take five years for Signs of Safety to be fully embedded within the authority, and the Council is only two years into its' implementation. This is still very much the beginning, and builds on the Improvement Programme phases of the past, and the later Transformation Programme supported by Newton Europe. Whilst permanent staff have undertaken the training, work is underway to ensure Newly Qualified Social Workers who joined Specialist Children's Services in September 2016, equally access the training as soon as possible. The Council wants all staff within services for children and young people, to aspire to and achieve ["Practice to be proud of"](#).
- 4.2 An international, annual "Gathering" was held in Norwich, to celebrate Signs of Safety in July 2016. Three Children's Services managers attended, inclusive of team manager, social worker, and Specialist Children's Services' Principal Social Worker. The Council gave a presentation on the topic of "Leading, Learning and Changing Trajectories". the presentation was well received, and those who attended reported that they found the presentations helpful and inspiring. [A video of KCC's presentation is available online.](#)
- 4.3 Internally, Practice Leaders workshops are primarily attended by team managers. The most recent learning session took place in September, and these continue to be regularly held. The sessions are now led by a registered Signs of Safety trainer who follows a prescribed programme. There is clearly an increasing enthusiasm and passion for the model as understanding continues to embed, and developing practice continues to bring helpful and well-received outcomes. To this end, some of the team managers who are Practice Leaders have signed up to contribute to and train other professionals during multi-agency Signs of Safety training led by KSCB.
- 4.4 There is clearly value in recognising and celebrating the changes that Signs of Safety has made to the Council's practice, particularly as it has gained momentum in the last twelve months. Plans are therefore underway to host a Kent "Gathering" to celebrate practice which has benefitted children, young people, their parents, guardians or foster carers.

## **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **7. Equality Implications**

7.1 There are no equality implications associated with this report.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 It is unknown when exactly Kent will receive their inspection. The remaining Single Inspection Framework (SIF) notification dates for 2016 are 14 and 21 November. Ofsted has also recently published SIF notification dates for early 2017. These are 16 and 23 January, 27 February and 6 March.

8.2 Officers continue to report regularly to Members via a range of forums, inclusive of the Children's Services Improvement Panel and [Corporate Parenting Panel](#). The latter has recently received updates on an Independent Review of Kent's Fostering Service, Adoption Services and an update on the support and protection of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. An Ofsted Narrative has been developed and is regularly updated and a copy has been made available to Members as part of an Ofsted briefing pack.

8.3 An Ofsted Standing Group has been set up, comprising key Officers from both Specialist Children's Services and Early Help & Preventative Services. This Group meets on a regular basis to review preparedness for an inspection, ensuring that documents required for the Annex A are kept updated.

8.2 Services are prepared for "the call" when it comes, with a defined response process in place both centrally and at a local level. The majority of targets and performance indicators are either already positive or a moving in a very positive direction. Those which continue to be addressed are not directly attributable to the performance of our social workers, although we continue to address the features that are responsible for the poorer performance. This improving picture reflects the findings from our monthly auditing programme where 65% of casework has gradings that are good and above.

8.3 We are not however complacent, and continue to hold our service provision to a robust benchmark, measuring ourselves against those authorities that have been judged as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. We continue to be cautiously innovative, building on the positive Signs of Safety roll out as the systemic framework underpinning our services.

8.4 In addition there is an initiative, that from January 2017 will see the Family Group Conferencing Service (FGC) partner with the Family Rights Group and a number of other authorities as part of a pilot to look at developing a UK version of 'Family Finding' model. This uses FGCs to identify networks for young people while they are in care to support them into adulthood, providing the essential networks that can make for a successful transition from our care into

independence. We have also launched the Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) across Kent & Medway after an initial pilot phase, to bring targeted assessment and support to complex families within care proceedings, enabling timely decisions to be made on the best interests and permanency options for those relevant children.

## 9. Recommendations

9.1 Recommendations: The Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT ON** the content of the report.

## 10. Background Documents

None

## 11. Contact Details

### Report Authors

Emily Perkins

Executive Officer (West Kent) Specialist Children's Services

0300 416566

[Emily.Perkins@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Emily.Perkins@kent.gov.uk)

Tom Stevenson

Acting Head of Quality Assurance

03000 421775

[Tom.Stevenson@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Stevenson@kent.gov.uk)

### Lead Officer

Patricia Denney

Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

03000 416927

[Patricia.Denney@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Patricia.Denney@kent.gov.uk)

### Lead Director

Philip Segurola

Director of Specialist Children's Services

03000 413120

[Phlip.segurola@kent.gov.uk](mailto:Phlip.segurola@kent.gov.uk)