

The 2nd Annual Working Together To Safeguard Children and Young People Conference

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Care Quality
Commission



Joint targeted area inspections

Joint targeted area inspection

- Joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) are carried out by:
 - Ofsted
 - Care Quality Commission (CQC)
 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)
 - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMI Probation).
- Under section 20 of the Children Act 2004.
- Recognition that while local authorities play a key role in child protection this is the responsibility of all agencies working with children.

'Deep dive' themes

- Child sexual exploitation and children missing from home, care or education (February – July 2016): selected as it was a cross-government priority.
- 'Deep dive' themes:
 - children living with domestic abuse: (September 2016 – March 2017)
 - older children experiencing neglect: (July 2017 – December 2017).
 - child sexual abuse in the family environment (Sept 2018 – May 2019)
 - children's mental health (Sept 2019 – March 2020)

'Deep dive' themes

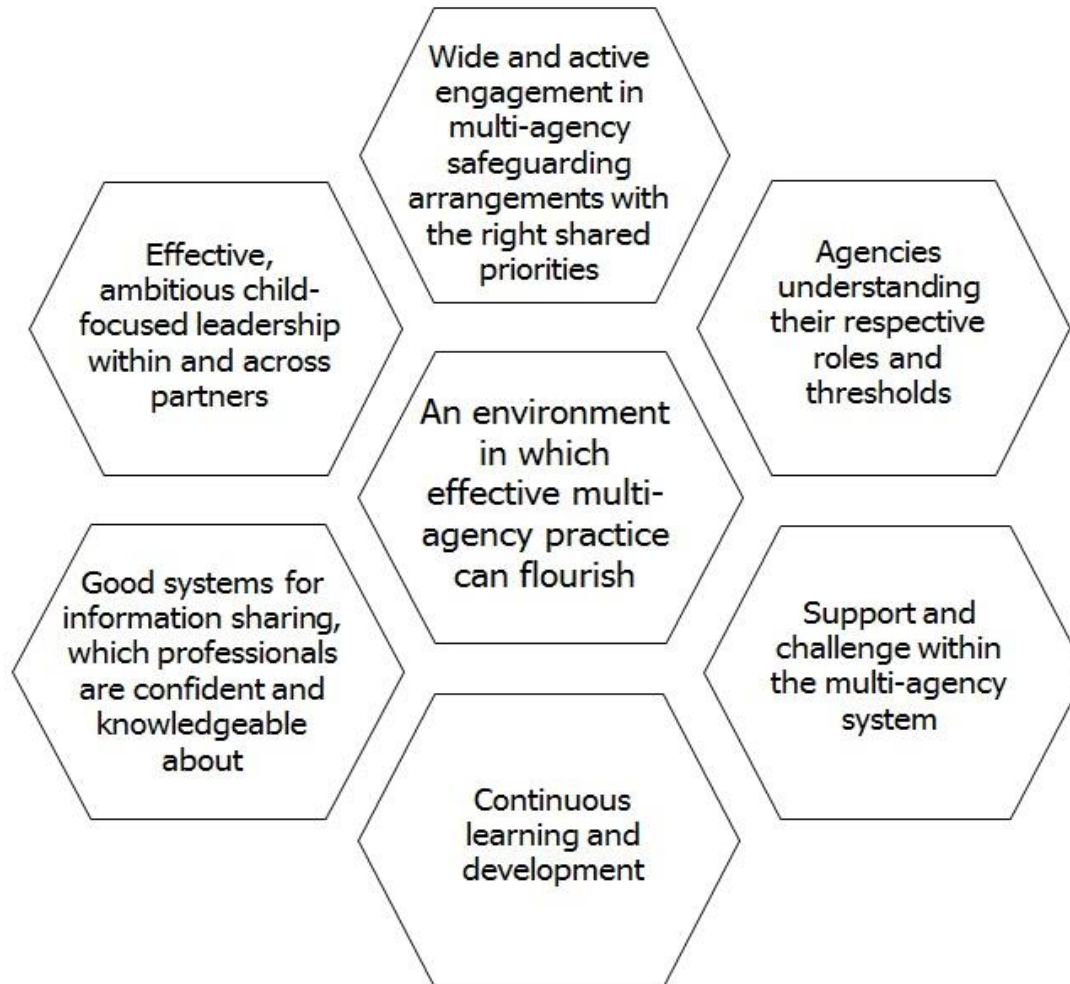
- The next JTAI 'deep dive' themes' are:
 - effectiveness of prevention and early intervention at reducing current and future risks to children and meeting their needs
 - multi-agency response to older children in need of help and protection focussing on risks outside of the family including exploitation.

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

- Safeguarding children requires a multi-agency response: it cannot be done by any agency alone.
- This is true across all aspects of safeguarding arrangements: from the frontline through to leaders determining local strategic and operational responses to child protection issues.
- We must get this right for all children who experience abuse or neglect. What is critical is:
 - shared vision and shared values
 - being ambitious to secure the very best responses to children at risk of harm in their community
 - clear line of sight on both the operational and strategic response locally: agencies need to know the quality of their frontline practice
 - understand the direct experiences of children and their families in their local area.

Components of successful partnerships

We identified components for effective multi-agency working through our JTAIs:





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'Multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment: joint targeted area inspections (JTAs)'

Context: Child sexual abuse in the family environment

- Child sexual abuse in the family environment is a very complex area. Our findings highlight significant challenges for agencies, professionals and the government.
- There is very little reliable data available on the prevalence of child sexual abuse.
- The most recent prevalence surveys suggest that around 15–20% of girls and 7–8% of boys have been victim of sexual abuse.
- A further complication is the hidden nature of sexual abuse, and the fact that when disclosures are made, it is often a long time after the abuse took place.

Findings: Child sexual abuse in the family environment

- Sexual abuse within the family environment needs to be talked about.
- Child sexual abuse in the family environment is not a high enough priority.
- Professionals find this area of practice very difficult. Local area leaders across all agencies must provide better training and support for frontline professionals on the issue of sexual abuse in the family environment.
- Preventative work is absent or focused on known offenders.

Findings: Child sexual abuse in the family environment

- Professionals rely too heavily on children to verbally disclose abuse.
- When children have displayed harmful sexual behaviour, often it is solely their behaviour, not the cause, that professionals respond to.
- Practice in this area is too police-led and not sufficiently child-centred. Too often, health agencies are not involved at all.
- The quality of criminal investigations of child sexual abuse in the family environment is sometimes poor.
- Children and non-perpetrating parents and family members are not supported well enough.

Conclusion: Child sexual abuse in the family environment

- Child sexual abuse in the family environment needs to be a priority across government departments and local areas.
- Evidence-based strategies need to be in place to support agencies and professionals in improving the prevention, identification and response in this challenging area of practice.
- Communities, organisations and the media have important roles to play. We need to create an environment in which children and adults are able to talk about sexual abuse more easily.
- Health agencies are important partners. Their involvement should be seen by all as essential in enabling effective assessment and decision-making.

Conclusion: child sexual abuse in the family environment

- There needs to be a greater emphasis on better training, support, supervision and resources for all professionals.
- The quality and timeliness of criminal investigations needs to improve.
- There needs to be greater consistency in practice when managing known sex offenders in the community, and the risks they pose to children on their release.
- In conclusion, we can no longer stay silent on this issue. We have to talk about it and act. Everyone needs to play their part in identifying, preventing and tackling child sexual abuse in the family environment.

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